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PROPOSED
KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY



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KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY

by
Edwin C. Bearss



Office of History and Historic Architecture
Eastern Service Center
Washington D.C.
November 15, 1970



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



F O R E W O R D

This report has been prepared to satisfy research needs as enumerated in Historical Resource Study Proposal KLGR-H-1, Basic Data Study, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. This study has been undertaken with a twofold goal: (a) It has been my intention to provide Master Planners with a document to enable them to locate and identify sites associated with the Gold Rush of 1897 and 1898, both in Dyea and Skagway, and along the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails between tidewater and the summits leading into Canada; and (b) to provide a documented narrative that, besides emphasizing the significance of the Klondike Gold Rush, will provide material for interpreting the days of '97 and '98 and the struggle for supremacy between the cities of Skagway and Dyea. In this battle for survival, the focus was on modes of transportation.

In undertaking this project, I traveled to the Alaskan Panhandle and hiked the Chilkoot Trail, and the section of the White Pass Trail between the Summit and the crossing of Skagway River. These treks were tremendously rewarding. Besides familiarizing me with the topography, it gave me a deep appreciation of the hardships encountered on the trail by the stampedeers in the gold rush.

A number of persons have assisted in the preparation of this report. Particular thanks are due Merrill J. Mattes and Reed Jarvis of the Western Service Center, National Park Service, for guidance on sources of information and lists of persons to contact at Juneau and Skagway; personnel of the Western Service Center for taking my draft of the Historical Base Maps and turning them into works of art; Norman Hukill and Mr. and Mrs. George Rupuzzi of Skagway for sharing their knowledge of local lore with me; Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pollard of Swickley, Pennsylvania for their companionship on the Chilkoot Trail; John B. Maloney and Gary McLaughlin of the Yukon Territory, Department of Correction, for the hospitality extended me at Lake Lindeman; Mrs. Phyllis J. Nottingham, librarian at the Alaska Historical Society, for going out of her way to locate source materials and have them xeroxed; Elmer Parker, Virgil Baugh, Sara Jackson, Linda Crabtree, and Robert Kvasnicka of the National Archives were helpful in suggesting and locating unpublished documents.

To Frank Sarles I wish to extend thanks for proofreading the final draft, and to three persons for assistance above and beyond the call of duty I wish to extend special recognition: they are Henry Judd, Roy E. Appleman, and Lucy Pope Wheeler. Historical Architect Judd photographed and evaluated structures in the proposed Skagway Historic District; Roy Appleman encouraged me to hike the trails, then read the manuscript and made a number of suggestions calculated to strengthen the final product; and as always, Mrs. Wheeler, besides taking charge of the typing, read the manuscript with a critical and talented eye, and made many beneficial

suggestions. With the completion of the subject manuscript, Mrs. Wheeler is leaving our Office to take a professional editorial position with Historic American Buildings Survey; it is, therefore, with deep regret that I see her go, and a pleasant, professional relationship dating to 1966, terminated.

E. C. B.

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I. THE FIRST PROSPECTORS CROSS CHILKOOT PASS

A. The Geographic Setting

The Yukon, one of the mighty rivers of the world, was nearly unknown to the public until 1897. In that year, with news of the fabulous gold strike on the Klondike making headlines, persons throughout the western world rushed to atlases to determine its whereabouts. Unless these sources had been published within the last decade, they were purposely vague as to the Yukon's course. The reason for this situation was simple. Because of its location and geographic setting, it was the mid-1830s before the Yukon was visited by Russian explorers.¹ Between 1842 and 1844, Lt. Lavrentiy A. Zagoskin, along with five companions, explored and mapped the Yukon to above the mouth of the Koyukuk. While Zagoskin was deeply interested in the geography, geology, and ecology of the region, no gold was found.

Traders from the Hudson's Bay Company had also reached the Yukon from the Mackenzie River by way of the Porcupine. Alexander J. Murray in 1847 had established Fort Yukon at the mouth of the Porcupine. The next year Robert Campbell erected Fort Selkirk, 600 miles farther upstream, where the Pelly joins the Yukon. Here the traders bought furs from the Nahane, or Stick Indians, of the interior and forwarded them to the factories by way of the chain of Hudson's Bay forts connecting with the Mackenzie River and Hudson Bay. The difficulty of getting supplies into Fort Selkirk caused the Hudson's Bay Company to question its utility.

Before a decision could be reached as to its possible abandonment, the Indians of the coast, the Chilkoot and Chilkat, who had heretofore monopolized trade with the Nahane, became embittered. Besides being bold warriors, they were great "grease-traders" and middlemen. Two "grease trails" led inland from Dyea and Chilkat inlets, and across the Coast Range to the Yukon Country, the home of the peaceful Stick of Athabaskan stock. The Stick were content to trap, and trade with the Chilkat and Chilkoot at great disadvantage, exchanging their pelts and horns for fish oil and sea products of the coast tribes and the goods which the latter secured from white traders. Russian, Boston, and Hudson's Bay Company traders had realized huge profits on the goods they bartered to the Chilkat and Chilkoot in exchange for furs, and they, in turn, made still greater profits in their dealings with the

¹ Andrey Glazunov, 1835-1836, and Vasilii Malakhov, 1838-1839, reconnoitered the lower reaches of the Yukon.

Stick. For the half century that Hudson's Bay Company ships regularly called at Chilkat Inlet, the traders never dealt directly with the Stick.

Not prepared to yield what they had won by might, a Chilkat and Chilkoot war party in 1850 crossed the mountains and descended the Yukon. Fort Selkirk was plundered, then burned. After this incident, the coastal tribes became more vigilant in maintaining their blockade of the passes.²

By 1861 Russian fur traders had pushed up the Yukon as far as the mouth of the Tanama, east of which the Hudson's Bay Company from Fort Yukon dominated the trade. In 1863 Russian Creole Ivan Lukin visited Fort Yukon. Although the British knew they were in Russian territory, they did not withdraw from Fort Yukon until 1869, two years after the United States purchased Alaska from the government of the Tsar.

These explorations, along with those made in the 1880s, enabled geographers to plot the Yukon and its principal tributaries. Maps showed the river heading on the north slope of the Coast Mountains, within 18 miles of tidewater, and then meandering north and west for several hundred miles through a chain of shallow lakes. On its course toward the northwest, the Yukon is joined by a number of large tributaries--the Teslin, Pelly White, Stewart, Klondike, and Fortymile rivers. Those joining the Yukon from the east drain the Pelly and Selwyn mountains, while those flowing in from the south have their heads in the St. Elias Range. The river, after crossing the 141st degree of longitude (the boundary between Alaska and Canada) continues its sweep toward the Arctic Circle. There it receives the waters of the Porcupine and changes course toward the southwest. It now leaves the mountains and flows through level country. On its sweep toward the sea, several more rivers, the Tanama and Koyukuk, mix their waters with the Yukon. The Yukon as it approaches the ocean, 2,000 miles from its source, spreads itself across a delta, and finally loses itself in Norton Sound, within 250 miles of Siberia.

B. The First Prospectors *****

Lonely prospectors, eager to find a new mother lode, in the 1870s began looking toward the northwestern fastnesses of the continent. Surely, they reasoned, somewhere in the vast and little-known Yukon

² John R. Swanton, *The Indian Tribes of North America* (Washington, 1952), p. 584; Eliza R. Scidmore, "The Northwest Passes to the Yukon," *National Geographic Magazine*, April 1898, pp. 105-107.

Basin were placers that could make them wealthy. The first gold-seekers approached the grim and isolated Basin from three directions.

Arthur Harper, in 1872, with five companions descended the Peace River in canoes. A veteran of the Fraser River and Cariboo stampedes, Harper theorized that similar diggings must be located in the mountain chain that swept on toward the Arctic. After reaching Great Slave Lake, the prospectors pushed down the mighty Mackenzie. The Mackenzie and Richardson mountains were reconnoitered, and finally in 1873 Harper crossed the backbone separating the watersheds of the Mackenzie and Yukon and struck the latter river, where it sweeps to the north of the Arctic Circle. Harper was to remain on the Yukon for the next quarter century, but the sought-for gold eluded him.³

The first prospector, and possibly the first white man, to enter the Yukon Basin from tidewater at the head of Lynn Canal was George Holt. He breached the mountainous barrier by climbing Chilkoot Pass. To scale the pass with its scree- and boulder-strewn, 35-degree slope, Holt had either to mollify or outwit the warlike Chilkoot, who guarded this route and monopolized trade with the Indians of the interior. Accompanied by several Indians, Holt reached the headwaters of the Lewes. He then pushed on to the lower end of Lake Marsh, and then walked the Indian Trail to Teslin-too, returning to the coast via the same route. On his return, he reported the discovery of "coarse gold," but none of the miners who afterwards prospected this region were able to confirm his claim.

Although the *Pacific Coast Pilot for Alaska* published in 1883 gives the date of Holt's crossing of Chilkoot as 1875, Commissioner William Ogilvie believed, after talking to people who knew him, that his trip was in 1878.⁴

Four years after Holt had crossed Chilkoot, Ed Schieffelin, who had struck it rich in Arizona, prepared to start for the Yukon. He

³ Pierre Berton, *The Yukon Fever: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush* (New York, 1958), pp. 7-8. Harper died of tuberculosis in Arizona, in 1897, as the great stampede to the Klondike was getting under way.

⁴ *The Yukon Territory . . .*, compiled by F. Mortimer Trimmer (London 1898), pp. 376-377; *Pacific Coast Pilot-Alaska, United States Coast and Geodetic Survey*, 2 vols. (Washington, 1883), 1, 200, 278; Scidmore, "The Northwest Passes to the Yukon," *National Geographic Magazine*, April 1898, p. 108, Holt was killed by Indians several years later on the Chettyna.

had a theory that a "great mineral belt" girdled the Western Hemisphere from Tierra del Fuego to the Bering Strait. If this belt followed the continental divide, it would parallel the Yukon to the north. Schieffelin in the spring of 1883 was at St. Michael, Alaska, with a small steamboat. In this craft he and his company ascended the Yukon for a thousand miles. The Lower Ramparts were prospected. No colors were found, and Schieffelin, becoming disenchanted with the mosquitoes and the country, returned to Arizona.⁵

C. Commander Beardslee Opens Chilkoot Pass to Prospectors

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A dispute among the Chilkat in the late summer of 1879 gave a United States naval officer an opportunity to break the stranglehold they and the Chilkoot maintained on the passes leading from tidewater into the Yukon Basin. In September word reached Sitka that there had been a brawl at a potlatch in the Chilkat Country, and the leader of the Klockwatory clan, Klotz-Kutch, had been seriously injured. The senior American officer at Sitka at this time was Comdr. Lester A. Beardslee. Here was a situation on which Beardslee hoped to capitalize. He called for Dick, one of his Indian police, and placed him in charge of 30 Tlingit, with orders to proceed to Lynn Canal and restore order. He was to explain to Klotz-Klutch that the Tlingit had been sent to keep the peace. In return Beardslee expected the chief to employ his "influence to secure good treatment to any white men who should come to his country to trade." Moreover, the United States would be pleased if he would let white miners go into the "interior to prospect the country for precious metals, which, if found, would enrich the Indians."<sup>6</sup>

These privileges had never been accorded to the whites by the warlike Chilkat and Chilkoot, because they feared the whiteman would interfere with their monopoly of trade with the redmen of the Yukon Basin. Now with stories being told in the Sitka saloons by Holt of untapped mineral wealth beyond the mountain passes, Beardslee feared that unless the Chilkat and Chilkoot agreed to end their blockade, gold-hungry prospectors would force their way across and there would be war.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>6</sup> "Report of Captain Lester A. Beardslee, U.S. Navy, Relative to Affairs in Alaska and the Operations of the *U.S.S. Jamestown*, under his command, while in the Waters of that Territory," found in *Executive Document*, No. 71, 1st Session, 47th Congress (Washington, 1882), pp. 59-60. Cited hereinafter as *Beardslee's Report*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.



On February 12, 1880, Dick and most of his men returned from Lynn Canal. They brought an invitation from Klotz-Kutch "for the white miners to come, and promises of welcome." Beardslee relayed this news to a number of prospectors currently holed up in Sitka to escape the heavy snows on Baranof Island. A number of the miners were ready to undertake an expedition into the interior. The project was discussed, meetings held, and an expedition organized. Several boats were built. By May 1, the party was ready to sail.<sup>8</sup>

On the evening of May 11 a public meeting was held, and an understanding between the miners and Commander Beardslee reached. The prospectors, 19 in number, agreed to proceed up Chatham Strait and to go ashore at Chilkat. They would obey the orders of their leader, Capt. Edward Bean, and not transport any spirituous liquor into the Indian Country to barter with the natives. Beardslee, on the government's part, agreed to provide them with an escort and letters of introduction. Lt. E. P. McClellan was placed in charge of the escort.

The expedition sailed from Sitka on May 20. There were five boats: McClellan's launch armed with a Gatling gun, and four boats with the prospectors and their gear. The convoy reached Pyramid Harbor on the 26th. Here the launch anchored, while McClellan sent an officer ashore to arrange an interview with the village headmen. Accompanied by several of his officers and seven miners, McClellan on the 27th landed and met Klotz-Kutch, Elquesah, and Unacoa. After they exchanged greetings, McClellan, employing Dick as interpreter, read aloud Beardslee's letter. He then explained the advantages that would accrue to them if they welcomed the prospectors.

Klotz-Kutch answered that "he had lost father, grandfather, and brothers, and was an orphan, and therefore he gladly welcomed the white people, for they would be fathers and brothers to him." Two other Indians now walked up. Rakee and Tawawah were headmen of the lower villages. McClellan repeated what he had said, and "told them the miners had come by invitation and they must treat them as guests." They said they were glad the whites had come.

Captain Bean offered to hire the Indians at good wages as packers. An agreement was reached whereby the redmen were to pack some of the outfits across to Chilkat Inlet, instead of up the Chilkat River and across the rugged Coast Mountains. Having finished his business with the Chilkat, McClellan said goodbye to

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

the prospectors and wished them good luck. He reboarded the launch, preparatory to returning to Sitka.<sup>9</sup>

Several weeks after McClellan's return to headquarters, Commander Beardslee received a letter from Captain Bean. It was "dated from the headwaters of Yukon, June 17th," and was brought to Sitka by an Indian doctor. Bean reported his party, now numbering 25, had crossed Chilkoot Pass, and were camped on a lake, "building boats preparatory to descending the Yukon." So far they had received good treatment and service from their Indian packers.<sup>10</sup>

Early in August one of the prospectors returned to Sitka with the word that the Chilkat and Chilkoot had been angered to learn that two men (Steele and Hilton), not original members of the company and not bound by the pledge given by the others, were trading with the Indians of the interior. These men, however, had been with the company long enough to be identified with it, and the redmen had accused the whites of bad faith. He also had a message for Beardslee from Klotz-Kutch begging that either he come in person or send a subordinate to take these men away or they might be killed.<sup>11</sup>

Beardslee accordingly sailed for Lynn Canal on August 14, 1880, aboard the steamer *Favorite*. The vessel was armed with a howitzer and Gatling gun, and rifles for the crew. At 6 p.m., on the 23d, the ship anchored in William Henry Bay, and Commander Beardslee and an armed party went ashore at the trading house managed by George Dickenson. Their arrival was opportune, because the Chilkat and Chilkoot were again at each others' throats. Immediately after order was restored, one of the two men, R. Steele, accused of trading with the Indians of the Yukon Basin showed up. When questioned about his activities by Beardslee, Steele swore that there was no truth to these tales. He failed, however, to satisfy the naval officer as to his innocence, but Beardslee, lacking any evidence to the contrary, dropped the subject.

That evening Beardslee met with the chiefs and headmen, and resolved the difficulties between Steele and the Chilkat. The next day Beardslee, after demonstrating the firepower of his Gatling gun, prevailed on the Chilkat and Chilkoot to settle their differences. He then returned to Sitka by way of Yakutat Bay.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., pp. 63-64.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 65; *The Yukon Territory*, pp. 376-377; *Pacific Coast Pilot*, 1, 377. The lake where the boats were built was subsequently named Lake Lindeman.

<sup>11</sup> *Beardslee's Report*, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 69-74.

Meanwhile, Captain Bean and his prospectors had cast off on July 4, 1880, and descending the chain of lakes gained the Yukon. The Teslin (Hootalinqua) was reached and prospected for some distance. No encouraging colors were found, though years later Steele told Commissioner William Ogilvie that he prospected bars in a small stream flowing into the Lewes 15 miles above the canyon that yielded \$2.50 per day.<sup>13</sup>

In 1881 four prospectors, including G. Langtry and P. McGlinchey, crossed Chilkoot. These men penetrated as far as the Big Salmon River, which they ascended for a considerable distance. Some gold was found, which has been characterized as the first paying placers in the district. The next year, 1882, a number of miners entered the Yukon by way of Chilkoot Pass, and one group probably ascended the Pelly to Hoole Canyon.<sup>14</sup> The coastal Indians by this time had learned that the packing of miners' supplies was more profitable than exploiting the diminishing fur trade. Lifting the blockade, they established high rates for packing.

#### D. Comments and Recommendations

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In the period 1872-1883 prospectors were beginning to filter into the Yukon Basin. It is interesting to observe that even during these years they came from three directions, just as they would in the great stampede of 1897-1898. Especially significant were the actions of Commander Beardslee in prevailing on the Chilkat and Chilkoot to relax their blockade of Chilkoot Pass. If Beardslee had been less diplomatic and unable to exploit the Indian feuds, the breaching of the barrier might have resulted in bloodshed. These aspects of the Klondike story should be interpreted in the Visitor Center.

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<sup>13</sup> *The Yukon Territory*, p. 377; Scidmore, "The Northwest Passes to the Yukon," *National Geographic Magazine*, April 1898, p. 120. Bean's company was trailed by two miners, Johnny Mackenzie and Slim Jim, who reached the lake (Lindeman) on July 3. Other parties may have entered the Yukon Basin in 1880. While en route over the mountains, Bean and his men encountered James Wynn coming out, and by him were warned of dangerous rapids below Marsh Lake. Wynn had crossed the mountains in 1879.

<sup>14</sup> *The Yukon Territory*, p. 378; Scidmore, "The Northwest Passes to the Yukon," *National Geographic Magazine*, April 1898, p. 120.



## II. CHILKOOT PASS IS SURVEYED AND WHITE PASS RECONNOITERED

### A. Arthur Krause Crosses Chilkoot Pass

Two years after Captain Bean's company had crossed Chilkoot Pass, the Geographical Society of Bremen, Germany, sent Anthropologists Arthur and Aurel Krause to the Chukotsk Peninsula of Siberia to study the native culture. After they had completed their project there, the Northwest Trading Company invited them to visit its Chilkat post on the Alaskan panhandle. They arrived on Christmas 1881 and undertook an intensive study of the Tlingit Indians. Aurel returned to Germany in April, but his brother remained through the summer and twice penetrated into Canada.

Accompanied by two Chilkat, Arthur Krause left Pyramid Harbor by canoe in late May 1882. They paddled up Lynn Canal and landed on the Dyea Flats. Packing their gear on their backs, they pushed up the Chilkoot Trail, paralleling the Taiya River, to the summit of Chilkoot Pass. They crossed the pass on May 28, after "a steep climb under unfavorable snow conditions." A fast descent brought them to Crater Lake, "whose outlet flows into the Yukon." The chain of lakes leading to the northeast was still frozen, and Krause reconnoitered the area to a large lake, called Schutluch by the Chilkoot. As this body of water, subsequently named Lake Lindeman, was still sheeted with ice, Krause had to abandon his plans to study the Nahane or Stick Indians. On the marge of the lake, he encountered a company of American prospectors, who had preceded him across Chilkoot, and were building two boats in which to descend the Yukon.

On June 1, Krause and his Indians started back to the coast. Once again, the summit was crossed, and on June 5 they were back at the Northwest Trading Company post. Although the Coast Range had been crossed previously by prospectors, Arthur Krause was the first scientific explorer to travel the Chilkoot Trail.<sup>1</sup> On a second trip, Krause ascended the Chilkat River, crossed the pass, and after sighting Kusawa Lake, retraced his steps.<sup>2</sup> Soon thereafter, he left the area and returned to Germany, where in 1883 he published a monograph about the Chilkat.

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<sup>1</sup> Arthur Krause, "Das Chilcat-Gebiet in Alaska," *Zeitschrift der Gesellschaft für Erdkunde zu Berlin*, 18 (1883), 344-368; Erna Gunther, "Introduction," in Aurel Krause, *The Tlingit Indians*, translated by E. Gunther (Seattle, 1956), p. iii; Morgan B. Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska, 1865-1900* (New Haven, 1965), pp. 82-83.

<sup>2</sup> Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska*, p. 83.

## B. Lieutenant Schwatka's Summer in Alaska

### 1. General Miles Plans an Expedition

Brig. Gen. Nelson A. Miles in 1883 commanded the Department of the Columbia, with headquarters at Vancouver Barracks, Washington Territory. Miles, unlike certain of his superiors, believed that the United States Army should be in the vanguard of Alaskan exploration. He refused to accept the fact that "according to the official maps, orders, and army register," Alaska was not the responsibility of his department. Neither did he overlook the lack of knowledge regarding Alaska's interior and its flora and fauna. Every move he initiated to secure information on the territory was motivated by the challenge of the Indian menace and an unexplored wilderness. As Morgan Sherwood has written, Miles "typified the classic situation leading to army dominance in the Trans-Mississippi, brought into play when the wilderness Indian was rapidly disappearing in the States, when specialized civilian scientific bureaus were rising to assume hegemony in western exploration." Miles' desire to explore the interior of Alaska encountered the opposition of a Congress reluctant to spend public funds in a region that supported almost no whites. Vociferous proponents of civilian as opposed to military science were arrayed against him, as were rival ambitions of scientific bureaus and military agencies. The deliberate obstructionism of the War Department and his army superiors likewise failed to dampen his ardor.

Miles' struggle began in 1881, when he recommended a special appropriation of \$68,000 to explore Alaska. A bill was introduced in the Senate but failed to become law. In 1882, in face of difficulties imposed by his immediate superior, he visited southeastern Alaska. Alaska, at this time, had no civil government. Since 1877, when the army ended its occupation, Treasury Department revenue cutters had policed the western and northern coasts, and the navy watched the southeast coast with a man-of-war at Sitka.

This trip reinforced Miles' determination to learn more about the region. In April 1883 he ordered 1st Lt. Frederick Schwatka, currently acting as his aide at Vancouver Barracks, to Alaska.<sup>3</sup> Born in Illinois, Schwatka had worked as a printer and had attended Willamette University in Oregon. He graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1871. Schwatka's wanderlust was both intellectual and geographical. While serving at different army posts, he studied law and medicine, and was admitted to the Nebraska bar and received a medical degree from New York's Bellevue

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<sup>3</sup> Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska*, pp. 98-99.

Hospital Medical College. In 1879-1880 he led a search in the Canadian Arctic for evidence of the long-lost Sir John Franklin expedition. Schwatka's journey received considerable publicity and won for him a reputation as an Arctic explorer.<sup>4</sup>

Because of opposition to the venture inside as well as outside the army, the expedition was financed by the Department of the Columbia. Schwatka was warned to exercise "strict economy," and to "consider this duty especial and confidential." The little expedition, Schwatka recalled, "stole away like a thief in the night with less money than was afterward spent to publish its report."<sup>5</sup>

## 2. Schwatka Goes to Alaska

Lieutenant Schwatka and six men sailed for Alaska from Portland, Oregon, on May 22, 1883, aboard the fleet-coaler *Victoria*.<sup>6</sup> As the ship headed down the Columbia and prepared to enter the Pacific, Schwatka reviewed the orders issued by General Miles constituting "the Alaska Military Reconnaissance of 1883." The general, disturbed by frequent reports of clashes between the whites and Indians, feared that war could result. He wanted Schwatka to proceed to Alaska to secure "all information that can be obtained that would be valuable and important" to the War Department.<sup>7</sup>

Schwatka was to ascertain the number, character, and disposition of the Indians; their relations with each other; their feeling toward the Russian Government; and their attitude toward the United States. Their way of life was to be studied, along with their method of communicating between regions. He was to observe and take note of the kind of weapons carried and how they had been secured. He was to study the terrain, and make recommendations as

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 100.

<sup>6</sup> *The Executive Documents of the Senate of the United States for the 2d Session of the 48th Congress and the Special Session of the Senate Convened, March 4, 1885, 1* (Washington, 1885), Series 2261, "Report of Military Reconnaissance in Alaska, made in 1883, by Frederick Schwatka, 1st Lt., 3d Cavalry," p. 3. (Cited hereinafter as *Schwatka's Report*.) The men who accompanied Schwatka were: Asst. Surg. George F. Wilson, Topographical Assistant Charles A. Homan, Sergt. Charles Gloster, Cpl. William H. Shircliff, Pvt. John Roth, and J. B. McIntosh, a citizen.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 119-120. The only hint of hostility in Alaska had been word of Chilkat and Chilkoot discontent over the threat to their monopoly of trade routes across the Coast Range into the Yukon.

to the best means of employing and sustaining a military force in the territory, if the occasion should arise. He would make "especial inquiry as to the kind and extent of the native grasses" capable of subsisting horses and mules, and the character of the climate, "especially inland, the severity of the winters, and any other information that would be important to the military service."

The Indians were to be assured that the United States looked upon them as friends, and in "no case" would the patrol penetrate a region where there was danger of provoking hostilities. Schwatka was to view the mission as confidential, and he would forward to General Miles his reports, maps, and field notes.<sup>8</sup>

En route up the Inland Passage, the ship stopped at a number of points to discharge and take cargo. June 2 found *Victoria* anchored in Pyramid Harbor. Here Lieutenant Schwatka found two recently erected salmon canneries. The explorers disembarked at the large cannery of the Northwest Trading Company, where they were welcomed by Superintendent Carl Spuhn.

His instructions directed him to complete the reconnaissance of one region before proceeding to another, so Lieutenant Schwatka decided to explore the Yukon Valley first, as he deemed it the most important district in Alaska. Moreover, it was largely unexplored in a military sense. The difficulties to be encountered in ascending the mighty Yukon from its mouth were well-known, consequently Schwatka determined to descend it from its source. Strange as it seems, he was not troubled by the thought that his patrol would be crossing hundreds of miles of Canadian territory, without first seeking permission through the State Department. He knew there were several passes through the Coast Range providing access from tidewater to the headwaters of the Yukon. It was known that Byrnes, a prospector, employed by the Western Union Telegraph Company in 1867 had reconnoitered the Taku River.<sup>9</sup> Schwatka was familiar with the explorations of Krause. He knew that Krause in 1882 had reconnoitered the trails ascending the Chilkat and Taiya valleys and had reached the headwaters of the Yukon.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Miles to Schwatka, April 7, 1883, found in *ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12. The success of the Atlantic cable had caused the Western Union Telegraph Company to abandon its plans for a telegraph to connect the Western and Eastern Hemispheres by way of Bering Strait.

<sup>10</sup> *Proceedings of the Bremen Geographical Society for 1882.*



The Chilkat told Schwatka that it took about 12 days to make the Chilkat-Takhini portage. But once on the Takhini, they said, no important falls or rapids were encountered this side of the Yukon. There was also a trail leading from the headwaters of the Chilkat to Yukatat Bay that took 15 to 18 days to travel. These two trails were the only ones used by the Chilkat in their travels to and from the interior.<sup>11</sup>

According to the Chilkat, the Chilkoot Trail ascended the Taiya River to its source and crossed the Coast Range to one of the sources of the Yukon. The portage between tidewater and a navigable tributary of the Yukon reportedly required three or four days. Several canyons, rapids, and cascades were said to obstruct the river below the head of navigation. Lieutenant Schwatka, after considerable thought on the subject, determined to reach the Yukon by way of the Chilkoot Trail.

Superintendent Spuhn briefed Schwatka on the recent history of this route. Until 1880 and the intervention of Commander Beardslee, the Chilkoot had refused to permit the Stick Indians of the interior to cross the pass with furs and trade goods, as they monopolized the packing trade for their own profit. Small numbers of prospectors had followed the route pioneered in 1878 by George Holt. As yet, none of them had struck it rich.<sup>12</sup>

Schwatka learned from Spuhn that the Chilkat and Chilkoot packers were accustomed to carrying 100 pounds. A miner boasted to Schwatka that he had employed one that carried 160 pounds. The established fee for transporting a 100-pound pack over the Chilkoot Trail was from \$9 to \$12. The Indians were not about to give the army cut rates, despite the large quantity of supplies needed, about two tons. Superintendent Spuhn unsuccessfully sought to assist Schwatka in bargaining with the natives. But after he had crossed the pass, Schwatka was compelled to admit that he "in no way blamed the Indians for their stubbornness in maintaining what seemed at first to be exorbitant, and only wondered that they would do this extremely fatiguing labor so reasonably."<sup>13</sup>

### 3. Across Chilkoot Pass

There was a delay at Pyramid Harbor necessitated by the death of the chief of the Crow clan. Several days were spent by the Chilkat in preparing for the funeral. After the body was burned on a pyre, the explorers left Pyramid Harbor in a large skiff and nine or ten canoes towed by the Northwest Trading Company's launch *Louise*. The skiff transported the equipment, while 40 to 45 Indians,

<sup>11</sup> *Schwatka's Report*, p. 13. <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

who had been engaged as packers, rode in the canoes. Rounding Point Seduction, the convoy turned into Chilkoot Inlet. A brief stop was made at Haines Mission.<sup>14</sup>

At Haines Mission the expedition was reinforced by four or five more canoes, manned by 20 Chilkoot, and at 2:15 p.m. *Louise* cast off. Shortly afterwards, the fleet sailed into Taiya Inlet, and at 6 p.m. the head of the inlet, at the mouth of Taiya River, was reached. The gear and supplies were lightered ashore, and *Louise* returned to Pyramid Harbor.

Lieutenant Schwatka, seeing that there were extensive tidal flats at the head of the inlet, had the equipment embarked in canoes and taken up the Taiya River about one mile. Here they were landed, and a camp established a short distance below a village belonging to the Stick.<sup>15</sup>

When he reconnoitered the area, Schwatka saw that Taiya Valley was about one-half to three-quarters of a mile across, and bounded by steep mountains rising to a height of over 5,000 feet. The river bed and valley were filled with "great bars of boulders, sand and coarse gravel, with here and there groves of poplars, willows of several varieties, and birch." The Taiya River was swift, averaging from 30 to 75 yards in width, to the head of canoe navigation at a cascade eight miles from its mouth. It frequently divided into channels, and there were places where it could be forded.

The journey across the Coast Mountains to the head of navigation would be made in stages. Most of the expedition's gear was "tracked" in canoes from Camp No. 1 to the cascade, six miles up the Taiya. Indians not having canoes were "compelled to at once commence carrying their loads upon their backs, their ungenerous companions not allowing them the use of their canoes." Moreover, several of them even refused to ferry their loads across the stream, thus compelling the packer to find a ford, or to scramble over a rugged spur. In cases of sickness of companions, they demanded a share of his pay for any help given. Unlike the Chilkoot and the Chilkat, the Stick Indians cheerfully assisted one another.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 14. Lieutenant Schwatka had walked across the isthmus separating Chilkat and Chilkoot inlets. The area was wooded, while the grass bounding the trail was four to five feet in height. The "innumerable flowers in bloom looked very much unlike the general idea of Alaska, until the mountains that surround these little valleys were brought in view with their tops and gulches buried in snow and glacier ice."

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. Several Stick Indians were employed by Schwatka as packers.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 15-16. Camp No. 2 was located one mile below the cas-

To avoid having to wade the frigid Taiya, the whites called on the extra packers to carry them across on their shoulders, their "legs being more used to the ice-water just from the glacier beds on the hill-tops." After stopping for the night, most of the Indians fell to gambling "at a game called la-hell, in which there was a free interchange of dirty clothing and prospective wealth accruing from this particular trip." Their "orgies and rude savage songs" often lasted past midnight.<sup>17</sup>

About two and one-half miles above the head of navigation, the explorers reached the confluence of Nourse River with the Taiya. The Nourse, which came in from the west, headed in a picturesque alpine valley. A short distance above the mouth of the Nourse, Camp No. 3 was pitched near some perpendicular blocks of basalt rock, and in view of Mount Hoffman Glacier. (During the Klondike Gold Rush, Canyon City was located at the site of Camp No. 3.) So far, the trip up from tidewater had been easy. Satisfied that this was an indication of what was ahead, Schwatka concluded that his packers' high charges were "exorbitant and the portage very easy to be made."<sup>18</sup>

The party moved out on June 10, 1883, at 7:30 a.m. The trail now left the head of Taiya Valley, ascended the narrow canyon, and passed over the spurs east of Taiya River. Occasionally, the path would debouch into the stream-bed, wherever it was wide enough to provide a mile or two of walking and wading, and then strike back over the mountain sides. At places, it would be easy for an inexperienced traveler to lose the trail, where it passed for long distances over "great winrows and avalanches of broken boulders and shattered stones varying in size from a person's head to the size of a small house." Willows and birches embedded in "the boulder barricades" warned travelers to be on the watch for avalanches.

It took the explorers 12 hours to cover the six miles between the mouth of the canyon and Stonehouse, where they camped for the night. The Stonehouse was a jumbled mass of huge boulders, "so thrown together that the natives" could crawl "under them and find sleeping places without being in contact with the snow." The distance traveled on June 10, Schwatka likened to 30 miles over an ordinary road. The final quarter of a mile was across snow banks.<sup>19</sup>

Soon after halting, the Indians sighted a mountain goat on Mount Hoffman to the west. Although the goat was several thousand feet above them, one of the packers started after it. He passed around

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cade at the head of navigation.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-17.

the goat, but as he stalked the game, the animal became startled and moved off. The packer then gave chase, pursuing down past the house, and up the steep eastern slope. This incident caused Lieutenant Schwatka to credit the Indians with superhuman endurance.<sup>20</sup>

Schwatka had his men up and on the trail by 5 a.m. on June 11. So steep was the grade that five hours were required to reach the summit of Chilkoot Pass, which Schwatka estimated at 4,100 feet above sea level. He reported that in two miles, the party climbed 3,100 feet. Once again, he marveled at his packers. Not averaging more than 140 pounds, they had carried 100 pounds up "a precipitous mountain, alternately on steeply inclined glacial snow and treacherous rounded boulders, where a misstep . . . could have hurled them hundreds of feet down the slope or precipices." To make their way, they grasped at stunted branches of trailing vines and roots. In places, they had to scramble on hands and knees. They used crude alpenstocks, cut in the Taiya Valley, to steady themselves in dangerous places.<sup>21</sup>

#### 4. Down the Yukon to St. Michael

After leaving the summit, called Perrier Pass by Schwatka, the explorers descended to Crater Lake. The Indians told the whites that this lake was where the Yukon headed. Although it was June 11, Crater Lake was frozen over and the ice covered with snow. Pushing on, the party made camp at 7 p.m. on a beautiful Alpine lake, which Schwatka called Lake Lindeman in honor of Dr. Lindemann, the Secretary of the Bremen Geographical Society. Fifteen miles, about eight of which were over the snow, had been traveled since daybreak. In places before reaching Lake Lindeman, snow bridges over the stream flowing out of Crater Lake had tumbled, revealing perpendicular banks of snow, some of which were as much as 25 feet high.<sup>22</sup>

Schwatka now paid off most of his packers. Many of them returned that night to the Stonehouse, because at this latitude, at this season, it was light enough at midnight to follow the trail.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 18. The summit of Chilkoot Pass is about 3,600 feet above sea level, not 4,100 as estimated by Schwatka. The difference in elevation between the Stonehouse and the summit is about 1,400 feet, not 3,100 as reported by the lieutenant.

<sup>22</sup> Frederick Schwatka, *A Summer in Alaska* (St. Louis, 1894), p. 90. Usage has corrupted the spelling of the name, as Lake Lindeman is the accepted geographic name.

<sup>23</sup> *Schwatka's Report*, p. 20.

On June 13, 1883, the party began the construction of a raft about 15 by 40 feet, with decks built up fore and aft. Spaces were left at the ends for bow and stern oars. The means of locomotion, besides the current, were side oars and a sail fashioned from a wall tent. The craft, christened *Resolute*, drew 20 inches of water. On the 16th the explorers cast off and shot the rapids on the stream leading into the next lake, named by Schwatka Lake Bennett, to honor James Gordon Bennett of the *New York Herald*.

*Resolute* navigated the Miles Canyon rapids on July 2 with only minor damage. She carried the explorers down the Yukon and its tributaries to Nukluklayet by August 6, a trip of about 1,300 miles. At Nukluklayet, Schwatka secured a small-decked schooner to transport the group to Anvik, where the Alaska Commercial Company steamer *Yukon* took the schooner in tow to St. Michael. Passage was secured there on August 30 for San Francisco aboard the schooner *Leo*.<sup>24</sup>

Canadian authorities were understandably disturbed to learn that Lieutenant Schwatka, without first securing permission, had reconnoitered territory belonging to the British Empire. To add insult to injury, Schwatka had named a number of geographic features over which the United States had no jurisdiction. Despite opposition, many of these place names came to be accepted.<sup>25</sup>

##### 5. Comments and Recommendations

Although Schwatka used the expedition to promote himself and the publication of a book *Exploring the Great Yukon* descriptive of his experiences, it helped focus the attention of many Americans on Alaska and the Yukon. The long-range significance of Schwatka's reconnaissance was that it provided the first survey of one of the principal routes followed by the Klondike stampeders in 1897 and 1898.

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<sup>24</sup> Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska*, pp. 100-101. Miles Canyon was named by Schwatka in honor of his immediate superior and sponsor of the expedition, General Miles.

<sup>25</sup> Schwatka had named Chilkoot Pass, Perrier Pass for Col. J. Perrier of the French Geographical Society.

## C. Ogilvie Runs a Line Across Chilkoot Pass

### 1. Plans Are Made to Survey the Boundary

The first effort to survey the United States-Canadian boundary was made in 1887, and resulted in the next official reconnaissance of Chilkoot Pass and the discovery of White Pass. This survey was triggered by informal meetings between William Dall of the United States Geological Survey and George M. Dawson of the Canadian Geological Survey to discuss the problem of marking the international boundary. Dall and Dawson, like the State Department in Washington and the Ministry of External Affairs in Ottawa, differed on interpretation of applicable treaties insofar as they pertained to the Alaskan panhandle. Dawson felt any plan not allowing Canada access to the ocean would be unacceptable, while Dall held that such a cession was undesirable and not likely to be considered seriously in the United States.

The two scientists, however, were in general agreement on the methods to be employed in the establishment of a line. Dall, a partisan of civilian control, claimed that the entire line from Portland Inlet to the Chilkat could be run in two or three seasons by about four parties, for not more than \$125,000, provided the methods employed by the United States Geological Survey and the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, or the Canadian Geological Survey, were employed. If undertaken by military methods and personnel, he forecast, the work would take twice as long and cost at least half a million dollars.

Anglo-American interests had clashed at this time over the hunting of seals for furs in the Bering Sea. The seal question was more critical, and fears were voiced that the two controversies, combined, could cause a diplomatic break. In 1889, before the seal issue reached a critical phase, Congress responded to President Grover Cleveland's request for action, and passed an appropriation of \$20,000 for the boundary survey. Coast and Geodetic teams took the field.<sup>26</sup>

Canadian survey parties by this time were already in the field. By 1887 the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada were ready to move. Until the late 1880s, Canada had neglected the northwest. It was the expeditions of Krause and Schwatka that moved Dawson to urge an investigation of the region. The immediate necessity for exploratory work, however, arose from the increasing number of prospectors in the area.

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<sup>26</sup> Sherwood, *Exploration of Alaska*, pp. 136-137.

Thomas White, Canada's Minister of the Interior, in 1887 authorized the organization of an expedition to explore the region of the Northwest Territories drained by the Yukon River. George Dawson would be in charge of the threefold undertaking. He and J. McEvoy were to run a line from the Cassiar District in northern British Columbia, via the Dease, upper Liard, and Frances rivers to the source of the Pelly, and down that stream to the Yukon. R. G. McConnell would survey the Stikine and lower Liard, while a third group led by William Ogilvie was charged with running a traverse from Pyramid Island in Chilkat Inlet, over Chilkoot Pass, and to make "as definite a location as possible of the 141st Meridian on the Yukon River." This was the first direct attempt to fix with any degree of precision the boundary line. At this time, 1887, the only reliable knowledge of the upper reaches of the Yukon available were Schwatka's reports and maps.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. Ogilvie Reaches Lynn Canal

William Ogilvie was destined to spend many years on the Yukon, and this was the first of many important assignments that he was to discharge to the satisfaction of both his superiors and the public. He and his party reached Haines Mission from Victoria, by way of Juneau, aboard the sidewheel steamer *Ancon*, May 24. There he received bad news. He was told there had been trouble between the Indians and prospectors at the mouth of Stewart River. Four Indians and two whites had been killed. Infuriated, the Sticks were said to have taken position commanding Miles Canyon, prepared to harass all whites en route to the Yukon. Ogilvie sought to question the miner who had told this story, but he was told that he had gone on to Juneau.

Subsequently, Ogilvie learned that the prospector in question had had difficulty with his fellow miners and had been ordered in mid-winter to leave the region. This was considered the equivalent of a death sentence. He, however, successfully challenged the elements, and, starting in February, reached the coast in May.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> William Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon and The Story of its Gold Fields* (Ottawa, 1913), pp. 36-37; George Dawson, "Historical Notes on Events in the Yukon District, Northwest Territories," *Review of Historical Publications Relating to Canada*, 2 (1897), pp. 182-183; Dawson, "Report of an Exploration in the Yukon District," p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> William Ogilvie, *The Klondike Official Guide: Canada's Great Gold Field, The Yukon District* (Buffalo, 1898), pp. 10, 14.

For 72 hours following the landing at Chilkat, the rain poured down. Ogilvie and his people took advantage of this situation to get their instruments, baggage, and provisions ready for the trip to the head of Taiya Inlet. The gear was loaded into two boats, rented from a trader, and towed the 20 miles to the head of the inlet by the United States gunboat *Pinta*.<sup>29</sup>

Ogilvie saw that Taiya Inlet had been formed by glacial action. Its sides were steep and smooth which, along with the prevailing landward blowing wind, made it very difficult to get ashore at Dyea, as the Indian village at that point was called. Here they found 138 Indians and three whites--two men and one woman. The whites were Capt. and Mrs. John J. Healy and George Dickson. Captain Healy, a fabulous character with a colorful career as boss of one of the whiskey forts on the Montana-Canadian border and sheriff of Chouteau Country, had gone into business with Dickson and had established a trading post at Dyea. They were engaged in the Indian trade and supplied miners bound across Chilkoot Pass. As such, they had considerable influence with the Chilkoot and Chilkat.

Preparations were now made for getting the supplies and instruments over the Coast Mountains to the head of Lake Lindeman. Comdr. J. S. Newell of *Pinta* assisted Ogilvie in his negotiations with the Chilkoot. The naval officer sought to get the natives to be reasonable in their demands, but they refused to pack to the lake for less than \$20 per hundred pounds. Having learned that the expedition was sponsored by the Canadian government, the second ranking chief of the Chilkoot invoked "some memories of an old quarrel which the tribe had with the English many years ago, in which an uncle of his was killed." He accordingly argued that the surveyors should pay for his uncle's death "by being charged an exorbitant price for . . . packing."

Commander Newell explained to the Chilkoot that Ogilvie had permission from "the Great Father at Washington to pass through his country safely, that he would see that I did so, and if the Indians interfered . . . they would be punished." After much talk, the Chilkoot agreed to carry the gear across the summit for \$10 per hundredweight. Ogilvie considered he had made a bargain, as the route to and across the summit involved hard climbing.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 14-15.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., pp. 16-18; Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 39-40.



### 3. Ogilvie Surveys the Pass

On June 6, 1887, 120 Chilkoot packers--men, women, and children--were turned out and started for the summit. They were accompanied by two of Ogilvie's men to insure that the supplies were deposited at the agreed cache. Each carrier, when given his pack, was handed a ticket on which was inscribed its contents, its weight, and the sum the packer was to receive. They were cautioned that they would have to produce these certificates on delivering their packs. At the Crater Lake cache, as each pack was delivered, one of the surveyors receipted and returned the ticket.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, Ogilvie and the rest of his party commenced their survey. By the time the packers returned, the surveyors had reached the mouth of Taiya Canyon, eight miles above tidewater. The Indians entered camp early in the morning before Ogilvie was up, and for about "two hours there was quite a hubub." While paying them off, Ogilvie found that few of the Chilkoot "would give any Indian name, nearly all, after a little reflection, giving some common English name," such as Jack, Tom, Joe, Charley, etc. Some protested that they had lost their tickets. Three or four who had advanced this claim presented themselves again for payment, producing first the receipted ticket, afterwards the one they claimed to have lost, and demanding pay for both. They feigned surprise when caught in their duplicity.<sup>32</sup>

Proceeding up the Taiya, Ogilvie established a number of stations, from which he took the angles of elevation of the preceding stations. From these angles he was able to compute the elevation of Chilkoot Pass as 3,502 feet above sea level.<sup>33</sup> An aneroid was employed to compute the descent from the pass to Lake Lindeman. The lake, he found, had an elevation of 2,141. On the south side of Chilkoot Pass, the timber line, according to a barometer reading, was about 2,300 feet above sea level, while on the north side it was about 2,500 feet.<sup>34</sup> This difference he attributed to several factors: (a) the sun, because of the depth of the Alpine valley,

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<sup>31</sup> Ogilvie, *Klondike Official Guide*, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> To arrive at this figure, he had computed the elevation of the pass at 3,378 feet above the head of canoe navigation on the Taiya. To this figure he had added 124 feet, his estimate of the elevation of the head of navigation above tidewater.

<sup>34</sup> The timberline south of the pass is at 1,900 feet, rather than 2,300 feet as reported by Ogilvie.

penetrated its recesses only a few hours each day; (b) the prevailing winds, blowing up the pass, piled up huge snow drifts; and (c) the terrain north of the summit was more open and exposed to the sun. Vegetation also differed. South of the summit the timber was of a type peculiar to a coastal environment, while to the north it was similar to that found in the interior.<sup>35</sup>

#### 4. Captain Moore Reconnoiters White Pass

While at Juneau, Ogilvie had heard stories of a low pass from the head of Taiya Inlet to the headwaters of the Yukon. At the mouth of the Taiya, he had made inquiries regarding this pass and learned that there was such a feature. He was unsuccessful, however, in ascertaining its exact location. Moreover, preliminary reports indicated that the terrain in the Taiya Valley was so rugged that no road or railway could be constructed through it. What little he could learn of the other pass indicated that it was much lower, with the possibility that a wagon road could be opened.<sup>36</sup>

One of his party, Capt. William Moore, was anxious to see if he could pinpoint the elusive pass. The 65-year-old Moore had been born in Germany, and had cut his teeth sailing aboard North Sea schooners. He had arrived in New Orleans about 1842 and began operating towboats on the lower Mississippi. After service in the Mexican War, Moore spent the next 40 years in quest of gold. He had been in California in 1849, and then on to the Fraser, the Cariboo, and the Cassiars. Moore was called captain because he had operated a fleet of steamboats during the Cassiar stampede. But now he was down on his luck and broke. His home in Victoria had been foreclosed to satisfy his creditors.<sup>37</sup>

Ogilvie accordingly determined to send Captain Moore to search for this pass, provided he could get an Indian to accompany him. This would be difficult, because the Chilkoot denied knowledge of its existence. The Sticks, at the same time, were afraid to do anything contrary to the wishes of the Chilkoot. Finally, Ogilvie prevailed on Skookum Jim, a powerfully-built and handsome Stick, to go with Moore. Having been through the pass before, he was a valuable guide.

Captain Moore and Skookum Jim left Taiya Inlet and ascended the Skagway Valley to its head. They examined the pass, and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-20, 22.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>37</sup> Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 146-147.

struck northward and pinpointed Too-shi River, said to empty into Tagish Lake. The explorers failed to follow this river to its mouth, rejoining the main party at Lake Lindeman. After listening to Moore's report, Ogilvie named the new route "White Pass" in honor of Thomas White, under whose authority the expedition had been organized.<sup>38</sup> Captain Moore, who had had considerable experience in building roads in the Canadian Rockies, was of the opinion that a road could be opened across White Pass. If his estimate of the pass elevation, 2,500 feet, was correct, Ogilvie believed that a railroad could be carried through White Pass.<sup>39</sup>

As Ogilvie recalled, the White Pass route was never far from Captain Moore's mind during the two months that he remained with the party. "Every night . . . he would picture the tons of yellow dust yet to be found in the Yukon Valley. He decided then and there that Skagway would be the entry point to the gold field."<sup>40</sup>

#### 5. The Expedition Reaches Lake Lindeman

After completing the survey between Chilkoot Pass and Lake Lindeman, Ogilvie prepared to get the baggage moved forward. Of all the Indians who had served previously as packers, only four or five could be talked into packing down to the lake, although the pay offered was four dollars per hundredweight. After one trip down only two Chilkoot remained, and they in the hope of stealing something. One of them made off with a pair of boots, and he was shocked to discover that their value had been deducted from his pay.<sup>41</sup>

Ogilvie did not blame the Indians for not wanting to work, as the weather was atrocious. It rained or snowed most of the time. After the Indians left, he tried to move the gear with his men, but "it was slavish and unhealthy labour." One man, after the first trip, was felled with inflammatory rheumatism. Several of them were blinded by the snow. With the two sleds bought in Juneau they hauled down from the Crater Lake cache 3,000 pounds of supplies. With time beginning to run out, Ogilvie became desperate. It so happened that one of his employees was George W. Carmack, who was "married" to Kate, a sister of Skookum Jim. Both

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<sup>38</sup> Ogilvie, *The Klondike Official Guide*, pp. 20-21. Skookum meant strong, and Skookum Jim had, on one occasion, lugged 156 pounds of bacon over Chilkoot Pass.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 22-24.

<sup>41</sup> Ogilvie, *The Klondike Official Guide*, pp. 22-24.

of them were to be involved in a momentous discovery nine years later. Carmack, through Kate, possessed considerable influence among the Stick Indians. He was accordingly sent by Ogilvie to induce the Stick to serve as packers, at five dollars a hundred-weight.

The Stick were subservient to the Tlingit, who claimed an exclusive right to the packing trade between the coast and the Yukon Basin. When asked by Carmack to pack for the expedition, they feared to do so. After being ridiculed for their cowardice, and being assured that they had the "exclusive right" to all trade in their own country, north of the Coast Mountains, nine of them reported to Ogilvie. A few days later, some Chilkoot came over the pass and started to pack. Soon there was a sizeable working party.<sup>42</sup>

All supplies having been brought down to Lake Lindeman, the expedition employed their two Peterborough Canoes to shuttle their gear to the foot of the lake. As the stream between Lakes Lindeman and Bennett was too shallow for canoe navigation, the gear had to be portaged. While some of the men were thus employed, the rest of the party turned to building a boat to ferry the instruments and provisions down Lake Bennett and the Yukon to the vicinity of the international boundary, a distance of 700 miles. The boat was finished on July 11, and the next day the expedition shoved off.<sup>43</sup> Ogilvie and his men spent the winter of 1887-88 camped on the Yukon, near the 141st meridian, where they established an observatory.

#### D. Comments and Recommendations

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Ogilvie's expedition had much greater significance to the Klondike story than Schwatka's reconnaissance. Survey stations were established in the Taiya Valley and the elevation of Chilkoot Pass and Lake Lindeman established. Captain Moore was able to pinpoint and reconnoiter White Pass. More important, the expedition introduced to the region a number of individuals who were to play significant roles during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-98. These persons were: William Ogilvie, George W. Carmack, Captain Moore, Kate, and Skookum Jim.

The Krause, Schwatka, and Ogilvie expeditions are important to an understanding of events leading to the Klondike Gold Rush. As such, they should be interpreted both on-site and in the Visitor Center.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp. 24, 26.

### III. CAPTAIN MOORE'S DREAMS

#### A. The Stampede to Fortymile

##### 1. Tom Williams' Desperate Mission

Ogilvie's party, while it was en route down the Yukon on August 12, 1887, encountered three men coming upstream. They were J. Bernard Moore, Joe Goldsmith, and Jack Currier. Moore was the son of Captain Moore, and here, deep in the wilderness, they greeted each other warmly. Twenty-one-year-old Bernard, hearing of a strike at Fortymile, had left his home in Victoria and started for the Yukon.

The previous spring there had been a strike near the mouth of Stewart River and about \$100,000 in placer gold panned. By autumn Arthur Harper had prevailed on two prospectors to try on Fortymile River, near the Alaskan boundary. There they found course gold, the kind that prospectors seek. The Stewart River diggings were soon abandoned as miners raced to the new golconda.

Harper, who had entered into partnership with LeRoy N. McQuesten and Al Mayo to supply prospectors on the Yukon, realized that the moment news of the discoveries at Fortymile reached the Puget Sound cities there would be a stampede. But there was insufficient food on hand at his trading post to subsist the newcomers. He therefore determined to send a volunteer down the frozen Yukon and across Chilkoot to Dyea, where Jack Healy had established a trading post.

Tom Williams, a steamboater turned prospector, started for tidewater, accompanied by an Indian guide. By the time they reached Chilkoot they had exhausted their rations, and their dogs were dead. A blizzard roared in, and for protection they burrowed into the snow. Their fingers and toes were frostbitten, and their only food was a few mouthfuls of dry flour. After several days, the Indian again headed for the coast, carrying Williams. Several miners were encountered at Sheep Camp, and, with their assistance, the loyal Indian loaded Williams on a sled and dragged him down the canyon to Healy's trading post. Williams died there two days later.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 15-17; Robert Oglesby, "Account of a Six Month's Trip Through the Yukon Gold Fields," *The Cosmopolitan*, Sept. 1897, p. 521; J. Bernard Moore, *Skagway in Days Primeval* (New York, 1968), pp. 38-39.

## 2. Bernard Moore Crosses Chilkoot

Bernard Moore had boarded the first ship for Dyea, the little steamer *Yukon*, upon receipt of word of the strike at Fortymile. He and his companions on March 21, 1887, landed across the ice and camped in a spruce grove, about one-half mile above the trading post. On the 23d they broke camp and proceeded to the mouth of the canyon, taking one-half their outfit upon a sled, which they pulled over the river ice. A round trip was made the next day, and Moore and his partner brought up the remainder of their gear. Three trips were made on the 23d through the canyon to Pleasant Camp. Large boulders and holes in the ice made traveling difficult. They were compelled to unload their sleds often, and "lift them up five or eight feet and then load one sack at a time." Several times they came dangerously close to tumbling into pools.<sup>2</sup>

On March 26 they left Pleasant Camp at 8 a.m., and by 10 o'clock were at Sheep Camp, with their outfits. After pitching camp, they each took a load up to Stonehouse. Halting several times, they looked up toward the summit of Chilkoot and saw men, small dark spots against the snow, as they struggled forward with their outfits. Two days later they took three loads each on their sleds to the advance cache, and sent down to Healy's for 25 pounds of bacon, 50 pounds of rice, two tins of syrup, one tin of lard, and a dozen cans of yeast. From several newcomers, they learned that the gunboat *Pinta* was anchored near Dyea, where she would remain to overawe the natives until all the prospectors had got their gear over the pass.<sup>3</sup>

On March 29, 1887, they began packing the outfits from Stonehouse to the foot of the summit. The grade was steep and it was hard pulling. When they returned to Sheep Camp, Moore paid four dollars for some tobacco, yeast powder, and a tin of syrup sent up by Healy. Because of the high cost of transportation, \$12, no rice or bacon had been forwarded.

Bad weather kept most of the prospectors holed-up for the next 24 hours. On March 31 the weather moderated, and 60 men turned out to pack their outfits to the summit. The next day there was heavy traffic over the pass. Indian women and their children, some as young as ten years old, were out in force "packing from

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<sup>2</sup> Moore, *Skagway in Days Primeval*, pp. 43-44.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

fifty to seventy-five and one hundred pounds on their backs for miners, earning from ten to twenty dollars per day." During the day the first party crossed Chilkoot with their camp outfits.

When they lugged their first load to the summit on April 2, Moore reported that

going up the last pitch is similar to going up a stairway. We felt quite warm in our exertion and many times in ascending; when we became winded, we would just turn around and lean back against the snow and rest a while without removing our packs.

The next day, they hired three Indians to take nine packs from the foot of the summit to the crest for \$30, each pack weighing from 75 to 100 pounds. Moore and his partner experienced considerable difficulty in pulling their sleds across Chilkoot. They then retraced their route for what they hoped would be the last time.

They spent their last night at Sheep Camp on April 3, and the next morning they struck their tent and headed up the trail. By the time they reached "Old Man Medlow's Camp," one mile up the trail, Moore was snow blinded. To get relief, he applied warm moist tea leaves over his eyes. The next day they left Medlow's at 6:30 a.m. and were at the summit in three and one-half hours. Here they loaded their outfits on their sleds and eased them down the Canadian side, caching one-half at Crater Lake. Darkness overtook them within one mile of Lake Lindeman, and they camped in the timber. Very hard sledding was encountered in the canyon between Deep Lake and Lake Lindeman. They returned to Crater Lake two days later for the portion of their outfit cached on April 5. On the 8th they started with one-half their gear for Lake Bennett, traveling across frozen Lake Lindeman. Unlike Moore and his partner, some of the prospectors rigged large square sails on their sleds.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Moore Stops at Fortymile and Visits St. Michael

They continued down the frozen waterway as far as the foot of Marsh Lake. The ice now started to break up, and they halted to build a raft. Launching the craft on April 23, they cast off for Fortymile, which they reached on May 30. Moore, seeing that there was little opportunity for newcomers to stake a promising claim, pushed on down the Yukon to St. Michael. His wanderlust satisfied,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 46-48.

he took passage aboard a Yukon steamer and was back at Fortymile on July 27. Within the week, Moore, accompanied by Joe Goldsmith and Jack Currier, started for tidewater. On August 12, as they paddled up the Yukon, they sighted Ogilvie's camp.<sup>5</sup>

## B. Captain Moore Builds a Dock and Cabin

### 1. Captain Moore and His Son Visit Skagway Valley

Captain Moore determined to secure his discharge from Ogilvie and return to the coast with his son's party. Ogilvie was agreeable, and the four pushed off the next day. On September 5 they reached the head of Lake Lindeman. After establishing a cache in a large spruce, they prepared to pack across to the coast. The summit of Chilkoot was crossed at 4:30 p.m. in a driving sleet storm. They pushed on, but one-half mile above Stonehouse, they were compelled by the rain-swollen Taiyato stop. Cold, wet, and hungry they camped on damp, soggy ground near the creek. The water ran off during the night, and, after fording the stream, the travelers hiked on to Sheep Camp. They left Sheep Camp at 10 a.m. on September 8, and found the trail through the canyon very rough. The forks were reached at 4 p.m., and here they found a small canoe which took them down the Taiya to tidewater.<sup>6</sup>

Captain Moore had not forgotten about White Pass and his dream of opening and exploiting a trail, via that route, across the Coast Range. His enthusiasm was communicated to his son. But first they would have to lay in supplies. The first week of October 1887 found father and son in Juneau. On the 7th they started for Dyea Inlet in a large canoe, heavily laden with the equipment and food to subsist them for several months. Their plan was to take up a 160-acre homestead at the mouth of Skagway River and build a wharf.

Severe storms, encountered on Lynn Canal, compelled them to lay-to for several days, and it was October 20 before they arrived off the mouth of Skagway River. They paddled up the river about one-fourth mile and beached the craft. Landing, they pitched their tent "at the foot of a little bluff on the beach where a

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 81, 85. Ogilvie's party was camped on the west side of the Yukon, 26 miles above the mouth of the Pelly.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 93-95.



small creek comes down and joins the large creek on the righthand or east side of the bay."<sup>7</sup>

Again demonstrating his foresight, the father assured his son, "I fully expect before many years to see a pack trail through this pass, followed by a wagon road, and I would not be at all surprised to see a railroad through to the lakes."<sup>8</sup>

On the 21st they made soundings and located a site for their wharf, near the east side of the bay at the foot of a high, steep, rocky bluff. Work was started on the cribbing. On the 24th Captain Healy came over from Dyea in a canoe to look at his schooner, *Charlie*, which had broken adrift and had grounded near Mill Creek. With him were his partner, Wilson, and George Carmack. When Healy returned to his trading post, the two others remained on the Skagway to refloat and repair the schooner. Meanwhile, Captain Moore was able to hire an Indian to assist him and his son at two dollars per day and his board.<sup>9</sup>

By November 11 they had finished all the work they intended at the wharf site, and had cleared an area for the foundation of the 12 x 16-foot cabin they proposed to build on "the beach in line with and to connect with the inner logs or binders that connect the crib to shore above high watermark." On the 12th they laid foundation logs for their cabin, "measuring sixteen by sixteen feet on the bank, about twenty feet from the creek where it forks, and about a quarter of a mile farther up the valley from our present camp on the lefthand side of the creek going up."<sup>10</sup>

## 2. The Moores Return to the Skagway

Carmack and Wilson, on November 13, refloated *Charlie*, and two days later the Moores took passage on the schooner for Juneau. The next six months were spent at Juneau and Victoria discussing prospects with friends and getting ready to spend a summer at Mooresville, as they called their settlement on the Skagway. Father and son were back at Mooresville on May 26, 1888, and saw that their cribbing had withstood the winter's storms. On Monday, the 28th, they commenced getting out logs for their cabin. Three days later they chained off and relocated their one hundred and sixty acres to extend from tidemark back against the bluff on the east side of the bay and northwest toward Skagway River.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-102. The creek referred to is Mill Creek.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. Logs were floated down Mill Creek to the construction site.

While the Moores made their improvements, there was trouble at Captain Healy's trading post on the Dyea flats, four miles away. A number of Tlingit from Baranof Island had come up from Sitka to work as packers. The Chilkoot regarded the newcomers as interlopers, and on June 5 their chief, Kla-Naut, demanded that the Sitkans "desist from infringing on his people's rights . . . or pay him thirty percent on all goods packed by the Sitka Indians" over Chilkoot Pass to Lake Lindeman. This the Tlingit refused to do, and their leader ordered his men to strap on their packs. Kla-Naut then slapped the face of Sitka Jack's son. Sitka Jack attacked Kla-Naut and a fight with knives ensued. Before they were separated, both men had been cut. Next day, the 5th, the two factions met in front of the trading post, and a fight took place in which knives and small-arms were employed. Several Indians were killed and a number wounded.<sup>12</sup>

Kla-Naut and Sitka Jack again battled with knives. Kla-Naut, getting the worst of the fight, broke away, and fled toward the trading post. Sitka Jack called to Captain Healy, threatening to burn down the post if he sheltered his foe. Kla-Naut, with the door barred against him, was compelled to confront his powerfully - built foe. The personal confrontation ended with Sitka Jack braining Kla-Naut. Moments later, Kla-Naut's son slipped behind the victor and knifed him to death.

Kla-Naut's followers now called on Healy and demanded a large number of blankets as reparations for their leader's death. Healy barricaded the doors and windows and refused to listen to their demands. Whereupon the Chilkoot threatened to fire the buildings. A sailor and Wilson slipped down the canal on the 6th for Juneau to get reinforcements.

News of the fight at Dyea spread like wildfire. Within a few minutes of Wilson's arrival at Juneau, a number of men, armed to the teeth, had turned out. Twenty-two of them sailed off for the point of danger aboard the little steamer *Lucy*. By the time she anchored off Dyea flats on June 9, most of the Indians had disappeared, and those remaining had placed little white flags on poles as a sign of peace.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-118. The trading post was a two-story, hewn-log structure of about 25 by 40 feet.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 117-120.

Following this excitement, the Moores went back to work. On June 16 they moved into their cabin, although it was not completed. With the assistance of two Indians, hired on the 18th, they again turned their attention to the wharf. By July 5 construction had proceeded to the point where they were able to pay off their laborers. On August 1, 1888, they decided that they had accomplished all they could for the present, and after packing their gear in a canoe, they locked up their cabin and paddled over to Dyea. From there, they took passage for Juneau.<sup>14</sup>

### C. The Secretary Discourages Opening Toll Trails

As early as 1887 the Secretary of the Interior found himself bombarded by requests from promoters desirous of securing franchises for construction of trails across the Alaskan Panhandle from tidewater to the headwaters of the Yukon. Edward Bean, as to be expected from his early interest in the area, wrote the Secretary asking for a charter to construct "a practical pack trail from a point near the head of Lynn Canal, to connect with a trail from Bennett Lake . . . for which a charter had been granted by the government of British Columbia." After studying the request, Secretary of the Interior L. Q. C. Lamar notified Bean that his office had no authority to grant such a privilege. A franchise such as was desired could only be secured through Congressional action.<sup>15</sup>

The following year David Flannery and Samuel O. Wheeler, having talked with Captain Moore about White Pass, attempted to steal his thunder. They were turned down by the Secretary when they asked for a charter "for a pack trail to be constructed from Skagway Bay . . . to the boundary line of British Columbia at Summit Lake, together with a right-of-way of one-half mile on either side."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pp. 17-18. The wharf, when completed, rested on stone cribs and pilings and was 30 feet wide by 60 feet long.

<sup>15</sup> Muldrow to Bean, Feb. 16, 1887, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. Henry L. Muldrow was 1st Assistant Secretary of the Interior in President Grover Cleveland's cabinet.

<sup>16</sup> Vilas to G. G. Vest, Feb. 17, 1888, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. William F. Vilas was Secretary of the Interior in the final months of President Cleveland's administration, while George G. Vest was a United States Senator from Missouri.

Captain Moore, at the time he built his wharf and cabin on Skagway Bay, applied to Governor A. P. Swineford of Alaska for a similar concession. The Governor informed Moore that he was powerless to act and referred him to the Secretary of the Interior.<sup>17</sup> Three years passed before Captain Moore got around to writing the Secretary. In April 1891 he proposed to open a pack trail from Skagway Bay through White Pass to Summit Lake. This trail, to be blasted or cribbed from the mountain side, would be five feet wide when graded. All streams not fordable at high water were to be bridged. As the opening of a trail across White Pass would necessitate considerable blasting and expense, Moore wished to be granted a franchise to levy a toll.<sup>18</sup>

Acting Secretary George Chandler, after discussing Moore's request and reviewing previous correspondence on the subject, informed him that legislation was needed for the franchise. The request for necessary legislation, it was pointed out, should originate with the governor of Alaska.<sup>19</sup>

Within six months the Secretary received a request from Miner W. Bruce and Charles W. Young of Juneau for a "charter" to construct a toll road up the Chilkat. Secretary John W. Noble, like his predecessors, vetoed the request.<sup>20</sup> Sheldon Jackson, the influential Presbyterian missionary, had taken cognizance of the applications for franchises to open trails across the Alaska Panhandle. While he had frequently urged such a project, he argued that in granting the privilege the government should insure that the interests of the Chilkoot and Chilkat were protected, as the country to be traversed by the proposed roads and trails had been their homeland "from times immemorial." He cautioned that the Chilkoot considered Chilkoot Pass their "peculiar property," and had never tolerated its use by the interior tribes.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Moore to Secretary of the Interior, April 27, 1891, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

<sup>18</sup> The right-of-way desired by Moore would extend to a distance of one mile on either side of the trail.

<sup>19</sup> Chandler to Moore, July 2, 1891, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

<sup>20</sup> Noble to Bruce and Young, March 18, 1892, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

<sup>21</sup> Jackson to Noble, March 16, 1892, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. John W. Noble had succeeded Vilas as Secretary of the Interior on March 1, 1889.

The failure to secure a franchise from the government discouraged promoters. They knew that with the high cost of construction, people with capital to invest would not be interested in their projects, unless given an opportunity to recoup their outlays by being granted the privilege of charging a toll.

D. From 1893-1896 on the Chilkoot Trail

1. The Moores Keep the Faith

The Moores, father and son, returned to Skagway Bay on several occasions during the ensuing years to check on their claim. When Bernard Moore visited the area in the spring of 1894, he saw that the wharf, its pilings having rotted, had collapsed.

He had come north on a sloop with a promoter named Peterson. Peterson had with him a number of large hair sealskins, sewed together in the form of sleds, about six feet long and four feet wide. To these frames had been sewn heavy canvas sides. These sleds, of which he had ten, were about two feet in depth. Peterson proposed to Moore that they rig heavy poles from The Scales to the summit of Chilkoot, and by employing an endless rope, with blocks and pulleys connected to the sleds, hoist freight up the steep grade. Power for the project would be provided by loading the empty sleds with snow at the crest. These sleds would then have sufficient weight as they descended to haul up an equal number loaded with freight.

Moore, believing there was merit to Peterson's scheme, agreed to join him. Several horses belonging to Captain Moore were rafted over to Dyea from Mooresville. As the Taiya was still frozen, the horses hauled the sleds up to the mouth of the canyon over the ice. After much backbreaking work, which involved cutting a trail, Peterson and Moore reached The Scales with their sleds. Several weeks were required to place the poles in position and rig the endless rope. Their experiment, however, was a dismal failure, and their dreams of wealth vanished when it was found that they, along with a number of prospectors, had to lay onto the rope and pull the loaded sled up the slope of Chilkoot. All agreed, after several days, that this was harder work than pulling "a medium-loaded, regular handsled" across the summit. The project was abandoned.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Moore, *Skagway in Days Primeval*, pp. 168-169, 173.

## 2. Frederick Funston Crosses Chilkoot

Frederick Funston, who was destined to gain fame as a brigadier general in the Philippine Insurrection by his capture of Emilio Aguinaldo, crossed Chilkoot Pass in 1893, three years before gold was discovered in the Klondike. Having had some training in botany, Funston was commissioned by the Secretary of Agriculture to gather botanical specimens in the Yukon Valley. For Funston, the trip to the Arctic was another opportunity for adventure in a long and adventurous career.

Funston and his three traveling companions (McConnell, Thompson, and Mattern) landed at Dyea at daybreak on April 10, 1893. He was the only one in the group that had previously been to Alaska. His companions planned to travel with him as far as Fortymile.<sup>23</sup>

Their outfit consisted of two small tents, several handsleds (each eight feet long with steel runners), blankets, rifles, ammunition, a six weeks supply of flour, bacon, coffee, a whip-saw, axes, and other tools for boat-building, and two cameras. The entire outfit weighed about 1,000 pounds. Their plan was to ascend the Taiya Valley, cross Chilkoot Pass, "and descend to the frozen lakes on the other side--dragging our outfit on the hand-sleds across" a chain of lakes, until reaching a point where there were trees of sufficient size to build a small boat in which to proceed down the Yukon to Fortymile.

Near the landing was the village of Dyea, "whose inhabitants turn an honest penny every spring" by assisting miners bound for the interior in packing their supplies to the summit. Funston's party divided their gear into seven packs and hired seven Chilkoot, five men and two women, as packers.

They started up the valley on April 12. The Indians supported their loads on their backs by the aid of deerskin bands, passing across the forehead. Several children went along, carrying on their backs light loads, consisting of food and cooking utensils for the use of their parents. Two dogs also went along wearing packs.

At one o'clock they reached the forks of the river, where the Indians threw off their loads and announced that there they would camp. While there had been no snow at Dyea, there were two feet

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<sup>23</sup> Frederick Funston, "Over the Chilkoot Pass to the Yukon," *Scribner's Magazine*, 20, No. 5, Nov. 1896, 572.

at this point. It snowed during the night, and half the next day was spent in wading through deep snow to reach Sheep Camp. They spent the night bedded down near the timber-line, "at the foot of the dreaded pass."<sup>24</sup>

The weather had cleared during the night, and they turned out before daybreak on April 14 to find "the sky clear and the air frosty." Below them was a "scattering growth of stunted spruce-trees and above the great slopes of ice and snow." The children and dogs were left at Sheep Camp to await the return of their parents, and, after having had breakfast at 8 a.m., the climb was commenced.

The Indians struggling forward with their heavy loads were compelled to stop periodically to rest. Funston and his three companions found the task of pulling the two empty sleds exhausting. As they ascended, the snow, which at lower altitudes had been soft, was hard and crusted. Before they reached the summit it was more like ice than snow. They reached The Scales by 11 o'clock. From here to the summit was about three-fourths of a mile, and as they looked up that "long trough of glistening ice and hard-crusted snow, as steep as the roof of a house, there was not one of us that did not dread the remainder of the day's work."

The women were sent back to Sheep Camp and the bucks divided the packs, leaving nearly half the gear for a second trip. One of them produced a plaited line of rawhide, about 100 feet long, and employing it as a life-line lashed the nine of them together about ten feet apart. The man at the head of the line carried an alpenstock, and as they advanced he cut footholds in the ice and hard-packed snow. As they had to zigzag, it took three hours to reach the summit. After resting the Indians returned to get the rest of the outfit. Since the trail had been cut, and they were now unencumbered by the whites and sleds, the Indians were back at the summit of Chilkoot in less than two hours.<sup>25</sup>

Funston and his companions now loaded their outfit onto the two sleds, securely strapping it to the frames. They started down the slope toward Crater Lake. It was a wild ride. All efforts to control the sleds were fruitless. The sleds, each with two men and 500 pounds of equipment, shot down the grade with the speed of an express. The lead sled struck an uneven surface, tipped over, and snapped its lashings. The air was filled with

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., pp. 574-575.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 574-575.

blanket rolls, sides of bacon, mining tools, and profanity. The second sled was more fortunate and glided to a stop on Crater Lake. It took Thompson and Mattern one-half hour to reload their sled.

Darkness overtook the party between Deep Lake and Lake Lindeman, and they were caught in a blizzard. Compelled to abandon their sleds, they sought shelter. Before doing so, however, they fortunately marked the site with a long-handled shovel thrust in the snow and capped with a bucket. Making their way down into the canyon, they took cover in a clump of spruce and built a fire.

It had stopped snowing in the morning. They returned and retrieved the sleds, which had been buried, and finally reached Lake Lindeman. Funston and his companions, pulling their sleds over the ice, passed Lakes Lindeman, Bennett, Nares, and Tagish. One mile above Lake Marsh they stopped and whip-sawed lumber from which they built a boat. Before the ice broke up, they were overtaken by a dozen men en route to Fortymile. The newcomers had crossed Chilkoot on April 17, 1893, three days after they had.<sup>26</sup>

After reaching Fortymile, Funston said goodbye to his companions and pushed on into the Arctic. He wintered at Rampart House on Porcupine River. Before leaving the Yukon Basin, he broke a new route, and traveling due north reached the shore of the Arctic Ocean.

Two years after his return from the Yukon Basin and the Arctic, Funston published an article in the popular monthly magazine, *Scribners*, describing his expedition and the trip across Chilkoot Pass. This article, when the electrifying news of discovery of gold on the Klondike reached the United States, influenced most of those who participated in the rush in the spring of 1897 to take the Chilkoot Trail.

#### E. Comments and Recommendations

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The best place to interpret the story of Captain Moore and his dream of a route across White Pass is at the Moore Cabin in Skagway. The Moore Cabin should be entered on the List of Classified Structures. A study should be initiated by the Service to investigate the possibility of returning the cabin to its historic site.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 578-579.

IV. GOLD IS DISCOVERED IN THE KLONDIKE

A. Robert Henderson Makes a Strike

1. Henderson Enters the Yukon

Robert D. Henderson was born in Pictou Nova Scotia, in 1857. The son of a lighthouse keeper, he was raised by his parents on Big Island. He was going to sea as a fisherman almost before he was a teenager. Leaving home at 14 he moved to New England, from where he went to Portland, Oregon, intending to go to Alaska. Instead he was persuaded to travel to Patagonia by Jim Fielding to prospect. He failed, however, to get there and returned to Nova Scotia. In 1880 Henderson again headed west and worked the Colorado diggings for 14 years. In 1894 he headed for Alaska and in April landed at Dyea. He and two companions, Kendrick and Snider, packed his outfit over Chilkoot Pass, and by June 1 he was camped on Lake Lindeman. There he whipsawed some lumber and built a boat, which carried him down the Yukon to the mouth of the Pelly. Here he panned for gold and found enough to bring him \$54. Running out of supplies, he headed for Sixtymile.¹

2. Henderson Meets Joe Ladue

At Sixtymile, Henderson stopped at the trading post run by Joe Ladue. Of French-Canadian descent, Ladue, who had been born in upstate New York in 1852, had entered the north country in 1882. He had failed to strike it rich, and he went to work for Harper and McQuesten. When they broke up their partnership in 1889, Ladue continued his connection with Harper. Ladue's trading post was a popular stop for all prospectors en route down the Yukon, and he never failed to encourage them with stories of mother lodes just waiting to be found.²

Ladue's trading post was about 100 miles upstream from Forty-mile. Between the two settlements, two other rivers flowed into the Yukon from the east: the Indian River, about 30 miles downstream from Ogilvie, and the Thron-diuck, another 30 miles farther down.

¹ Mrs. William Campbell Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, pp. 415-416. The community that had grown up here--consisting of a few cabins and tents, a sawmill, and a two-story log trading post--was called Ogilvie, in honor of William Ogilvie, the surveyor.

² Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 118-119; J. Lincoln Steffens, "Life in the Klondike Gold Fields," *McClure's Magazine*, Sept. 1897, p. 957.

Ladue had reconnoitered the Thron-diuck, but he had found no colors. He, however, believed that the Indian River country had possibilities, and he urged every prospector that would listen to give it a try.

3. Two Lonely Years on the Yukon

Henderson was impressed with what he heard. After purchasing a small outfit from Ladue, Henderson joined Jack Collins and they drifted down the Yukon to Indian River. Henderson at this time was 37 years old. He was lean and tall, with "a gaunt hawk's face, fiercely knit brows, and piercing eyes." His full mustache drooped at the ends. The partners prospected Indian River and Quartz Creek, finding some colors. Collins, with the approach of winter, returned to Sixtymile, while Henderson spent the winter of 1894-1895 prospecting Quartz, Australia, and Wounded Moose creeks. While searching for a way to take his outfit down into one of the valleys on the Thron-diuck slope, he was snow blinded.³ Henderson, after resting his eyes, sought to return downstream. Encountering a herd of caribou, he killed and skinned two, using the hides to build a canoe.

On May 6, 1895, he injured his leg when he fell across the broken limb of a tree, driving the stub into his calf. As soon as he was able to travel, he returned to Quartz Creek, where he prospected for two weeks. But as his leg still plagued him, he started for Sixtymile in his canoe. Accompanied by William Radford, he was back on Quartz Creek by mid-June. Early in the autumn he headed for Sixtymile to purchase winter supplies. The winter of 1895-1896 was spent alone on Quartz Creek. Here he burned holes to bedrock and drifted tunnels in search of pay-dirt. During this period he panned \$620.⁴

While prospecting Indian River and its tributaries, Henderson observed a dome-shaped mountain, whose summit rose above the other hills. A number of streams flowing into Indian River headed against this mountain, and in the spring of 1896 he climbed the dome to see what was on the other side. When he reached the summit, he saw to the north a mass of snow-capped peaks. In other directions, as far as the eye could see, were a maze of hills and valleys. From the dome on which Henderson stood, creeks radiated out like the spokes of a wheel. Three led off toward Indian River and an equal number,

³ Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, pp. 416-417; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 35-37.

⁴ Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, pp. 417-418.

on the opposite side, flowed into an unfamiliar watercourse. Although Henderson did not know it, these six streams were destined, within the year, to yield fabulous quantities of gold.

4. Henderson's Strike on Gold Bottom

Almost at Henderson's feet, a ravine dropped off from the dome. Henderson worked his way down this stream and began panning. Fair prospects were found, and he was able to wash out two cents to the pan. Satisfied that he had made a strike, he recrossed the divide and returned to his camp on Indian River for supplies. There he found 18 men working the sandbars. They had been directed to the area by Joe Ladue, and told to see Henderson.

He told the newcomers of his strike on the stream, which he named "Gold Bottom Creek" because, as he recalled, "I had a day-dream that when I got my shaft down to bedrock it might be like the streets of the New Jerusalem." The newcomers were invited to join him, and they would divide the profits equally in the autumn. In addition, they would have the privilege of staking claims where ever they saw fit. The proposition was accepted. Soon, however, the newcomers tired of the hard work and began to drift off. Before very long, there were only five men, including Henderson, left on Gold Bottom.⁵

By mid-July 1896 the five (Henderson, Dalton, two Swedes, and one Italian) had panned out several hundred dollars, but they were running out of supplies. Henderson, who was familiar with the country, started for Ladue's post at Sixtymile.

B. George W. Carmack's Discovery

1. A Chance Encounter

In descending Indian River, the water was so shoal that Henderson's canoe frequently grounded, and he realized that unless there were heavy rains it would be impossible to return via this route with supplies. As he ascended the Yukon, Henderson told all those he met about his strike on Gold Bottom and urged them to stake claims.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 119-121; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 38-39; Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 123-124. Before returning with the prospectors to Gold Bottom, Henderson had observed that Rabbit Creek had good prospects. During the summer, Henderson deserted his comrades for several days and prospected Gold Run, where he found colors yielding 5 to 35 cents per pan before

After making his purchases at Ladue's, Henderson loaded his goods and drifted down the Yukon. Not wishing to risk wrecking his craft ascending Indian River, he determined to paddle up the Thron-diuck, into which he had concluded Gold Bottom must flow.⁶ At the mouth of the Thron-diuck or Klondike as it soon began to be called, Henderson sighted a camp. Henderson landed and was hailed by George W. Carmack.

Carmack, like Henderson, was a pioneer. He had been born on a cattle ranch at Costa, California, on September 24, 1860. In March 1885, he left San Francisco, reaching Juneau in April. There he organized a party of seven men, and they crossed Chilkoot Pass and prospected the upper Yukon as far as Miles Canyon. Finding nothing they returned to Juneau. Two years later he joined the Ogilvie survey party, and, having been over the route before, helped guide the group to Lake Bennett. That fall he returned to Juneau and bought a supply of goods to trade with the Indians of the Yukon Basin.

At the mouth of the Hootalinque he prospected, hunted, and trapped with the Indians. Accompanied by Skookum Jim and Tagish Charley, he worked the upper Yukon until June 1889, when they dropped downstream to Fortymile. In 1890 they found colors on Birch Creek, and in July 1896 they, along with their wives, had established a fish camp at the mouth of the Thron-diuck, the best salmon river in the Yukon.⁷

Carmack, his wife Kate, their daughter Graphie Gracey, and his two brothers-in-law Skookum Jim and Tagish Charley were catching and drying salmon. Henderson, in accordance with the unwritten miners' code, called Carmack aside and told him of his strike on Gold Bottom. Carmack asked Henderson if there was any chance to stake a claim. Henderson, who had no use for Indians, glanced at Skookum Jim and Tagish Charley, who were standing nearby and muttered, "There's a chance for you, George, but I don't want any damn Siwashes staking on that creek." These words were to cost him dearly.⁸

he reached bedrock. He returned and told the others, but it was determined to remain where they were until the close of the season. Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, p. 121.

⁶ Thron-diuck means "Hammer-Water" in Indian. It was so named because of the stakes the Indians hammered into the muck on which they hung fish nets. Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 40.

⁷ Walter R. Hamilton, *The Yukon Story* (Vancouver, 1964), p. 69.

⁸ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 40-43; Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of

Henderson now poled his way up the Klondike to the mouth of Gold Run Creek, where he beached his craft and made a cache. He then packed into Discovery Camp on Gold Bottom.

2. Carmack Strikes It Rich

Carmack was in no hurry to follow Henderson's suggestion and go upstream and stake a claim on Gold Bottom. He and his brothers-in-law were more interested, at the moment, in getting out logs to raft down to the sawmill at Fortymile, where they would bring \$25 per 1000 feet. Skookum Jim had already ascended Rabbit Creek, where he had seen many good trees. More important, he had done some panning and had found some colors. He told those at the fishing camp of his discovery, but it elicited scant interest.

About 20 days after Henderson's visit, Carmack told his brothers-in-law to get ready to find Bob. Instead of ascending the Klondike to the mouth of Gold Run, they decided to go overland up the valley of Rabbit Creek, which led to the high ridge separating the watersheds of the Klondike and Indian rivers. They started up Rabbit Creek with gold pans, spades, axes, and other tools necessary for a prolonged stay in the woods. A short distance below where they subsequently made their strike, they halted for a rest and found a ten-cent pan. This caused some excitement, and it was determined that if Gold Bottom proved a bust they would return. Carmack told the Indians not to mention what they had found to Henderson, until they had returned, "then if they found anything good they might tell."⁹

On reaching the point where a watercourse, soon to be called Eldorado Creek, discharges into Rabbit, they climbed out of the valley and took the crest of the divide around the head of Rabbit, where they found a route blazed by Henderson. When they found Henderson, they were out of provisions and tobacco, the latter a serious predicament for the two Indians. Henderson refused to share, although Jim and Charley offered to pay well for all they took.¹⁰

Carmack and his brothers-in-law, after reconnoitering the area, determined that prospects looked better back on Rabbit and prepared to return. As they were shouldering their packs, Henderson called:

Carmack, I have been intending to do some prospecting on Rabbit Creek this winter, but you might do some panning on your

Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, pp. 121-122; Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 124-126. Siwash was a term of opprobrium for an Indian.

⁹ Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 125-126.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-128.

way back, and if you find anything send one of the Indians back and let me know, and I will pay him for coming.

Carmack agreed and went his way.¹¹

The evening of August 14, 1896, found them camped on Rabbit Creek, one-half mile below the forks. Their provisions exhausted, Skookum Jim went hunting and killed a moose. While awaiting the arrival of the others, Jim went to the creek for a drink. There he found gold in greater quantities than he had heretofore seen. After they had butchered the moose, he showed them the colors. It was found that a single panful yielded a quarter of an ounce, or about four dollars' worth. In a country where a ten-cent pan had been considered something to boast of, this was something to shout about. They remained two days at the site panning and testing the gravel up and down the creek. After satisfying themselves as to the best site, they determined to stake and record it. There was a dispute as to who should record the discovery claim, "Jim claiming it by right of discovery, and Carmac[k] claiming it . . . on the ground that an Indian would not be allowed to record it." The difficulty was settled by agreeing that Carmack was to stake and record the discovery claim, and assign one-half of it to Jim. On the morning of August 17, 1896, Carmack blazed a small spruce tree with his hand axe, and on the upstream side wrote with a pencil:

To Whom It May Concern

I do this day, locate and claim by right of discovery, five hundred feet running upstream from this notice. Located this 17th day of August, 1896.

G. W. Carmack¹²

Carmack stepped off three more claims: No. 1 Below for himself, No. 2 Below for Tagish Charley, and No. 1 Above for Skookum Jim. The gold which they had panned was placed in a Winchester rifle cartridge shell, and they returned to the salmon camp at the mouth of the Klondike. There a small raft of saw logs was prepared for the mill at Fortymile. While Carmack and Charley went downstream on it, Jim returned to guard the claims, as the country was alive

¹¹ Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, pp. 121-123.

¹² Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 128-129; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 47. Under Canadian law, no more than one claim could be staked in any mining district by anyone except the discoverer, who was allowed a double claim. The claim, by law, straddled a creek from bedrock to bedrock.

with people Ladue had sent in search of Henderson's camp. On August 19 Edward Monahan and Greg Stewart staked two claims, two miles below the discovery, while on the 20th J. Moffat, D. Edwards, D. Robertson, and C. Kimball staked additional claims downstream. These men, as Carmack could not possibly have reached Fortymile by the 21st, could not all owe their information to Carmack and the two Indians.¹³

3. Carmack Spreads the Word

When Carmack and Tagish Charley reached Fortymile, and told of their discovery and showed the gold, their story at first failed to arouse much interest. Carmack had not done much prospecting, and his long association with Indians had prejudiced the white community against him. They were unable to believe that the squawman had made a strike. It was believed that the gold was from Miller Creek, and had been given to Carmack by Joe Ladue to start a stampede. When some of them came to see William Ogilvie, he pointed out that Carmack must have found the gold somewhere. By the time they had recorded their claims with the authorities, a stampede was under way.¹⁴

Within three weeks the area was overrun with prospectors. Before the end of August, a miners' meeting had determined that the name Rabbit Creek was too prosaic, and the stream was now called Bonanza Creek. Joe Ladue had closed up his trading post at Sixtymile, and had erected a warehouse and cabin on a site he had selected on the east bank of the Yukon, just below the mouth of the Klondike. Ladue named the new mining camp Dawson City in honor of George M. Dawson.

By August 31 all of Bonanza Creek had been staked, with more prospectors arriving daily. Fabulous strikes were now made on the south fork by Antone Stander, Jay Whipple, Frank Keller, J. J. Clements, and Frank Phiscator. Each of these claims, all staked on the 31st, were destined to produce over one million dollars in gold. The stream henceforth was known as Eldorado.¹⁵

C. Henderson's Cruel Fate

1. Word of the Strike Reaches Gold Bottom

Meanwhile, over on Gold Bottom Creek, Robert Henderson and his friends continued to operate their sluice. They were unaware that

¹³ Ogilvie, *Early Days on the Yukon*, pp. 128-131.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 131-133; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 48-51.

¹⁵ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 51-60.

across the ridge there were hundreds of prospectors; that Bonanza was staked for 14 miles and Eldorado for three. He and his partners had seen no one since that day in August, when Carmack had walked off, promising to send word if he found anything on Rabbit Creek.

At the end of the first week in September, eight men came over the hill, with packs on their backs. Henderson, greeting the newcomers, inquired, "Hello, boys, where did you hail from?"

"From Bonanza Creek," they answered.

"Bonanza Creek?" Henderson repeated. The name puzzled him, because, although he had been in the area for two years, he had never heard of a stream by that name. He asked, "Where is Bonanza Creek?"

"Just over the hills about ten miles," answered one of the men, pointing in the direction with his finger.

"Oh, that's Rabbit Creek."

"The people over there call it Bonanza Creek."

"Have they found anything over there?"

"Found anything! Well, I should say so! They have got the richest creek that was ever heard of!"

"Who found it?"

"George Carmack."

"The traitor!" Henderson dropped his pick and sat down, with his head resting in his hands. The one thought that passed through his mind was that he would like to have Carmack by the neck.

He then asked, "Have there been many claims staked over there?"

"Yes, the whole creek is staked from one end to the other," was the reply.

The newcomers did not like Gold Bottom Creek, and soon retraced their steps. Henderson and his comrades continued their work in a daze.¹⁶

¹⁶ Lowden, "The Real Discoverer of Gold in the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, Sept. 1908, pp. 120-121.

2. Bad Luck Continues to Dog Henderson

Earlier in the summer, Henderson had reconnoitered the stream into which Gold Bottom flows and had found colors yielding 35 cents to the pan. He had staked a discovery claim but had failed to record it. He now determined to do so. But as he was getting ready to start, Charles Johnson and Andrew Hunker, veteran prospectors, appeared from downstream. They said they had been looking for Henderson, but had missed the camp and had crossed over the ridge to another creek, where they found a high reef of bedrock and had panned out \$25 in coarse gold.

"Yes," said Henderson, "I have been over there and found gold and have staked a discovery claim. Did you see my stakes? I have been calling that creek Gold Run."

Hunker admitted he had seen the stakes, but he, too, had staked and wanted the privilege of naming the creek. After some discussion, it was decided to settle the matter by the flip of a coin. Hunker won.¹⁷

Henderson and his partners continued to work their claim, and when they closed down for the season, they divided their take, \$750, equally between them. Henderson then started for Fortymile, the nearest recording office, to register his claims. On his way down he found that a great number of claims had been staked. When he reached the mouth of Bear Creek, he ascended that stream and staked No. 12.

On reaching Fortymile, Henderson felt certain that he had three claims to register--one each on Gold Bottom, Gold Run, and Bear Creeks. But, when he rushed into the recording office, he was told that there was no Gold Run Creek. When he explained its geographic location, the clerk told him that the stream referred to was Hunker Creek, named for Andy Hunker, who had recorded the discovery claim. He was further disappointed to learn that the law had been changed: no person was allowed more than one claim in the Klondike Mining District, and that claim must be recorded within 60 days of staking. Vainly, Henderson protested that when he had staked his claims, the law had permitted a claim on each creek, with no deadline for recording. The clerk held his ground, and Henderson, allowed only one claim, chose to stake No. 3 on Hunker Creek.

As he left the office he protested, "I only want my just dues and nothing more, but those discoveries rightly belong to me and I will contest them, as a Canadian, as long as I live!"

¹⁷ Ibid.

Heading for Dawson, Henderson planned to spend the winter working his claim. His leg now began to give him serious trouble, and he determined to go to St. Michael to see a doctor. The steamer on which he took passage got no farther than Circle City. There he was operated upon. In the spring of 1897 he was back at Dawson, but because of ill health, he was unable to work his claim. When refused an extension to do his assessment work, he sold his claim for \$3,000. His claim was sold again, within a few years, for \$200,000.¹⁸

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 121-122; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 61-64.

Aboard these ships were a number of sourdoughs, who had struck it rich in the Klondike. As soon as the ice in the Yukon broke up in June 1897, about 80 prospectors took passage at Dawson aboard the river steamers *Alice* and *Portus B. Weare*. With them, the Klondike Kings carried hundreds of thousands of dollars in gold dust and nuggets. At St. Michael, the men had taken passage aboard two ocean-going vessels, *Portland* and *Excelsior*. As *Portland* was first to weigh anchor, the majority boarded her. When she lay-to on July 17, at Seattle, the passengers disembarked onto Schwabacher's Dock to the cheers of 5,000 people. They soon found out why. *Excelsior* had made a faster passage back to the states, arriving in San Francisco on July 15, 48 hours earlier, bringing with it the news of the Klondike Kings, and the story of their good fortune had swept the continent.²

The editor of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, having learned from the stories carried by the San Francisco newspapers that *Portland* was due any moment in Puget Sound, chartered a tug. A number of reporters boarded the vessel, which took position off Cape Flattery to await *Portland*. The newsmen hailed and boarded the gold ship, and after securing their stories scrambled back aboard the tug. The tug sped back into port, and the first of the *Post-Intelligencer's* three extras were being hawked by newsboys by the time *Portland* docked. The headlines read:

GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!

68 RICH MEN ON THE

STEAMER *PORTLAND* -- STACKS OF

YELLOW METAL!

Correspondent Beriah Brown wrote a by-line that caught the imagination, "At 3 o'clock this morning the steamer *Portland* from St. Michael for Seattle, passed up the Sound with more than a ton of solid gold aboard."

Brown felt that to most of his readers "the weight of the gold dust would be more dramatic than its value." He was correct. Hundreds of other newspapers seized on the words "a ton of gold." The rival *Seattle Times* listed the weight as one-half ton, but the newspapers were too conservative. When the gold aboard the ship was totaled, it was found that there was at least two tons of gold.³

² Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 96-100.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 103-107.

V. THE CHILKOOT TRAIL IN 1897

A. The Stampede Starts

1. The First Wave

In 1897 the rush to the Klondike began. The **cheechakos**, as the newcomers were called, came in two waves. News that gold had been discovered in the Klondike reached the west coast of the United States and Canada in the winter of 1896-1897. The Puget Sound cities were still suffering the after-effects of the panic of 1893, and many men were out of work. "Gold" was an electrifying word, and in the election campaign of 1896 the democratic candidate, William Jennings Bryan, had sounded a responsive keynote when he shouted, "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" In recent years the production of gold had failed to keep pace with the population explosion. The demand for the yellow metal had zoomed as more countries adopted the gold standard. As gold coins grew scarce they commanded a premium, and people began to hoard gold. A drop in the gold in circulation was one of the reasons blamed by economists for the hard times that gripped the United States. This situation helped swell the number of people who dreamed of finding their fortune in the Yukon Basin.

By April and May 1897 every ship leaving the area bound for Alaska was crowded with prospectors. Most of this first wave went ashore at Dyea, because of all routes leading to the Klondike the one across Chilkoot Pass was the best known. It was the route used and publicized by Schwatka and Funston. The newcomers packed across Chilkoot. After reaching Lakes Lindeman and Bennett, they built boats and anxiously waited for the ice to break up. Then on to the land of gold, 500 miles downstream, in their frail craft.¹

2. The Second Wave

A second and more numerous wave of humanity started for the Klondike in late July and early August 1897. This wave was galvanized into action by the arrival of two steamships from St. Michael--*Portland* at Seattle, and *Excelsior* at San Francisco.

¹ Ella Lung Martinsen, *Black Sand and Gold* (Portland, 1967), pp. 14-22; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 101.

As was to be expected, this news sparked a stampede, the likes of which the world was not to see again. Men walked off their jobs in the factory and on the farm, while others closed their stores. The *Seattle Times* lost most of its reporters, stevedores and police left their jobs. Within four days, 12 members of the Seattle police force had resigned to go to the Klondike. Professional men were just as eager. W. D. Wood, mayor of Seattle, was in San Francisco at the time the news broke. Without even returning home, he telegraphed his resignation, raised \$150,000, purchased the steamship *Humboldt*, and organized the Seattle and Yukon Trading Company.

Similar situations prevailed in the other cities and towns of the northwest. Steamship company offices were flooded with requests for transportation. Every train rolling into Seattle, Portland, Tacoma, and Vancouver was jammed with men and a number of women wild with excitement and eager to start for the Klondike. Merchants in these cities vied with one another to outfit the adventurers. Rivalry between Seattle and Tacoma became bitter, as each sought to outstrip the other as the port of embarkation for the thousands clamoring to go to the Klondike. Guide books were published, describing in detail, with maps, the routes to the gold fields.

Newspapers featured stories by returning prospectors, in which they gave advice as to routes and the type of outfits required. Typical of these interviews was the one secured by Lincoln Steffens, with Joe Ladue, and published in *McClure's Magazine*. Ladue had returned to the United States aboard *Portland*, after 13 years on the Yukon, and headed for his old home in upstate New York to marry his lifelong sweetheart.

Ladue, evidently shaken by the effect the news of his good fortune was having on the inexperienced, was cautious. The Mayor of Dawson City, an honor he had been accorded by the reporters, would not advise anybody to go to the Klondike. "It goes pretty hard with some of the men who go in." He warned that

lots of them never come out, and not half of those who do make a stake. The country is rich, richer than any one has ever said, and the finds you have heard about are only the beginnings, just the surface pickings, for the country has not been prospected except in spots. But there are a great many hardships to go through.⁴

⁴ J. Lincoln Steffens, "Life in the Klondike Gold Fields," *McClure's Magazine*, Sept. 1897, p. 959.

As he was familiar with the country and its resources, Ladue feared that there would be insufficient food at Dawson during the coming winter, and starvation would haunt the Yukon. Ladue urged that the adventurers curb their ardor, make plans, and delay their departure until the spring of 1898. "From the fifteenth of March on," he told Steffens, "is the time to go."⁵

For those going to the Klondike, Ladue suggested that they secure an outfit consisting of: frying pan, kettle, coffee pot, knives, forks, and spoons, a drill or canvas tent, axe, hatchet, whipsaw, two-inch auger, pick and shovel, and ten pounds of nails. For wear they should have heavy woollens, the stoutest overshoes obtainable, with arctic socks. The best sled was six or eight feet in length and six inches in the run. Juneau was the best place to buy a sled. The lightest and best canoes were found in Victoria, and weighed from 160 to 200 pounds.

If the cheechako planned to build a boat to descend the Yukon, he should have, in addition to the enumerated tools and nails, two pounds of oakum and five pounds of pitch.⁶

The year's supply of "grub," which each prospector was required by Canadian regulations to bring with him on crossing the border, could be purchased as cheaply in Juneau as elsewhere. This should consist of 100 sacks of flour, 150 pounds of sugar, 100 pounds of bacon, 30 pounds of coffee, 10 pounds of tea, 100 pounds of beans, 50 pounds of oatmeal, 100 pounds of mixed fruit, 25 pounds of salt, 10-dollar's worth of "spices and knicknacks, and some quinine to break up colds." This outfit would cost about \$200, but Ladue cautioned that no one should start for the Klondike with less than \$500.⁷

The easiest way to get to the Klondike, he explained to Steffens, was to take a ship from the Puget Sound ports to St. Michael. There passage could be had on one of the river steamers plying the Yukon during the seven months the river was navigable. But if an individual wished to rely on his own resources, the route recommended by Ladue was across Chilkoot Pass.⁸

In staking a claim, the prospector was governed by Canadian regulations. He must mark off 500 feet along the bed of a stream, where no one had laid a claim, and put up four stakes with his name on them, one at each corner. Trees would be blazed across the ends. Next,

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., p. 960.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 960-961.

⁸ Ibid., p. 961.

the claim would be registered and a \$15 fee paid to the register of claims. A surveyor would then visit the claim and make a formal survey. Claims ran about ten to the mile, and were limited only by the width of the ground between the two "benches, or hillsides that closed in the stream."⁹

Steffens observed in his article on Ladue that "he was the weariest looking man I ever saw." This was a prophetic statement, because Ladue's days were numbered. For the next year, Ladue's name was a "household word." He was referred to by the press as "the Barney Barnato of the Klondike"; his picture appeared in advertisements endorsing "Dr. Green's Nervura Blood and Nerve Remedy"; he was listed as an author of a book about the Klondike; and news media carried accounts that he had been named president and managing director of the Joseph Ladue Gold Mining and Development Company.

Unfortunately for Ladue, the years on the Yukon had taken their toll. In 1898, while the great stampede he had helped spark was at its height, he died of tuberculosis.¹⁰

Ladue's words regarding waiting until the spring of 1898, before starting for the Klondike, came too late for thousands. By July 27 over 1,500 cheechakos had sailed from Seattle. Thousands of others were clamoring for space aboard the first northbound ship. Every train that pulled into the city was crowded with gold seekers. Hotels, flophouses, restaurants, and saloons were jammed. The dockside area was choked with people and wagons. Circulating through the multitude were steerers hired to bring men to the various outfitting stores. Similar scenes were being enacted at Tacoma, Portland, and Vancouver.¹¹

B. The Chilkoot Trail in 1897: A Description

I. From Dyca to Sheep Camp

In 1897, as heretofore, new arrivals at the head of Taiya Inlet found that their outfits must be lightered ashore. In the spring, when the first wave of prospectors landed, Dyca consisted of the Indian village and Healy & Wilson's Trading Post. By September

⁹ Ibid., p. 963.

¹⁰ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 109.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 112.

three saloons, a hotel and restaurant, and a large tent city had sprung up along the wagon road leading inland. Meals and lodging were expensive. The harbor was non-existent, the anchorage poor, as the water shoaled rapidly from 40 fathoms onto the tidal flats. A long wharf, which promised better for the future, was soon under construction.¹²

There was a good wagon road from the beach to the first crossing of the Taiya. The bridge which had spanned the glacial stream at this point had been washed out by a spring freshet and had not been rebuilt. Supplies were ferried across the Taiya at a charge of five dollars per ton. The tariff for passengers was 50 cents each. Above the ferry, the road followed the east bank of the Taiya for a short distance, when the river was again crossed by a ford. In the late summer and autumn the water was about knee-deep, but in the spring a ferry was in operation.¹³

At Finnigan's Point, five miles from Dyea, the river was forded a second time. In September 1897 the width of the Taiya at this point was about 50 feet and its depth 18 inches. Here there was a tent camp, a blacksmith shop, saloon, and restaurant, where meals and lodging could be had.

From Finnigan's Point to the head of canoe navigation, the trail crossed a glacial moraine and several boggy areas. With a little effort and some expense, a traveler reported, it could be greatly improved.¹⁴ At the head of navigation the Taiya was crossed again, this time on a foot-log, with a good ford for animals just above the log.¹⁵

¹² *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898. Vessels could also be unloaded onto a rocky point about a mile from the beach, and the outfits hauled into Dyea in wagons. The town was located on a flat, with one branch of the Taiya River flowing into Taiya Inlet to the west and a second branch to the east.

¹³ *Ibid.* The Taiya meanders across a heavily timbered bottom, and, except during the spring run-off and following a heavy rain, is not very deep.

¹⁴ During the autumn, Pat Finnigan and his sons corduroyed the trail from the point to the head of navigation, and sought to collect a toll of two dollars per horse. *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 247.

¹⁵ The Indians, when the river was high, could force their canoes up the Taiya to this point. A number of the prospectors, arriving in the first wave, hired Indians to transport them and their outfits up the Taiya to this point. Martinsen, *Black Sand and Gold*, pp. 19-21.

From here to the mouth of the canyon, the trail followed the river over level terrain.¹⁶

Before entering the canyon, the river was crossed again, this time on a log bridge. Here a toll was collected.¹⁷ The trail then zig-zagged its way up a steep hillside. Many people considered the next mile and one-half the worst part of the Chilkoot Trail. The hillside was heavily wooded, "the surface rough and covered with decayed vegetable matter which in spots . . . [was] worked into deep mud by animals passing over it." There were many boulders, with some short, steep ascents and descents in and out of small gulches. A foreman and eight men, paid from the proceeds of the tolls, were employed to keep this section of the trail passable. They had corduroyed the worst places.¹⁸

Above the canyon, the trail crossed on a bridge to the west side of the Taiya and entered "a romantic spot covered with spruce and cotton-wood trees." Here a settlement, known as Camp Pleasant or Pleasant Valley, was located. After passing through the gloom of the canyon, it was easy to see how it came by its name. Pleasant Valley was a good place to stop, as there was good water and plenty of firewood. Sheep Camp was two miles farther up the trail, where the traveler again forded the Taiya. Sheep Camp, which was about 1,000 feet above tidewater, was where most of the cheechakos spent their first night on the Chilkoot Trail. Between this point and Deep Lake, a distance of 11 miles, there was no timber. The movement of one's outfit between these two points accordingly required "care and the exercise of good judgement."¹⁹ In September 1897 there were at Sheep Camp two restaurants and one gambling saloon.

¹⁶ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; Ogilvie, *The Klondike*, p. 107. Fred H. Lysons, *Map-Guide: Seattle to Dawson* . . . (Seattle, 1897), p. 14. Except when the water was high, during the spring run-off and following a heavy rain, the Taiya was easily forded. The current was swift, the water milky colored.

¹⁷ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897. Professional packers were charged one dollar, while miners paid 50 cents for use of the bridge and the trail beyond.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*; Field Reconnaissance of the Taiya Canyon, Aug. 19, 1969. During the period, August 19-21, 1969, I made a field reconnaissance of the Chilkoot Trail. The canyon of the Taiya River is a narrow cleft, about two miles long and several hundred feet wide.

¹⁹ Ogilvie, *The Klondike*, pp. 107-108; Lysons, *Map-Guide*, pp. 14-15; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897.

2. From Sheep Camp to the Summit

From Sheep Camp to Stonehouse was about one mile, with a rise in elevation of nearly 600 feet.²⁰

This portion of the trail passed "over a rough surface covered with immense rocks which by some convulsion of nature have been detached from the mountain side and rolled down to the bank of the creek." Beyond Stonehouse the surface was more regular and the traveling easier, as one was now above the timber line, and "out of the mud which is found on the timbered ground." About one-half mile beyond Stonehouse, Long Hill was ascended, the crest of which was about 600 feet above Stonehouse.²¹ From this point, the traveler went down a short incline and up another steep grade to The Scales. He was now about 3,000 feet above sea level. The Scales were within three-fourths of a mile of the summit of Chilkoot. At The Scales a sharp ascent to the summit of nearly 600 feet is commenced. In the late summer the ground is covered with scree, which makes traveling difficult, especially when there is insufficient snow to cover the ground. After a sleet storm this part of the route becomes not only difficult but dangerous.²²

²⁰ Stonehouse was "an immense square-shaped rock somewhat resembling a house", and was named from the fact that it had an overhanging shelf which afforded some shelter in heavy storms. *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898; 1898; Robert C. Kirk, *Twelve Months on the Klondike* (London, 1899), p. 45.

²¹ Long Hill bears some resemblance to a whale's back. Many travelers considered the walk up Long Hill as the "most tedious and tiresome strip of the whole journey--even more so than the summit." Long Hill is about one-half mile wide and slopes off "right and left toward the mountains, forming on each side a sort of ravine." Many prospectors pitched their tents and cached their outfits at the foot of Long Hill. Once they had got all their gear up to this point, they would "stake a tackle and fall on the top of the hill, fasten their sleds to the rope and by . . . taking hold of the uphill end, walk down and draw the sled loads up and continue this until" they had gained the crest. *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898; Field Reconnaissance of the Chilkoot Trail, Aug. 20, 1969, E. C. Bears.

²² Ogilvie, *Klondike Guide*, pp. 107-108. After a heavy snow the favored route follows the bed of the Taiya, which has a uniform slope. With the advent of warm weather, the snow above Sheep Camp softens, and on a warm or rainy day is difficult to travel through. Following a cold snap, it would freeze, and the traveler had to cut steps in the steeper spots.

3. From the Summit to Lake Bennett

The first snow encountered by travelers in the summer is between the summit and Crater Lake. From the summit to Lake Lindeman, a distance of 12 miles, there is a descent of about 1,300 feet. The only steep part of the trail is between the pass and Crater Lake. The trail followed by the Indian packers kept to the hillsides and avoided this sharp descent, but did not reach the level of the lake until a mile farther north. A trail opened by the prospectors bore directly for the lake, where in the summer and fall of 1897 and 1898 there were boats. By using the ferry a mile of packing could be avoided. A three and one-half mile portage brought the adventurers out on Long Lake. Part of this trail is through a "small box canyon, where the walking, except on the snow, is hard, on account of boulders." Near the head of Long Lake, "a small desolate valley opens up," which feature, for some reason known but to the men of '97 and '98, they referred to as Happy Camp. In September 1897 there was still a little dead timber here, but a traveler reported, "at its present rate of consumption this will soon disappear, when the first fuel will be found at Deep Lake."²³

Boats were available in the summer of 1897 to provide transportation three and one-half-miles down Long Lake to the Deep Lake portage. For the individual traveling afoot, on leaving Happy Camp, the valley narrows again for about one-fourth mile, and at the head of Long Lake the trail swings sharply to the right and zig-zags up a granite hogback overlooking the lake. The hogback is followed the length of the lake, when the trail descends for the portage between Long and Deep lakes.

Deep Lake could be crossed by ferry, or the traveler could, after crossing the stream connecting Long and Deep lakes, take the trail skirting the lake to the north. At the lower end of Deep Lake, the routes converged, and an easy trail skirts the rim of the canyon overlooking the stream connecting Deep Lake with Lake Lindeman and the wild country toward the Coast Mountains. About three-quarters of a mile from the head of Lake Lindeman a sharp descent is commenced. In September 1897 there was a large camp at the point where the trail struck the lake. Here many boats were being built. No meals or lodging could be had, and a traveler reported, "Money has no value as compared with food."²⁴

²³ Ibid., p. 108; *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897.

²⁴ *Seattle, Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; *Field Reconnaissance of Chilkoot Trail*, Aug. 20, 1969, E. C. Bearss.

From the landing at Lake Lindeman, a boat ride would carry the miner and his outfit about five miles. At the lower end of the lake a three-quarter mile portage over a high sandy ridge brought him to Lake Bennett. The remainder of the trip to the Klondike, when the waterway was open, could be made by boat, although many chose to take advantage of the portages around Miles Canyon and the Whitehorse Rapids rather than risking their clumsy craft in whitewater. In addition, on these narrow, shallow lakes, travelers had to guard against sudden gales, which churned up mountainous waves capable of swamping their boats.²⁵

4. Getting One's Outfit Across Chilkoot

The moving of one's outfit from Sheep Camp to Deep Lake required planning and the exercise of good judgment. During the spring, it was usually sledged to The Scales, and from there packed to the summit, about 1,300 yards. The entire outfit should be packed from Sheep Camp to the summit of Chilkoot as rapidly as possible, and cached. In caching the outfit, it was well covered, because a sudden storm might close the pass for several days. Experienced miners included dry kindling in their outfit for use in emergencies.

From the summit the outfit could be taken over snow and ice until open water was reached. Early in the year, this might be as far as the foot of Lake Marsh or Lake Lebarge.²⁶

Until mid-May, a miner's outfit was usually transported over ice and snow on sleds. As March was the most favorable month for this mode of travel, those wishing to take advantage of this left Portland and the Puget Sound ports in February.²⁷

The prospector was advised to allow about two weeks to move his outfit from Dyea to the summit. In the spring of 1895, Mr. Sallee had made the trip from Seattle to the Klondike, by way of Chilkoot Pass, in 30 days, without dogs, having an outfit of 900 pounds.²⁸

During the summer months, supplies could be freighted by wagons from Dyea to Finnigan's Point, a distance of five miles. Pack-

²⁵ Ogilvie, *The Klondike*, p. 108.

²⁶ Lysons, *Map-Guide*, p. 15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

horses could be engaged from there to The Scales. Although it was difficult to get horses over the summit, in the summer of 1897 four or five sure-footed and experienced pack animals were taken over, and employed between the summit and Lake Lindeman.

If the horses were all engaged, the cheechako could either pack his outfit from the summit to Lake Lindeman, about 12 miles, or he could pack part way and ferry the intervening lakes (Crater, Long, and Deep), which totaled more than five miles. Many men familiar with the area considered it a mistake to take pack horses over the pass, because there was little forage for them on either side of the summit, and those planning to do so would have to carry fodder. By the fall of 1897 there were many carcasses lying along the trail, "brought about by the neglect of this precaution."

If the prospectors preferred not to use wagons, their outfits could be freighted in canoes from Dyea to the head of navigation, about one mile beyond Finnigan's Point. As the Taiya was a swift and treacherous stream, boating, besides being difficult, involved possible loss of one's outfit.²⁹

C. Traffic Zooms on the Chilkoot Trail in 1897

1. The Historic Scene

As to be expected with the attention of the English-speaking world focused on the Klondike, newspapers, periodicals, and publishing houses clamored to give the reading public what it wanted. Adventurers who kept journals or had a flair for writing found a ready market. Popular newspapers and periodicals made arrangements and dispatched special correspondents into the Yukon Basin. Consequently, there is a plethora of primary accounts describing the trials and tribulations of the stampedeers as they scaled Chilkoot and descended the Yukon to the Klondike. My story of travel over the Chilkoot Trail in 1896 and 1897, is based on these journals and diaries, supplemented by my observations on a reconnaissance of the Chilkoot Trail in August 1969.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 20; Ogilvie, *Klondike Guide*, p. 108. The first man to cross Chilkoot Pass with a pack animal was from Seattle. He took a white mule across. He was laughed at for his folly, but he succeeded and reached Crater Lake with his animal, which was somewhat cut about the legs, but otherwise unhurt. Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, pp. 48-49.

2. Robert Oglesby Crosses Chilkoot Pass in 1896

The *Cosmopolitan Magazine* for September 1897 carried an article by Robert Oglesby titled, "Account of a Six Months' Trip Through the Yukon Gold Fields." Oglesby had boarded a ship bound for the Alaskan Panhandle in late May 1896, three months before George Carmack and his brothers-in-law struck it rich. Booked aboard *City of Topeka* were 12 others likewise bound for the Yukon. Oglesby was drawn by mutual interest to four Montanans and a young Swede, and they determined to join forces.³⁰

The run up the coast to Juneau from Puget Sound took five days. Disembarking, the six partners bought their outfits at reasonable prices. Each man's rations consisted of 100 pounds of flour, 50 pounds of bacon, and 25 pounds of beans, along with coffee, sugar, and several pounds of dried fruit and vegetables. These supplies were deemed sufficient to subsist the men for two to three months. At this time the Canadian government had not established the regulation that persons entering the Yukon must bring with them rations to last for 12 months.

Oglesby and his companions each equipped themselves with two pairs of extra heavy blankets, along with rubber boots and stout climbing shoes. When they had added to these their camp equipment, boat building tools, prospecting gear, and firearms, they found that the average weight of "each man's grub-stake was 300 pounds."³¹

For ten dollars apiece, the captain of a small coastal schooner agreed to transport them to Dyea. With a favorable wind, the vessel made the run from Juneau and up Lynn Canal in 24 hours. When they landed at Dyea, they found that Sam Herron had taken over as manager of Healy & Wilson's Trading Post. He had brought in pack-horses and had improved the trail as far as Sheep Camp. In fact, the brawny Scotchman had a monopoly of Indians, horses, and anything else a traveler wished. Herron agreed to pack their outfits to Sheep Camp on his horses and to provide Indians to lug their gear over the summit to Lake Lindeman for \$14 per hundred pounds.³²

³⁰ Robert Oglesby, "Account of a Six Months' Trip Through the Yukon Gold Fields," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Sept. 1897, pp. 523-527.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 523-524.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 424; *The Dyea Trail*, "Special Illustrated Edition, August 1898"; Harry De Windt, *Through the Gold-fields of Alaska to Bering Strait* (New York, 1898), p. 14. Herron lived in a comfortable cabin, near the trading post. The horses were pastured on a 20-acre field.

The ride up to Sheep Camp was made in one day. Oglesby found the trail as far as the canyon good, although the Taiya was forded four times. In the canyon, the trail led along the east side, "through thick timber, over fallen trees, up and down hill, through snow-drifts and across numerous small streams." It took eight hours to reach Sheep Camp, so named "because of the number of mountain sheep formerly killed here." Nearby were shelters of brush and blankets belonging to the Indians who were to pack their outfits across Chilkoot. Seated on the ground were a number of young bucks, playing poker, with beans for chips.³³

They broke camp next day at 2 a.m. At this hour the crust that had formed on the snow during the night was hard enough to support their weight. The Indians fastened their packs on their backs with cloth straps, the men carrying from 100 to 150 pounds, the squaws about 70.

When they reached Lake Lindeman in the first week of June they found it filled with floating ice, all of which disappeared within 72 hours. The timber near the lake was spruce and pine, but of no great size. The partners were compelled to beat their way back from the lake several miles to find trees that would square more than six or eight inches.

After eight days' hard work, they secured 450 feet of six-inch lumber, which they carried to a mountain stream and made into a raft. In rafting the timber down to camp, the raft collided with a large rock, and the prospectors were pitched into the icy water. They managed to salvage the lumber and built two boats. These craft were flat-bottomed, sharp at one end, three-foot broad in the middle, with a depth of two and one-half feet. The oars were hewn from small trees with axes. Each vessel was fitted with a mast, having a small wooden pulley wheel at the top, by which a square sail could be lowered or raised. One sail was made from a canvas wagon-cover, the other from old pieces of bagging.³⁴

While the adventurers worked on the boats, they met and exchanged gossip with several parties camped nearby. All these groups, except one, consisted of prospectors. The exception consisted of four whiskey smugglers, en route from Juneau to Fortymile and Circle City.

³³ Oglesby, "Account of a Six Month Trip Through the Yukon Gold Fields," *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, Sept. 1897, p. 524.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 525.

They had with them 40 kegs of rotgut, each with a capacity of ten gallons. They boasted that whiskey costing four dollars a gallon, including the packing charge, could be peddled to the saloon keepers for between \$18 and \$20 per gallon.³⁵

The boats were completed and loaded by June 13, 1896, and the six-man company cast off for Sixtymile.

3. The Canadians Join the Stampede

J. H. E. Secretan was living in Ottawa in 1897, when news of the discovery of gold in the Klondike reached the Canadian capital. A company of adventurers was organized and Secretan elected leader. No time was wasted in purchasing railroad tickets on the Canadian Pacific Railroad for Vancouver, British Columbia. Detraining at Vancouver, Secretan and his company took the ferry to Victoria, a port of call for most ships on the Puget Sound-Juneau run.³⁶

On April 15, 1897, passage having been secured on *City of Topeka*, Secretan's company boarded the steamer. Secretan would remain in Victoria to complete the purchase of the expedition's outfit. When she sailed from Victoria, the ship carried from 200 to 300 passengers and a deck-load of lumber, as well as other supplies. The only Canadians aboard, besides Secretan's party, were a detachment of 25 North West Mounted Police en route to duty stations in the Yukon.

Secretan, his business in Victoria completed, sailed for the land of gold on April 25 aboard the steamer *City of Mexico*. Disembarking at Juneau at 10 p.m., on the 28th, he rushed ashore to purchase passage for himself and the supplies to Dyea. He found that a makeshift fleet--consisting of *Rustler*, the flagship, and *Gasoline* and *Alert*--were providing transportation from Juneau to Dyea. Secretan secured space aboard *Alert*.³⁷

The run up Lynn Canal was uneventful, and *Alert* anchored at 4 a.m., May 1, off Dyea in six fathoms of water. As the vessel drew only six feet, he and the other passengers were in a quandary as to why the captain had dropped anchor so far from shore. A cold wind was blowing off the glaciers and snowfields at the head of the valley, and Secretan determined to employ the two Peterborough canoes

³⁵ Ibid., p. 424.

³⁶ J. H. E. Secretan, *To Klondyke and Back: A Journey Down the Yukon from its Source to its Mouth* (London, 1898), pp. 1-17.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 17, 34.

he had purchased in Victoria to get ashore. Assisted by another passenger, he launched the "frail barque and tried to make land." With the tide ebbing, they soon found why *Alert* had anchored in 6 fathoms. Before they had paddled very far, a sounding showed that the depth of water was only seven inches. It soon shoaled to four. They were compelled to disembark and shoulder the canoes, and "march wearily over the long dreary mudflat in the direction of Healy and Wilson's store."³⁸

At the shore they encountered genial Sam Herron, and their spirits soared when he pulled out a bottle of whiskey and offered them a drink. From Herron, Secretan learned the location of his company's camp. As he walked over to join his companions, he saw that hundreds had preceded him. At Dyea on May 1, 1897, there were at least "a thousand people, men, women, children, and unweaned babies" determined to cross Chilkoot Pass and reach the Klondike.³⁹

Secretan and his men, after the last of their outfit had been put ashore from *Alert*, built several small flat-bottomed boats, 15 feet in length. These were loaded with the expedition's gear and "dragged" up the Taiya six miles, to the head of navigation. Indian packers were then hired at ten cents a pound to "stagger over" a mountain pass with a load on their backs that made one "tired to look at or pay for." Secretan voiced the opinion that the packers were "teetotally unreliable, and will drop your most precious belongings anywhere, upon the slightest provocation of another cent from the first stranger he meets. But he is a very necessary ruffian until the Chilcoot [sic] Pass is abolished."⁴⁰

Above The Scales, they saw that an "enterprising capitalist" had established a crude aerial tramway, the precursor of more sophisticated ones of the future. He had positioned a wire cable

³⁸ Harry De Windt, an Alaskan explorer, had had a somewhat similar experience at Dyea. He recalled that his party had been compelled to wade across the tidal flat for over a mile. As the crowd splashed ashore from *Rustler*, it looked "like an invading army. The water . . . is scarcely knee-deep, but an occasional hole lets one in over the waist, which adds to the general hilarity of the proceedings but does not improve the temper or the provisions we carry." De Windt, *Through the Gold-Fields*, p. 13.

³⁹ Secretan, *To Klondyke and Back*, pp. 34-36.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

to lift supplies up the last 600 feet of Chilkoot. The lift was powered by "two wretched horses," plodding around a circle, "winding up sleigh-loads of supplies and passengers at one and one-half cents a pound." They were told that this man was clearing \$150 per day off eager cheechakos.⁴¹

The day Secretan crossed the pass, May 8, it was raining on the Pacific slope, but by the time they reached the Scales it was snowing. "With bewildering rapidity the air filled with "particles of whirling snow, and in less than five minutes" he could only "faintly distinguish the heels of the man immediately ahead . . . which . . . were generally on a level" with his eyes.⁴²

The summit was no place to linger. A cold wind was howling, and stacked about were tons of supplies packed to the summit and cached. Secretan and his company pushed on to Lake Lindeman, the next stopping point on the way to the Klondike.⁴³

4. Ed Lung and Bill Stacey Pack Across Chilkoot

Ed Lung, an unemployed Tacoma accountant, sailed from that city for Juneau on May 24, 1897, aboard *City of Mexico*. Stops were made at Seattle and Victoria to load more passengers and baggage. At Juneau, the cheechakos thronged ashore, and Lung took advantage of the opportunity to complete his outfit. The run up Lynn Canal was made aboard *Rustler*, "a narrow, unseaworthy-looking vessel which was much smaller than the *Mexico*." She was "loaded to the guards; so crowded that men had to sleep on boxes, tables, supplies and all over the decks."

While en route up Lynn Canal, the "old tub" was buffeted by a gale, but the weather had cleared by the time she reached the head of Taiya Inlet. Lung and his companions crowded the rail. They could see the village and the wall of mountains. As they gazed at the scene, they "wondered which was the high and treacherous pass known as Chilkoot. We shivered when we looked at those giant mountains, for we knew we would have to transport our outfits across this part of the coast range to get into the Klondike."⁴⁴

They went ashore in lighters, and Lung joined forces with Bill Stacey, a tall, husky ex-policeman from Tacoma. After they had made camp on the west side of the Taiya, Lung crossed the river

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 44.

⁴² Ibid., pp. 43-44.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 47.

⁴⁴ Martinsen, *Black Sand and Gold*, pp. 13-16.

and visited the Indian village. There he succeeded in his efforts to hire a Chilkoot, Indian Joe Whiskers, to use his "hand-carved, brightly-painted dugout canoe" to transport their outfits upstream to the head of navigation, known as Canoe Landing.

It took two days to pole and pull the canoe upstream. As they ascended the Taiya, the river became swifter. Stacey and the Indian got out and walked along the bank, pulling on long ropes, while Lung stood up in the stern, pushing and steering the craft with a long pole. Indian Joe Whiskers wore a harness around his head and shoulders, known as a "tump line."⁴⁵

At Canoe Landing, Lung and Stacey thanked Indian Joe Whiskers for his service and paid him in silver. They observed that he was delighted with his bargain, especially as some of the stamperders had taken advantage of the Indians and had paid them off in Confederate money.⁴⁶

Lung and Stacey divided their outfit into packs of 65 to 75 pounds each. Two days and a number of trips were required to get all their gear to Pleasant Valley. From there they pushed on to Sheep Camp and then The Scales. Caches were established at each of these points, while they packed their outfit to the next camp. Ed Lung recalled that the trail from The Scales to the summit was

like climbing an icy stairway to hell!

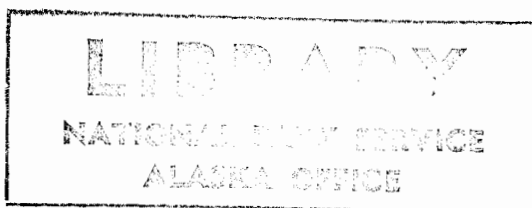
Our tremendous loads cut into our backs and weighed heavy against our straining muscles. My seven-foot whipsaw was the most awkward to carry; but the heaviest and most unwieldy was my large Yukon sled. Stacey and I each had one, and it was necessary to carry them on our backs to scale that last thousand feet up the mountain.

Some of the fellows couldn't take it and slid back down the mountain to The Scales . . . Some even fainted and died on the trail, but most of us pressed on.⁴⁷

By June 13, 1897, Lung and Stacey had packed most of their outfit to the summit. On his last trip Lung was felled with ptomaine poisoning. Overcome with nausea he collapsed, convinced that he was about to die. An Indian packer carried word of his sickness to

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 17-20. The "tump line" enabled the Indian to exert great force as he pulled.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 20.



⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

Stacey. It was after dark when Stacey found and revived him with a powerful shot of pain-killer. Stacey then packed the sleds, and, after lashing them together, they shot down the north slope and out onto ice-covered Crater Lake.

Dawn was breaking as Stacey kindled a fire from wood they carried in their packs. After he had made some coffee and doctored Lung with several large doses of pain-killer, Stacey returned to Sheep Camp to get a box of gear he had left with the Indians.⁴⁸

By the time Stacey returned, Lung had recovered sufficiently to travel. The sleds were packed, and they started down the trail. As they pushed ahead, the trail "showed evidence of hundreds of stampedes having recently passed. . . . The snow was ground to a dirty coffee color and the sun was melting it rapidly. Already, the trail was mushy, with little rivulets forming."

A short distance above Long Lake, they found their way temporarily barred by a crevasse that had opened in the snow bank. Peering over the edge, Lung saw a man's hat lying on a ledge. If someone had fallen into the crevasse it was too late to help, and the partners, along with a dozen other stampedes, bridged the crevasse with one of their sleds, which was first unloaded.

Although the ice on Long Lake was rotten and about to break up, they determined to take their chances. With Stacey in the lead, the cheechakos cautiously inched their way down Long Lake. The next day they reached Lake Lindeman, a beautiful body of water "surrounded by snow-peaked mountains and dark-green forests."⁴⁹

Ed Lung and Bill Stacey pitched their tent near hundreds of others, and began building a boat. Although it was mid-June, Lake Lindeman was still frozen over. It was June 25 before the exultant shout was raised, "The ice is clear enough to start!" By this time they had finished, with the assistance of two others, a 20-foot, flat-bottomed boat. The craft was hurriedly loaded, and all jumped in and shoved off. Within several hours, the surface of Lake Lindeman was "dotted" with boats and barges, their bows pointed toward the Klondike.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 22-26. The pain-killer was about 75 percent alcohol.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 26-36.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 37-41.

5. The Spurr Party and the Indian Packers

Edward Spurr, unlike the others who crossed Chilkoot Pass in June 1897, was not motivated by the thought of finding the mother lode. A scientist, Spurr was employed by the United States Geological Survey to investigate and report on mineral resources in the Upper Yukon District of Alaska. Leaving Washington, D. C., in May 1897, Spurr proceeded to Juneau, where he secured passage for his party aboard the tug *Scrambler*. Designed and built for transportation of freight, *Scrambler* had been pressed into passenger service without "the formality of making alterations." She might have carried comfortably a dozen passengers, but there were 50 to 60 aboard. Most of them were stampedeers. Also aboard were two men who had contracted to carry the first regularly scheduled mail into the Yukon District, and a Catholic priest en route to his mission among the Eskimo, far down the Yukon.⁵¹

It was starting to get dark by the time *Scrambler* entered Dyea Inlet. The surf was too heavy to attempt to get ashore, so the vessel lay-to until morning. After landing, the passengers pitched their tents near Healy & Wilson's Trading Post.

Spurr headed for the village to make arrangements for packers. Unlike many whites, he was impressed with the Indians, and reported that they were "by no means ill-looking people." The men were strong and powerfully built. The women were inferior to the men in looks, and had a habit of painting their faces uniformly black with a mixture of soot and grease, "a covering which is said to prevent snow-blindness in the winter and to be a protection in summer against the mosquitoes." Some had painted only the upper part of their faces, and the black part stopped in a straight line, giving the effect of a half-mask.⁵²

At the time Spurr visited their village, the Indians were catching and drying small fish.⁵³ After some hard bargaining on the

⁵¹ Edward Spurr, "From the Coast to the Golden Klondike," *Outing: The World's Magazine of Amateur Sports and Recreation*, Sept. 1897, pp. 523-524.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 525. Another traveler reported that while the Chilkoot and Chilkat were a "fine-looking, well-built race," they were the "laziest and most impudent scoundrels I have ever met with." Their once picturesque dress had been discarded, through association with the white man, and they now wore tweeds and trousers. De Windt, *Through the Gold-Fields*, pp. 17-18.

⁵³ Spurr, "From the Coast to the Golden Klondike," *Outing Magazine*, Sept. 1897, p. 525. These fish were very oily, and when dried could be lighted at one end and used as candles.

part of the Chilkoot, Spurr closed a deal with them to pack his party's gear across the summit. Spurr's people had brought with them from Juneau lumber with which to build a boat on Lake Lindeman, but the packers' tariff was so high that it was left on the beach. Spurr was told that he could purchase lumber at Lake Lindeman from Rudolph and Marcus, who had packed a steam engine across the mountains and had established a sawmill and were cutting lumber.⁵⁴

It was late in June when Spurr's party left Dyea. At the mouth of the canyon, the Taiya was crossed on a fallen log. There was unexpected trouble at Sheep Camp, when the Indians struck for higher wages. They claimed that the June sun had softened the snow, making the climb more difficult and dangerous. Their demands caused considerable haggling. Finally, some of the miners, intent on reaching the land of gold as soon as possible, yielded.

At 3 p.m. the Indian packers moved out. At this season they preferred to cross the deepest snow between midnight and 3 a.m. for in those hours a crust formed, which in daytime was softened by the sun. Their way

soon led us on to a glacier-like field of snow, which often sounded hollow to our feet as we trod, and at intervals we could hear the water rushing beneath. The grade became steep, and the fog closed around us thickly joining with the twilight of the Alaska June night to make a peculiar obscurity which gave things a weird ghostly appearance.

Near The Scales they saw a deaf-and-dumb Indian and his squaw drying their moccasins before a fire kindled from a few stunted bushes. He explained by signs that the trail was dangerous, and that it was too dark to see clearly. They waited until midnight when another packer came up. The rest of the ascent was over snow.⁵⁵

Spurr and his men, as they traveled between Crater and Long Lakes, were plagued by difficulties similar to those encountered by Lung and Stacey. Occasionally, they "walked over a stream on an archway of snow and ice, and . . . trod cautiously along its banks, while the river broken loose from its covering, ran turbulently between its icy banks." The upper lakes were frozen, but the lower ones were covered with knee-deep slush. On several occasions a foot thrust through rotten ice. By the time they reached Long Lake, the ice had broken up. They were compelled to skirt the precipitous shoreline. It now began to rain, which changed

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 525.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 528.

first to sleet and then to snow. It was 9 a.m., 18 hours after they had left Sheep Camp, when they reached Lake Lindeman.⁵⁶

The Indians were paid off. Most of them started immediately back over the trail, without resting, intending to travel all night and be in Sheep Camp the next morning.

Spurr had sent one of his men ahead, and he had succeeded in purchasing a boat. This saved the party about two weeks, the time estimated to be required to whipsaw lumber and build a craft. The next morning, after embarking their outfit, they sailed down Lake Lindeman with a fair wind.⁵⁷

6. Joaquin Miller Travels Light

Colorful Joaquin Miller, the grey-bearded "Poet of the Sierras," a veteran of earlier stampedes, was sent to report on the Klondike goldrush by William Randolph Hearst. Although he was almost 60 years old, Miller announced, prior to his departure that there was "no possible chance of famine" and that "the dangers and hardships and cost of getting through have been greatly exaggerated." Miller boasted that he was traveling light, with little in the way of provisions or equipment--a fact that was to cause him great distress before 1897 passed into history.⁵⁸

Miller sailed from Seattle for Dyea aboard the *City of Mexico*. His baggage consisted of a carpetbag, and his available funds totaled less than \$100. It was his intent to walk over Chilkoot Pass, build a boat, and shoot the White Horse Rapids.⁵⁹

It was in mid-August when Miller started up the Chilkoot Trail. A ground fog enveloped the area on the morning Miller left Sheep Camp. Suddenly the fog lifted, and looking up the poet-reporter saw

a splendid example of American manhood! It made my heart thrill and throb with pride in my great people. We saw . . . the brave men climbing with their packs, pike in hand, holding on with one hand, holding the pike in the other. Sixty pounds, seventy-five, and one hundred, and in one rare case a giant French courier with two hundred pounds.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 528.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 529.

⁵⁸ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Joaquin Miller, "How I Missed Being a Millionaire," *Overland Monthly*, Dec. 1897, pp. 518-519.

We raised a shout, and up the line it ran, the long, steep, and tortuous line that reached from a bluff above us on and over and up till it lost itself in the clouds.

Miller now began to climb. It was not as difficult as it appeared. "The stupendous granite mountain, the home of the avalanche and the father of glaciers, melted away before us as we climbed, and in a single hour of brisk work, we stood against the summit, or rather between the big granite blocks that mark the summit." Although the climb was not as formidable as some had represented, Miller continued, "Yet, mark you, it is no boy's play; no man's play. It is a man's, and a big strong man's honest work, and takes strength of body, and nerve of soul."

In the pass and within ten feet of a snow bank, Miller plucked and ate a few raspberries, as he rested and looked down onto Crater Lake.⁶⁰

Pushing rapidly on, Miller reached Lake Lindeman and boated down to Dawson, where he arrived by the first week in September. When he disembarked at Dawson, Miller, who made "a fetish of traveling light," pulled an onion from his pocket. He was shocked when a bystander offered him one dollar for it. Miller declined to sell, and the offer was increased to five dollars.⁶¹

7. The Tom Scott Party Goes into the Ferry Business

Thomas Scott, a Canadian, and two fellow countrymen landed at Dyea in late August. Their interest in the Klondike had been sparked by the publicity given the region by the arrival of *Excelsior* and *Portland*. They brought with them from Victoria two mares, a bay and a sorrel. By this time the United States had designated Dyea a sub-port of entry. A representative of the Treasury Department had taken up station at Dyea and was collecting duty on all Canadian goods landed on United States territory. When he checked the trio's outfit, the collector told them they owed \$290. They were unable to pay, so he had the deputy marshal seize their mares.⁶²

⁶⁰ Ibid., pp. 519-520.

⁶¹ Martensen, *Black Sand and Gold*, p. 200; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 17.

⁶² Thomas S. Scott, "Some Experiences on the Chilkoot Pass," *The Canadian Magazine*, Feb. 1898, pp. 329-332.

Discouraged by this development, the trio crossed over to Skagway, the boomtown that had been established four weeks before. Good fortune now came their way. By September 1, it was apparent to even its loudest boosters that the White Pass Trail "was all but impassable," and the demand for horses slumped. When the customs officials offered the two mares for sale at public auction, the market was bearish. Scott and his partners, through an agent, Jack Cavanaugh, were able to buy back their mares.⁶³

The trio had planned to take their outfit up the Taiya in a boat to the Canoe Landing. From there they would employ their packhorses. It was found that this would be impossible, because at this season the river was too low to float their heavily-laden craft. They therefore arranged to have their outfit taken up to the ferry in a wagon. On Tuesday morning, September 7, having crossed to the east side of the river, they assembled their packs and placed them on the mares. The weights were adjusted to have the loads balanced within a few pounds--a box of groceries, 40 pounds, and a sack of bacon, 50 pounds, on one side; a sack of oats, 90 pounds, on the other; and 50 pounds of flour in the middle.⁶⁴

It was determined to advance to Sheep Camp in two stages. The first cache was established at Canyon City, a newly established tent camp, on the west side of the Taiya, below the mouth of the canyon. This phase of the operation was simple, as a wagon road had been opened from the ferry to Finnigan's Point. For the first mile above Finnigan's the trail bore inland, and rocks and mud were encountered. The Taiya was then recrossed. At this season the cold water "came very close to the tops of the big rubber boots."

From there to Canyon City, the trail led "over what looked like a broad water course, rising gradually to the canyon," a distance of two and one-half miles. When the Taiya was low, wagons could be driven this far without difficulty. The wagon road crossed and recrossed the river several times.⁶⁵

Several dancehall girls en route to the Klondike were seen by Scott and his companions. Attired as they were in short skirts and knee-boots, the ladies, as they stood daintily at the water's edge, experienced no difficulty in finding strong men to carry them "pick-a-back" across the icy Taiya.⁶⁶

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 333.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 335-336.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 336.

The route from Canyon City to Sheep Camp was more difficult. There were slippery, steep, and narrow places along the canyon trail, and if a horse were poorly shod he could come to grief, thus blocking the route. It took three days to advance the outfit to Sheep Camp.⁶⁷

Sheep Camp in September 1897 was a lively place, with four or five saloons under canvas; a big gambling tent, and hundreds of tents belonging to adventurers and packers. The area reminded travelers of an army encampment. At night every tent had a light and fire. There were two wooden structures. One was a store and private postoffice run by Foss, a Swede, "one of the few truthful men encountered along the trail"; and the other Palmer's "Hotel and Store." At Palmer's, meals and lodging could be had. The bunks were "the floor divided into sections by imaginary lines." Guests provided their own blankets, paid for their meals 75¢ in advance, and considered themselves fortunate to get sugar in their coffee.⁶⁸

Two to three trips per day were made by the trio with the mares, packing their outfit from Sheep Camp to The Scales.⁶⁹ The men packed the more awkward items--oars, whipsaws, etc. Wood for the camp at The Scales was toted up on the final trip. Scott recalled The Scales as a very inhospitable campground. It provided only water, and "supplied that when not wanted." The tents were pitched on a flat watercourse, deceptively dry, and the ropes tied to rocks. Heavy rains fell and flooded the area, the water bubbling up into the tents.⁷⁰

Before crossing Chilkoot Pass, they sold the two mares. After passing the summit, the trio assembled and launched their boat on Crater Lake. They then went to work ferrying cheechakos and their outfits down the lake to the Long Lake portage. Their charge for freight varied from three-fourths of a cent to two cents a pound, and it was possible to make four trips a day. As their boat had a capacity of one ton, they could on a good day net \$160.

Crater Lake was, if possible, a worse camp site than The Scales. The only level place to pitch a tent was near the trail, where the people cached their gear, or on the boulders between the glacier and the lake.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 336. One of the saloons was Arizona Charlie's.

⁶⁹ Each animal was loaded with 150 pounds for the trip up to The Scales.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 336-337.

One night two Californians were caught in a storm and along with another they took shelter in the trio's tent. There were now six in the 8-by-10-foot tent. When they ran out of wood the next day, after burning the tent poles, they concluded to wait until the storm abated before they took down the oars--which had been substituted as tent poles--to row across the lake to get wood. As they sat in the tent they told stories, and organized the "Society of Frozen Stars," the emblem of which, a five-pointed tobacco stamp, each wore on his coat.⁷¹

With the approach of cold weather and the knowledge that Crater Lake would soon be frozen over, Scott and his partners took their boat out of the water and pushed on to Lake Lindeman.

8. The Medill Party Loses Its Horses

Robert B. Medill of Oregon crossed Chilkoot Pass several days after the Scott party. He and several friends had reached Skagway from west coast cities aboard the steamer *Williamette* on September 4, 1897. They had brought with them from the United States several horses. A barge was hired to ferry the pack animals around Yakutania Point to Dyea.⁷²

On Monday, the 6th, the Medill party packed their ponies and headed up the road through Dyea. The village consisted of "a scattering of tents and two or three log shacks. Most of the inhabitants were Indians."⁷³

They led their ponies up the road about one and one-half miles to the ferry. Here they cached their outfits on the gravel, near the milky-colored Taiya. The rest of the day was spent shuttling their gear across the river, and nightfall found them camped on the east bank. Their tents were pitched on a bluff, commanding a view of the ferry.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 338.

⁷² Robert B. Medill, *Klondike Diary: True Diary Kept by Robert B. Medill on his Trip to the Klondike 1897-1898* (Portland, 1949), p. 22.

⁷³ Ibid. The Indian village was segregated, being located in the woods at the foot of the mountains. Their cabins were built on either side of a winding road, and were "filled with squaws and Indian children and Siwash dogs." Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 42.

⁷⁴ Medill, *Klondike Diary*, pp. 23, 26.

Before pushing on, a wagon was hired to transport part of the gear to Finnigan's Point, where the road ended. With each horse loaded with a 200-pound pack, the company covered this leg of the route in one trip. From Finnigan's Point, they packed to the mouth of the canyon. Knowing that they would have to ford the Taiya several times they pulled on hip boots. At the mouth of the canyon, a cache was established on the west side of the river, where there was a bench.⁷⁵

In passing through the canyon, the Medill party lost "nearly everything but our shirts. It was one grand splash, slide, and tumble. Horses going down all along the trail. Ours went down off and on. Once, all three were down at the same time."⁷⁶

Some enterprising fellows had improved the trail by bridging ravines and corduroying logs, and charged a toll. One stamper tried to bypass a toll bridge, but he got his horse up a deep ravine, where it lost its footing and fell. Four days were required by the Medill party to shuttle their outfit through the canyon. To add to their difficulties it rained on Thursday and Friday. By Friday, September 10, they had all their gear at Sheep Camp.⁷⁷

On Saturday they started for The Scales, but were forced to stop and establish a cache at Stonehouse, "a large stone among the smaller stones or rocks." Medill recorded that this was "the worst piece of trail in the whole Klondike trip. Up and down the rocks, into mud holes, horses and pack rolling down the mountain side." Here there was no timber, just brush and rock slides. One of the horses "rolled down among the rocks with four sacks on his back and stopped in a mud hole." They "took his pack off and got him up, but he refused to move." He was abandoned, and they pushed on with two horses.

During the four days that they were on this section of the trail, 40 to 50 horses broke their legs in falls and had to be destroyed. Frequently they were obliged to step over one, where it sprawled on the trail, a bullet hole in its head. On Tuesday, September 14, their second horse went down, and they were obliged to leave it. When they returned, someone had put it out of its misery.⁷⁸

At The Scales they beheld a strange camp. "The many tents scattered about looked like a strong wind had knocked them every which way." As there were no poles available to support the canvas, "the whole camp seemed to be on a big spree." Some stampedeers had oars which served as poles, but most of the tents were draped over and about the rocks.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 28.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 32.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 37.

Seven days were needed to pack their outfit from the Stonehouse cache to The Scales. Once this operation had been completed, Medill gave away the surviving pony, as it was all but impossible to take horses across the summit.

On Saturday, September 18, they climbed through the pass. Clouds and fog enveloped Chilkoot. As Medill reached the notch, a howling gale nearly swept him off his feet. It was impossible to hear each other, although they shouted at the top of their lungs. The trail was plainly marked by scars left on the rocks by thousands of cleated shoes.

They were within 50 yards of Crater Lake, before its location was ascertained by the waves lapping on the shore. Here they cached their packs near a large flat rock and covered them with canvas. Two more trips were made over the pass that afternoon, and a similar number on Sunday.⁸⁰

On Monday, although five inches of snow fell during the night, four round trips were made. By Tuesday they had all their outfit over but one pack. As Medill returned to get it, he encountered two men and two women, two-thirds of the way up the American side. They were leading two horses, which they were struggling to get across the summit. They were rimrocked on a ledge, "where one of the horses spread out his legs in terror and couldn't be budged." After Medill passed, he heard a shot and saw the horse topple over the cliff. When he returned the party had disappeared, and he presumed that they had got the other horse over the pass.

He had previously seen several men try to get an ox over the summit, but the beast had balked one-third of the way up and had to be shot.⁸¹

The Medill party hired Scott and his men to ferry their outfit to the lower end of Crater Lake for two cents per pound. One trip netted the boatmen \$100. They walked down the lakeshore and reached the portage at the lower end about the same time as Scott's boat. After caching their outfit, they hiked down to Long Lake. On Wednesday, the 22d, they began packing from Crater to Long Lake. While at Long Lake, Medill helped to load on the ferry the luggage of five showgirls belonging to a troupe en route to Dawson City.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 40-42.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 42.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 44-45. The girls' gear was sealed in zinc cubical containers, 16 inches on the edge. Ibid., p. 45.

On Saturday, September 25, 1897, eight inches of snow blanketed the ground, and they loaded their outfits on the ferry and passed Long Lake. By ferrying Deep Lake in a canvas boat and packing steadily, Medill and his partners completed the trek to Lake Lindeman on September 28, 22 days after leaving Dyea. The hardest part of the journey to the Klondike was over.⁸³

9. Miss Lyons Describes Her Experiences on Chilkoot

The popular periodical *Frank Leslie's Weekly Illustrated* sent one of its female reporters, Esther Lyons, into the Klondike. Miss Lyons, traveling with Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, went ashore at Dyea in October 1897. Their outfit was landed from a scow onto a sand spit about a mile below Healy & Wilson's. As she stepped ashore, Miss Lyons recorded, "What desolate objects we were, what mites of humanity. Behind us civilization; before us vastness, silence, grandeur. What a place to think, to dream."⁸⁴

Mr. Wilson, seeing that the ladies were taken by the scene, called sharply for them to hurry and move their gear above the high tide mark. On doing so, they took careful inventory to make certain that nothing had been mislaid, was missing, or forgotten.⁸⁵

Arrangements were made for the employment of 35 Indian packers. The provisions were made up in packages calculated to last a week, so that only one would have to be opened at a time.

When they moved out and started up the trail, despite the presence of 35 packers, each of the women had to carry some personal gear. Soon after crossing the Taiya ferry, one of the squaws "began to yell, scream, and laugh, and act much like one of the weird witches in Macbeth. She by some means or other had obtained a flask of whiskey in Dyea, and was now feeling the effects." She, however, struggled on with 70 pounds on her back, "although at times, when we looked back, she would be rolled into all sorts of fantastic shapes."⁸⁶

They camped for the night at Canyon City. Two Indians put up the tents, while others helped Mrs. Wilson and Miss Lyons make the

⁸³ Ibid., p. 47.

⁸⁴ Esther Lyons, "An American Girl's Trip to the Klondike," *Frank Leslie's Weekly Illustrated*, Jan. 6, 1898, p. 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp. 5-7.

beds. Mr. Wilson cooked supper, serving flapjacks. "In weight they resembled stove-lids, but they were eaten with the relish of a dinner at Delmonico's."⁸⁷

The season was late and the Taiya was covered with ice at the mouth of the canyon. There were soft spots in the ice, however, and the Indians put down poles. Miss Lyons fell off one of the poles, and received a good ducking. Had it not been for the presence of mind of Semon, an Indian, who pulled her out by her hair, she might have drowned.

Sheep Camp had not grown in the past month. At the time Miss Lyons camped there, it boasted two permanent structures--a log cabin and a frame building housing "'a combination hotel, store, and restaurant." Disillusionment had already taken its toll, and Miss Lyons heard several refer to Sheep Camp as "Doubling Castle," because of the presence of a number of disgusted prospectors, who were "willing to sell their outfits for a song" to get funds to finance their return to their homes.⁸⁸

The Wilson-Lyons party took advantage of the first break in the weather to advance all their gear, except their camping outfit, to Stonehouse, and then to The Scales. At the former, about one-half their outfit was swept away by a snowslide. Most of it was recovered by the Indians with feeling rods (light, slender rods, tipped with steel). With these instruments, they thrust down into the snow to locate objects.⁸⁹

Miss Lyons found that the waterproof moccasins she had purchased from the Indians in Juneau were superior to boots on the rugged trail between Sheep Camp and the summit of Chilkoot. At The Scales, she reported, began "the last and really only hard

⁸⁷ The beds were made of hemlock brush, cut and laid on the snow to a depth of a foot or more. In turn the brush was covered with a large square of canvas, on which the blankets and fur robes were thrown.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp.7, 21. Miss Lyons reported that very few advanced their base camp beyond Sheep Camp until all their outfit had been packed to the summit and cached.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 21. Miss Lyons reported that Stonehouse was "nothing more or less than a clump of big rocks so arranged as to give shelter overhead and on three sides." Across the canyon and opposite Stonehouse was a huge glacier. It was part of this glacier that caused the avalanche of September 18, 1897.

climb." For about 600 feet they had to cut every foot of the way in the ice, and "so steep is it that I had to bend forward constantly to maintain my equilibrium." There was little danger of falling, however. The trails--there were several--ran in and out, behind big boulders, over rocky points, and up the beds of small streams. It was hard on one's lungs and legs, and it took the party about one hour to reach the summit.⁹⁰

One by one the Indians came up with their packs. From a cache they brought out the sleds and began preparing for the 500-foot descent to Crater Lake. Each Yukon sled could hold from 500 to 1,000 pounds, and it took three Indians to manage a sled. In the steepest places the sled itself took charge. When all was ready, the sleds were turned loose, and the yells and shouts did credit to a football game. The sleds rushed down the grade. "Some of the Indians stuck to the sleds and reached the bottom without accident." Sometimes a sled swerved, and the Indians shot off into space, and the sled made "the rest of the trip independently, but without loss of time."⁹¹

The weather had turned warm, and Crater Lake was difficult to cross, because of melting snow and slush which at times was knee-deep. At Long Lake the ice had melted to such an extent as to make it unsafe to cross. The Wilson-Lyons party accordingly took to the hills on the south shore of the lake, and found the traveling difficult. They reached Lake Lindeman about 3 o'clock, but it was another two hours before the packers arrived with enough of the outfit to permit them to pitch camp and prepare supper.

They had expected to build their boat at Lake Lindeman, but found the timber nearly all logged off. Instead, they built a raft, with a deck of small poles. Here the Indians were paid off, and the gear transferred to the raft, where it was protected by watertight sacks of oilskin and canvas. The raft was used to reach the portage at the lower end of the lake.⁹²

⁹⁰ Ibid. One of the Indians explained to Miss Lyons that an early traveler had abandoned a scales at this point, hence the name, The Scales, while another said the name had originated because of the practice by the packers of weighing all packs at this point.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 5, 21. A Yukon sled was made of the best hardwood, and shod with ground-steel runners, seven feet three inches long and 16 inches apart--just the correct width to track behind snowshoes. The sled cost \$14.

⁹² Ibid., p. 23.

VI. THE WHITE PASS TRAIL IN 1897

A. Skagway Engulfs Bill Moore's Homestead

1. The Stampeders Storm Ashore

In February 1895, eighteen months before George Carmack and his brothers-in-law staked their claims on Rabbit (Bonanza) Creek, Bernard Moore prevailed on seven young prospectors from California to cross White Pass with seven tons of freight. He assisted them by hauling their outfits from the landing up to the mouth of the first canyon with a team brought over by raft from Dyea. A two-mile trail was cut over a ridge to avoid the falls at the junction of the upper and lower canyons.

Two years later, in 1897, Captain Moore moved to capitalize on the rush into the Klondike. In May and June, while thousands were crossing Chilkoot Pass, he organized a company and hired a crew to open a trail up the west side of the Skagway to the summit of White Pass. Improvements were made to his homestead, and a small sawmill erected.¹

Captain Moore and his son were thus ready, when ships carrying the second wave of the 1897 stampeders began appearing on Taiya Inlet in the fourth week of July. On the 26th, nine days after the ship with "a ton of gold" had docked at Seattle, Captain Moore visited Dyea and talked Captain James Carrol of the steamer *Queen* into rounding Yakutania Point and landing his 200 passengers and 125 tons of freight near Moore's wharf. She was followed by the *Islander*, *George W. Elder*, and *Willamette*.²

Within the next several weeks, thousands of adventurers stormed ashore, and the flood plain of the Skagway, above highwater mark, was strewn with boxes, bags, and bales. The newcomers paid no attention to Captain and Bernard Moore or to the boundaries of their 160-

¹ Moore, *Skagway in Days Primeval*, pp. 19-20. The machinery for the sawmill had been shipped from Juneau in June aboard the steamer *Alki*.

² Ibid.; William J. Betts, "Captain Bill Moore the Dreamer who Lost a Town," *Alaska Sportsman*, July 1964, pp. 24-25; Brady to Bliss, July 28, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. John G. Brady was the Alaskan Territorial Governor, while Cornelius Bliss was President William McKinley's Secretary of the Interior.

acre homestead. A tent city sprang up overnight. To add to the confusion, Ned Moore transferred the family homestead to the Alaskan & Northwestern Territories Trading Company. When the corporation ordered the squatters to pay rent or move, they refused. By August 7 the newcomers countered by meeting and organizing a government for the boomtown, which they called Skagway. In the excitement, it was forgotten that Captain Moore had previously named the area Mooresville.³

2. A Town is Platted

A committee was named, at a meeting, to plat a town with 60-foot streets, and 100 by 50-foot lots. Frank Reid was selected town surveyor, and United States Commissioner for the District of Alaska, John U. Smith, recorder. To defray the cost of the survey, Smith,

³ Betts, "Captain Bill Moore the Dreamer who Lost a Town," *Alaska Sportsman*, July 1964, p. 26; Smith to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 9, 1897, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. The name Skagway was derived from the Tlingit word "Skagus"--the home of the North Wind. According to an Indian legend, "Skugway," a beautiful maiden, had in the dim past appeared on the banks of Skagway River. She was without consort and was dressed in the finest attire. Adopted by the tribe, she was given the name of the village. Living in the village was a young man, Chute, who was popular for his prowess and skill in the chase. He was also handsome and powerfully built.

Skugway and Chute courted and married. One day, while they were on their honeymoon, Chute became irritable and spoke harshly to Skugway. She looked him in the eye, then walked off, starting up the valley. Chute and the villagers started in pursuit. But run as fast as they might, Skugway was able to maintain her lead. Finally, she reached a great cliff at the head of the valley. Here she halted, and the cliff opened, and closed behind her, cutting off her pursuers. Chute, in despair, shouted her name, and pled with her to return, but there was no answer. He waited in vain for days for his beloved. Then the elders took him back to the village.

After many months, Skugway reappeared to the chief of the village in a dream, and said, "I am Tu-oo-yuk (woman of mystery), daughter-in-law of Tlingit. I will keep watch and ward, be guardian of you all as long as you hold me in memory."

There is a tradition among the Chilkoot and Chilkat that whenever a stranger crosses White Pass and returns, he brings the dread northwind--"the curse of Skugway"--laid upon the valley because of Chute's conduct. Lafe E. Spray, "Skagway: Gem of Alaska," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, 12, Nov. 1911, pp. 219-221.

in his role of Town Recorder, was authorized to collect a fee of five dollars for recording and two and one-half dollars for a transfer of title. By August 9 more than 1,100 entries were made. Smith ruled that "each man or woman might take possession and hold by fence" a lot, on which to erect a cabin or tent. The building of cabins and fences was slowed by a lumber shortage.⁴

Reid surveyed and laid out the streets and avenues, but unfortunately Captain Moore's cabin was athwart one of the projected streets. Moore was told to move. He refused. A committee was appointed to move him. Their initial attempt to evict Moore and tear down his cabin failed, when he, while his sobbing wife watched, beat off the wrecking crew with a crowbar. Moore, however, knew that he was bucking impossible odds, so he purchased a lot onto which to move his cabin.

He now took his case to the United States District Court for redress. Then as now the courts moved slowly, and it was four years before the case was decided in Moore's favor. He was awarded 25 percent of the assessed valuation of the improvements built on his and his son's 160-acre homestead. While awaiting action by the court, Moore, seeing that there was money to be made in Skagway, relocated and extended his wharf out across the tidal flat to deep water.⁵

B. The Route of the Trail

1. A Trail Is Opened

The repeated failures of the late 1880s and early 1890s to secure a franchise from either the United States or territorial authorities to open a toll road across White Pass, had discouraged promoters. They knew that high construction costs, without an opportunity to recoup their principal, would discourage prospective investors. The discovery of gold in the Klondike revived interest in opening a trail over White Pass. Captain Moore now secured the necessary financial

⁴ Richardson to Shoup, Aug. 6, 1897, and Smith to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 9, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior; Betts, "Captain Bill Moore the Dreamer who Lost a Town," *Alaskan Sportsman*, July 1964, p. 25; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 148; Thomas S. Scott, "The Klondike," *The Canadian Magazine*, Feb. 1898, pp. 325-326.

⁵ Betts, "Captain Bill Moore, the Dreamer who Lost a Town," *Alaskan Sportsman*, July 1964, pp. 25, 56; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 148-150.

backing, and put a 15-man crew to work opening his long-dreamed-of trail. Because of the urgency and the excitement, the Alaskan and Northwestern Territories Trading Company which backed the Moores' efforts took no pains to secure the right-of-way and the privilege of charging tolls until a rough trail had been opened.

On August 7, 12 days after the first stampeders landed at Skagway, D. Noble Rowan wrote Secretary of the Interior Cornelius N. Bliss, informing him that the company had completed "a trail from Skagway Bay . . . over White Pass entirely at its own cost." This undertaking had been expensive, and the Alaskan and Northwestern Territories Company desired a franchise "to levy a small toll of one cent per pound on the goods going over the trail."⁶

The Secretary's office replied that the Department had no authority to grant the request of the Alaskan & Northwestern Territories Trading Company. Rowan was warned that no "person or persons could lawfully take possession" of the White Pass Trail and charge tolls until authorized by Congress.⁷

It was apparent to many that the White Pass Trail would not suffice to handle the traffic being landed on the marge of Skagway Bay. The answer to the problem was a turnpike. Mr. Rowan of the Alaskan and Northwestern Territories Company now applied to the Secretary of the Interior for the privilege to build a wagon road from Skagway Bay through White Pass to Lake Bennett. His company was prepared to begin work immediately and complete the road, if allowed to charge a reasonable toll.⁸

Before Secretary Bliss could acknowledge Rowan's letter, he received a telegram from John Campbell, dated August 6. Campbell informed him that there were 3,000 people with 3,000 tons of baggage camped on the beach at Skagway. Ships were leaving Seattle daily with hundreds of additional gold seekers. All these persons, along

⁶ Rowan to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 7, 1897, NR, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. The Alaskan & Northwestern Territories Trading Co. was a corporation chartered under the laws of West Virginia.

⁷ Acting Secretary to Rowan, Aug. 7, 1897, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

⁸ Rowan to Secretary of the Interior, July 26, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

with their freight, would have to pass up the White Pass Trail. Unless the trail was improved, Campbell forecast, it will be impossible for one-tenth of the stamperders to cross White Pass, before "navigation closes which will result in great suffering and death from privation and exposure."

There were at this time, on Skagway Bay, 2,000 men ready to assist in construction of a wagon road, provided the United States would delegate to Campbell and his associate, J. L. Green, "the right to build . . . a road in interest of the Yukon Miners Association." To facilitate the construction of the road, Campbell and Green needed authority "to cut timber, to grade hills, corduroy swamps, and to prevent persons from passing over" the White Pass Trail while the road was under construction.⁹

The Secretary of the Interior was compelled to veto these requests by Rowan and Campbell, because his office lacked authority to make these concessions.

Secretary Bliss, at the same time, was being pressured by Dyea interests opposed to the opening of a competing route across White Pass. Sam Herron, manager of Healy & Wilson's Trading Post at Dyea, had written the Secretary on July 6. He complained that if a Canadian company were permitted to open the trail, it would soon begin operating a line of steamers from Victoria, which would "deprive the Territory of Alaska" of the Yukon trade. Land rights at Skagway, he pointed out, were held by Bernard Moore, Captain Moore's son, and a naturalized citizen.¹⁰

Apparently, Herron did not know that the Alaskan and Northwestern Territories Company had been incorporated in West Virginia. In any event, the Secretary took no official notice of Herron's protest.

2. A Description of the Trail in September 1897

a. From Skagway Across Porcupine Hill

Between Skagway and the first hill, four miles from the beach, a wagon road had been opened by the Moores across the alluvial flats of the Skagway River. One and one-half miles from the

⁹ Campbell to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 6, 1897, NA, RG 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

¹⁰ Herron to Secretary of the Interior, July 6, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

wharf, the road crossed from the east side to the west side of the river. A horse bridge had been built by the Alaskan and Northwestern Territories Trading Company. Wagons, during periods of low water, could ford the river, but after a heavy rain, when the Skagway rose rapidly, the packers had to unload their freight and haul it across the bridge. Critics of the Moores and the Company pointed out that a wagon bridge would have been almost as cheap to build.¹¹

Two and one-half miles beyond the bridge, the road narrowed, becoming a trail, and ascended a gulch to a plateau. The trail became rocky, and after a rain it was muddy. About a quarter of a mile beyond, the trail skirted the western side of Black Lake, an attractive body of water, about 550 feet above tidewater. After leaving Black Lake, a gradual descent of a mile, ending in a series of switchbacks, brought the traveler to the horse bridge spanning Porcupine Creek. Here was a choice camp site, with good water and plenty of timber. Although the White Pass Trail to this point was not good, it was passable, and by mid-September 1897 only a few dead horses were to be seen on this portion of the route.¹²

After crossing the Porcupine Creek bridge, the trail ascended Porcupine Hill. The grade was steep, with some switchbacks. Mud was deep, boulders large, and there were places where packhorses had to struggle out of "a mudhole to a boulder three or four feet high." Both man and beast found the going difficult, and to cross Porcupine Hill tried their endurance. Men packing their gear took four hours to cover the two and one-half miles from the Porcupine Creek bridge to the crossing of the Skagway.¹³

b. From Porcupine Hill to the Ford

The White Pass Trail descending Porcupine Hill crossed Skagway River on a horse bridge. After passing a campground, the trail bore away from the river, meandered through a swamp for one mile,

¹¹ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; Fred H. Lyson, *Map-Guide: Seattle to Dawson* . . . (Seattle, 1897), pp. 20-21; Ogilvie, *Klondike Guide*, pp. 106-107.

¹² *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; Ogilvie, *Klondike Guide*, pp. 106-107. The trail, where it skirted the marge of Black Lake, was excellent.

¹³ *Ibid.* The summit of Porcupine Hill was about 1,000 feet higher than Black Lake.

and recrossed to the west side of the Skagway. A steep hill was passed, and the river crossed a fourth time. The distance between the third and fourth crossings was one-half mile. Where the trail was not choked with boulders, mudholes were encountered. A traveler reported:

When mud is mentioned it means stuff in which a man traveling without a pack will sink to his knees almost every other step. There is no way of avoiding this, as the slopes on both sides of the trail, though in no case precipitous, are yet so steep as to preclude the possibility of traveling over them.¹⁴

At the fourth crossing of the Skagway, which like the others was spanned by a horse bridge, the White Pass Trail forked. The path veering to the right and passing over a steep hill was "practicable for pack animals," but as one traveler recalled, "it is probably the worst piece on the whole line, more horses having died there than anywhere else along the route." The trail (the river cut-off), branching to the left, followed Skagway River to the ford, two miles beyond. Starting out it crossed a small hill, "continuing up and down" for about 800 yards. It then reached a rock slide across which it was impossible to pack animals. By hard climbing, the stamperder passed the slide and dropped down to the river again, which inside of a mile was crossed four times on logs. A vigorous man could pack from 75 to 100 pounds over the cut-off, and save himself a mile of hard walking. After leaving the river, the cut-off joined the main trail, one-half mile below the ford.¹⁵

c. From the Ford to the Summit

The Skagway, except during the late spring run-off and after hard rains, could be forded without difficulty. Travelers in 1897 questioned the failure of the Alaskan and Northwestern Territories Trading Company to bridge the river, as it presented no technical difficulties. Because of its glacial origin, the Skagway was always murky, and its depth could not be judged. Usually when wading the stream, one member of the party first secured a rope to his waist to be held by the others as a lifeline. If he were swept off his feet by the icy torrent, he was pulled to safety by his comrades.¹⁶

¹⁴ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid. On August 25, 1969, while making a reconnaissance of the White Pass Trail from the summit to the site of White Pass City, I

On the rising ground north of the ford, where White Pass City grew up in 1898, was a campground. From the camp site to the summit of White Pass it is hard climbing. The rise is 1,000 feet in four miles. In reaching the summit, by way of White Pass Fork, the ground traversed is "very irregular and rough," and strewn with boulders.¹⁷

d. From the Summit to Lake Lindeman

From the summit to the Meadows, the first camp site after leaving the ford, was five miles. Much of the way was downhill, though a few small knolls were climbed. There was now a slight improvement in the White Pass Trail. The Meadows, in September 1897, was a good place to camp, but, a traveler observed, it would not be for long, because "the small quantity of scrub timber found in the area would soon be exhausted."

Some stamperders preferred to use the ferryboats built by enterprising individuals on Summit and Bernard Lakes. Well-informed prospectors usually sent one of their party ahead to contract with the boatmen to take their entire company. If the company waited until reaching the lakes, they could expect to take their turn, as there were a limited number of boats operating on Summit and Bernard Lakes.¹⁸

From the Meadows to the ford at the foot of Bernard Lake was about eight miles. Along this section of the White Pass Trail, there were a few mudholes, but these could usually be avoided. Complaints were voiced against those who had opened the trail, because instead of circling hills it passed over them.

It was ten miles from the ford to Lake Lindeman. After crossing the ford, the travelers skirted the western shore of Shallow Lake for a mile, then bore to the northwest, "over a most delightful sand road which looks exactly like a piece of railroad grade." Three miles beyond Summit Lake was a

forded the Skagway at this point. To keep from stepping in deep holes, I used a staff to probe the river as I forded. The water was swift and waist-deep.

¹⁷ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; Ogilvie, *Klondike Guide*, pp. 106-107; Personal Reconnaissance by Bearss, Aug. 25, 1969.

¹⁸ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897; Samuel F. Emmons, "Alaska and Its Mineral Resources." *National Geographic Magazine*, April 1898, pp. 147-149.

large log cabin; the North West Mounted Police had erected it as a haven of refuge. Plans had been made by Canadian authorities to utilize the cabin as a relay station for supplies. Here the trail forked. One branch led to Lake Tutshi and the other to Lake Lindeman. A sign board nailed to a tree at the forks read:

Men going to the Yukon are hereby advised not to try the trail via Too Chi [Tutshi] Lake, as the river between Too Chi [Tutshi] and Tagish Lakes, about seven miles long, is impassable for boats, scows, or rafts.¹⁹

Between Log Cabin and Lake Lindeman, the trail crossed several expanses of muskeg. In September 1897 these swamps presented no difficulty to pack animals, but fears were voiced that increased traffic would churn them into impassable marshes.²⁰

e. From Lake Lindeman to Lake Bennett

The route from Lindeman, where the White Pass Trail converged with the Chilkoot Trail, was easy. At the head of Lake Bennett there was "a fair amount of timber for boat building." But even as early as September 1897, fears were voiced that if lumbering continued at the present rate, it would soon be exhausted. As a hedge for those planning to follow this route, there would be enough scrub timber to build rafts to enable them to drop down Lake Bennett to a point where the forest was sufficient to build boats. Already, there was a small sawmill in operation at the head of Lake Bennett, and lumber was being sold at \$125 to \$150 per 1,000 feet. Boats already built cost from \$250 to \$400. No supplies could be purchased, nor had any restaurants been opened.

A detachment of North West Mounted Police, under Inspector Strickland, had established a camp at Lake Bennett, where they planned to collect Canadian customs.²¹

¹⁹ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.; Ogilvie, *Klondike Guide*, pp. 106-107.

C. The White Pass Trail Becomes the Dead Horse Trail

1. Kirk Reconnoiters the Trail

Robert C. Kirk sailed for Dyea Inlet from San Francisco on July 31, 1897, aboard the steamer *Willamette*. The ship anchored off Skagway at the end of the first week of August. When Kirk went ashore in a lighter, he found that, although less than two weeks had passed since *Queen* had landed the first stampedees, Skagway was already booming. Several frame buildings and more than 100 tents had been erected. There was only one street, Broadway, and that was the road leading from the landing up the valley of the Skagway. Newcomers had laid out parallel streets, and it was commonplace "to see a lone tent that had been pitched out on the flat, isolated from all the others, but put there to determine and hold some corner lot."²²

Along Broadway were shops and saloons, mostly housed in tents, and near the edge of the woods was a log and board dancehall. Great trees stood near the building. The Pack Train Saloon, one of the largest tents in town, was very popular. There men gathered to discuss ways of improving the White Pass Trail. Drinks and cigars were a shilling each.²³

The wagon road through Skagway was crowded at all hours with hundreds of men and a "few adventurous women, hurrying madly along with all sorts of vehicles and pack animals, carrying their outfits . . . from the beach to the first cache." There were two-horse wagons, two-wheeled carts, and sleds. Many were carrying packs strapped to their shoulders. There were strings of packhorses, packmules, oxen, dogs, and even goats.

With the arrival of each succeeding steamer, loaded with hundreds of stampedees, the confusion became greater. Additional streets were laid out. Lawlessness was held in check by miners' committees that had been constituted and delegated authority to mete out summary punishment.²⁴

Competition between proponents of the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails was already keen. Kirk and his companions had been propagandized by both. It was determined to send men to reconnoiter

²² Robert C. Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike* (London, 1899), pp. 10, 27.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

both before a decision was reached. Kirk was delegated to scout the White Pass Trail.

At daybreak, on the morning following his arrival at Skagway, Kirk left the ship and started up the White Pass Trail, carrying a camera, a blanket, and three days' rations. The route, at first, led across a flat, swampy bottom, heavily studded with timber. Four miles from the landing, the trail left Skagway Valley and ascended a steep grade. Skirting Black Lake and crossing Porcupine Hill, Kirk pushed on. The Skagway River was crossed a second time. When he inquired as to the elevation, Kirk was told that at this point he was about 800 feet above sea level. This information plagued him. He wondered what Captain Moore and his son had been thinking about, when they had blazed a trail "up and down a succession of high mountain ridges . . . rather than pursue the easier and more natural passage along the banks of the river." The route thus far, except for the first four miles, had been tortuous, and "the descents were often so great that the course of the trail lay in a series of zigzags." Swamps and mudholes were encountered in all the ravines, and the trail led among rocks and boulders.²⁵

Beyond the fourth Skagway crossing, the trail followed by Kirk ascended a steep grade. He believed this the "worst incline of all, and the descent to the stream again, after we had gone along the summit for some distance, was even more steep, and so difficult that a misstep might have meant disaster." Before making the final ascent to the summit, the Skagway was forded. A chain of rocks extended diagonally through the water to the opposite bank, and many of the men crossed on these. When the river was high, many stampedeers pulled off their clothes, made them into a roll, fastened the bundle over their shoulders, took a long pole in their hands to probe for the bottom, and forded the river.²⁶

After fording the Skagway, Kirk climbed Summit Hill. He stopped at the crest of White Pass, and looking northward could "see nothing but a great expanse of rock-bound country, beyond which there was a chain of lakes giving access to the Yukon."²⁷

Although conditions were to get worse on the White Pass Trail, Kirk had seen enough to satisfy himself that the Chilkoot Trail must be an improvement. He returned to Skagway, reboarded *Willamette*, and reported the results of his reconnaissance. After listening to his report, the stampedeers, still aboard, prevailed on the captain to put them ashore at Dyea.

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 29-30.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 33.

On August 18 Kirk and several hundred cheechakos began landing among the rocks in the ship's small boats. Employing a small Whitehall Boat, Kirk and his party transported their outfit up the Taiya to the Indian village, where they landed and made camp. After they had towed the first boatload up the swift glacial river, they determined to use mules. Most of the night was spent searching for the mules which had been swum ashore from *Willanette*.²⁸

2. The Dead Horse Trail

Promoters of the White Pass Trail, in championing it as the best route to the Klondike and superior to the Chilkoot Trail, boasted that pack animals would encounter no difficulty in crossing from tidewater to Lake Bennett. Since it was agreed that pack animals (principally horses and mules) would provide cheaper, easier, and quicker transportation across the Coast Mountains to the lakes, most stampeders in the last days of July and the first week of August 1897 went ashore at Skagway. Almost every ship arriving from the west coast ports of the United States and Canada brought up horses and mules, a few oxen, and even goats. Horses, mules, and oxen were swung from the decks in specially constructed stalls whose bottoms opened, dumping the animals into the water. They would then swim ashore to be rounded up.

Many of the horses and mules were broken-down animals slated for an early trip to the canners, when word was received in the west coast cities that a pack trail had been opened across White Pass. These animals now sold for premium prices and were shipped northward in large numbers. With them went many unbroken horses and mules. Many of the stampeders were from the city and were inexperienced in the handling of animals, and it was commonplace to see men spend hours attempting to pack a single horse. Such was the haste to get across the pass, and the condition of the trail, that a horse which had cost several hundred dollars in Skagway was frequently worthless by the time he reached the summit, 19 miles away. Most Klondikers were determined to get across the Coast Mountains "at any cost-- and the cost . . . [frequently] included an animal's life."²⁹

²⁸ Ibid., p. 41. The next day the largest mule was harnessed, a long rope attached to a single tree, and the supplies towed up to the camp. Afterwards the outfit was towed in this fashion to Finnigan's Point.

²⁹ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 154; Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 37.

Horses by the hundreds broke their legs on the boulder-strewn stretches of the trail, and had to be destroyed. A week's hard work carrying packs, weighing perhaps 250 pounds, took its toll on horses that had been put ashore at Skagway in good condition. There was little rest and feed. Forage was expensive and difficult to pack to supply points along the trail. Many horses worked under trying conditions, beneath a warm sun and frequent rainstorms, with little or no food. As they approached the treeline, vegetation became sparse, and the little grass that was found caused the faithful animals to sicken. By the time the muskeg was reached between White Pass and Lake Bennett, many of the surviving horses sank into the black mire, unable to rise. By September 1897 it was impossible for a man approaching the summit to walk one-half mile without stepping from the carcasses, and the stench became almost unbearable.³⁰

Veteran horseman, Maj. J. M. Walsh of the North West Mounted Police, retired and en route to the Klondike as Commissioner of the Yukon, was on the White Pass Trail in October. He was shocked by what he saw. Writing Clifford Sifton, the Canadian Minister of the Interior, he protested:

Such a scene of havoc and destruction . . . can scarcely be imagined. Thousands of packhorses lie dead along the way, sometimes in bunches under the cliffs, with pack-saddles and packs where they have fallen from the rock above, sometimes in tangled masses filling the mud-holes and furnishing the only footing for our poor pack animals on the march--often, I regret to say, exhausted but still alive, a fact we are unaware of until after the miserable wretches turn beneath the hoofs of our cavalcade. The eyeless sockets of the pack animals everywhere account for the myriads of ravens along the road. The inhumanity which this trail has been witness to, the heartbreak and suffering which so many have undergone, cannot be imagined. They certainly cannot be described.³¹

³⁰ Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 37; Scott, "The Klondike," *The Canadian Magazine*, Feb. 1898, pp. 325-326.

³¹ Canadian Sessional Papers No. 38D, 1898, *Report of Commissioner J. M. Walsh to Minister of the Interior for 1897*, p. 13.

Jack London, who was destined to gain fame for his novels of the north country, crossed White Pass in the autumn of 1897, and what he saw on the trail sickened him. He wrote:

The horses died like mosquitoes in the first frost and from Skagway to Bennett they rotted in heaps. They died at the rocks, they were poisoned at the summit, and they starved at the lakes; they fell off the trail, what there was of it, and they went through it; in the river they drowned under their loads or were smashed to pieces against the boulders; they snapped their legs in the crevices and broke their backs falling backwards with their packs; in the sloughs they sank from fright or smothered in the slime; and they were disembowelled in the bogs where the corduroy logs turned end up in the mud; men shot them, worked them to death and when they were gone, went back to the beach and bought more. Some did not bother to shoot them, stripping the saddles off and the shoes and leaving them where they fell. Their hearts turned to stone--those which did not break--and they became beasts, the men on the Dead Horse Trail.³²

3. Traffic on the White Pass Trail Comes to a Standstill

As early as August 9, 1897, traffic on the White Pass Trail was moving at a snail's pace. When he visited Skagway at this time, Governor Brady found 1,800 adventurers "strung along" the trail, and much of their gear in a sorry condition. He feared that many of them would be unable to reach Lake Bennett before the lakes froze over. Brady had hoped that the trail could be kept open during the winter, but persons familiar with the area disagreed. Already, a great quantity of subsistence stores had been spoiled by the rain, because the "packs were put up hastily & much of the bacon poorly cured."³³

When he visited Dyea, Governor Brady found there were no serious delays on the Chilkoot Trail. Those who had money were able to employ Indians to pack their outfits over Chilkoot Pass. This was costly as demand had caused the rate from Dyea to Lake Lindeman to

³² Jack London, *The God of His Fathers, Tales of the Klondike and the Yukon* (London, 1902), pp. 79-80.

³³ Smith to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 9, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. John U. Smith was the United States Commissioner for the subport of Dyea.

skyrocket from \$12 to \$40 per hundredweight. For persons crossing Chilkoot pass, the greatest difficulty was to secure boats this late in the season. A boat which at Sitka cost ten dollars sold for \$450 at Lake Bennett.³⁴

Governor Brady saw that there were no Indian packers on the White Pass Trail, but they were numerous on the Chilkoot Trail. With their services in demand and commanding premium prices, many of the redmen were easy marks for bootleggers, who sold rotgut whiskey for nine to \$12 a quart. If they could tempt an Indian to have a drink, they were certain of a sale, for when "Mr. Tlingit drinks he wants to get drunk."³⁵

In the struggle for supremacy between Skagway and Dyea as the favored route to the Yukon, Dyea in early August 1897 had the edge. By mid-August Dyea had widened its advantage, as conditions on the White Pass Trail worsened. To add to the embarrassment of Skagway interests, stampeders who had been attracted to Dyea were encountering no delays. When J. H. Shepherd left Dyea on August 21 there were only about 50 men left in town. The rest, an estimated 3,000, were en route for the Klondike via Chilkoot Pass.

By the same date it was almost impossible for a horse to reach White Pass. The standard practice was to move one's outfit about three miles at a time, establish a cache, and then return for the rest of the outfit. This method of crowding all traffic at one time on the first ten miles of the trail resulted in numerous blockades and loss of time, and "the swamps and bogs were so torn up by the trail that horses frequently sank deep in the mire and had to be got out by means of ropes and poles." Many packers shot the horses rather than waste one-half day extricating a weakened animal from a mudhole.³⁶

A miners' meeting was held, and a foreman named to take charge of gangs of men to corduroy the trail across bogs and swamps. Burros were tried but were found too small for work on the muddy flats. Wagons and carts could be used as far as the first crossing of the Skagway, but the trail was too narrow for them to ascend the grade to Black Lake. Oxen were employed as pack animals, but they moved

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Brady to Bliss, undated, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

³⁶ Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, pp. 37-38; Shepherd to President William McKinley, Sept. 30, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

too slowly and were unable to cross the muskeg unless it was corduroyed. T. Dufferin Pattulo, Commissioner Walsh's secretary, recalled that he saw an ox trying to commit suicide by walking off a cliff rather than continue up the trail.³⁷

One packer, who defaulted on several contracts to take outfits across to Lake Bennett, was confronted by the Montana Kid and others. They seized his pack train by force and took their outfits through to Lake Bennett. Others did likewise. The feeling became intense, so the packer left for his home, taking a night steamer for Juneau.³⁸

By September 1897 traffic over the White Pass Trail was at a standstill. Sylvester Scovel of the New York *World* offered several thousand dollars on behalf of his newspaper to anyone dynamiting the pass so the stampede could resume. Although Scovel was a colorful character and had spent some money widening a section of the trail, the *World* refused to countenance such a hair-brained scheme and recalled him.³⁹

An informed observer has estimated that in 1897 only ten percent of the 5,000 who started up the White Pass Trail reached Lake Bennett. Some, while there was still time, doubled back and reached the Klondike via the Chilkoot Trail; many retired to Skagway to wait for spring and the opening of the promised wagon road across the pass; while others gave up to return home. These offered to sell their outfits to get money for their passage. It often happened, however, that these disillusioned men were unable to sell, because their fellow-travelers had more gear than they could expect to get to Lake Bennett. Consequently, a little cache of stores was abandoned beside the trail, and during the winter of 1897-1898 enterprising Skagway merchants sledged the gear to town and sold it.⁴⁰

D. Skagway's First Six Months

1. Skagway Booms

With traffic over the White Pass Trail either moving at a snail's pace or at a standstill, the growth of Skagway was accelerated. Un-

³⁷ Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 39; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 15

³⁸ Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 4.

³⁹ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 156.

⁴⁰ Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, pp. 38-39.

able to get across the pass, hundreds squatted in Skagway to wait for spring and the opening of the promised wagon road across the Coast Mountains. All the while more stampeders were disembarking.

By September Skagway had a population of 3,000, with 35 restaurants, ten to 12 hotels, and numerous saloons and gambling dens. Meals were 50 to 75 cents. Lodging, without blankets, cost 75 cents to one dollar. Whiskey and beer sold at 25 cents a drink. Blacksmiths charged six dollars for shoeing a horse.

Already, there were about 40 wooden buildings, in addition to hundreds of tents. There was, at this time, only one wharf, Moore's, which was built on a rocky point on the east shore of the bay. This wharf was rarely used by the larger ships, "as the cost of getting freight from it to shore" was greater than by lightering. A "most reprehensible trail, over which a man had some difficulty in scrambling," and which was useless for a horse, connected this wharf with Skagway. Most of the ships anchored about one-half mile from the beach, and passengers and freight were sent ashore in lighters. The lighters were put alongside the ship and towed ashore at flood tide, and as the tide receded the freight was taken off in wagons.⁴¹

To remedy this situation and to compensate for the differential of 24 feet between high and low tide, Captain Moore put under construction a new wharf, designed to extend one-half mile across the tidal flats to deep-water. Work was soon under way on three more wharfs.⁴²

The rapid growth of Skagway proved embarrassing to the corporal's guard of government officials ordered to the head of Taiya Inlet in the summer of 1897. These officials, having been appointed in early July, had been assigned to Dyea. Within two weeks of when Commissioner Smith established his office at Healy & Wilson's the stampeders began thronging ashore at Skagway Bay. Within a few weeks all ships were unloading there and Moore's new wharf was under construction. To add to the confusion, traffic over the White Pass Trail was at a standstill because of mud, and "a good sized town or camp of miners" had sprung up at Skagway Bay. Saloons, dance halls, and gambling dens had opened. Commissioner Smith accordingly found that he was spending most of his time in Skagway, where he was "called on to settle disputes between contestants for squatters' rights."

⁴¹ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1897.

⁴² These three wharfs were owned by the Seattle-Skagway Wharf Co., the Juneau Wharf Co., and the Alaskan Southern Wharf Co.

He did "his best" to preserve order at both towns, but he was worried because his commission made no mention of Skagway. He wrote Secretary of the Interior Bliss for authority to "maintain my residence and place of business at either place, as circumstances warranted." His request was granted.⁴³

Collector of Customs Joseph W. Ivey was also plagued by the overnight development of Skagway as a port. At Dyea, the subport of entry, there was no wharf, and freight was landed from lighters on the rocks or on tidal flats. It was therefore impossible for him to determine what was dutiable. Governor Brady urged, in vain, that a revenue cutter be rushed to Lynn Canal to support Collector Ivey.⁴⁴

2. The Toughs Ride High

When he stopped in Skagway in the last week of August, Governor Brady found 5,000 men. They were mostly "fine fellows of whom a country could be proud." He was impressed with their respect for the peace. Word that the steamship companies planned to reduce their rates from Puget Sound to Taiya Inlet caused the Governor to fret, because this would result in the arrival of less desirable adventurers and troublemakers. He therefore hoped that the authorities at the ports of embarkation in the United States and British Columbia would keep their eyes open for potential troublemakers. If toughs arrived in large numbers, the United States, he warned the Secretary of the Interior, must be ready to rush troops to Lynn Canal to preserve order.⁴⁵

Either Governor Brady was a good prophet or he looked at Skagway through rose-colored glasses. Not many weeks were to pass before stories were circulating in which the lawless element was depicted as holding sway. The saloons, dance halls, brothels, and gambling dens boomed. Alexander Macdonald, a worldly Englishman who passed through Skagway in the late autumn of 1897, recorded:

I have stumbled upon a few tough corners of the globe during my wandering beyond the outposts of civilization, but

⁴³ Smith to Secretary, Aug. 30, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of Interior.

⁴⁴ Brady to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 21, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

I think the most outrageously lawless quarter I ever struck was Skagway. It seemed as if the scum of the earth had hastened here to fleece and rob, or . . . to murder. There was no law whatsoever; might was right, the dead shot only was immune to danger.⁴⁶

Superintendent Samuel B. Steele of the North West Mounted Police, when he reached Skagway in February 1898 en route to the Yukon, pronounced the boomtown as "little better than hell on earth." In his *Forty Years in Canada*, Steele vividly recalled the nights spent in Skagway, as the crash of the piano in the dance halls and the "cracked voices of the singers" were mixed with shouts of murder, cries for help, and the roar of gunfire. "Skagway," Major Steele wrote, "was . . . the roughest place in the world."⁴⁷

Captain Henry T. Mann, an Arctic adventurer, passed through Skagway about the same time. His experiences were similar to Steele's, "For the six nights I slept in Skagway there was shooting on the streets every night," he wrote. "At least one man was killed that I know of and probably others. The shack I slept in had a bullet through it over my head."⁴⁸

3. The Reverend Dickey Rallies the Law-Abiding

While there was rowdiness on one hand, there were also forces striving to bring peace and order to the community. Those opposed to the toughs found a champion in the Reverend Robert M. Dickey, who disembarked on October 9, 1897. With traffic over White Pass blocked, Dickey spent the winter in Skagway. Spearheaded by the Presbyterian minister, arrangements were made for the construction of a church, Skagway's first. The church was dedicated on Sunday, December 12. Four services had been arranged by Dickey. But on learning from one of his Roman Catholic friends that a priest had disembarked in Skagway, he hastened to meet him and to invite him to hold a service in the new building. He found Father O'Neil at the "Honest Lawyer" Hotel, a "place with an excellent name and an unsavoury reputation." Father O'Neil was delighted with the friendly invitation of the Presbyterian minister, and 9 a.m. was designated as the hour for the Roman Catholic mass.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Alexander Macdonald, *In Search of Eldorado* (London, 1905), p. 3.

⁴⁷ Samuel B. Steele, *Forty Years in Canada* (Toronto, 1918), pp. 296-297.

⁴⁸ Henry T. Mann, *Prairie Trails and Arctic Byways* (London, 1932), p. 75.

⁴⁹ Kenneth J. Green, "First Christmas in Skagway," *Alaska Sportsman*, Dec. 1967, pp. 3, 50.

At 12 o'clock, the hour for Protestant services, the church was overcrowded. The Episcopal bishop from Sitka, wearing the robes of his office, and the Rev. Mr. Dickey entered the church together. Dickey introduced Bishop Peter T. Rowe to the congregation, speaking of his many years' of service in the north country and of his travels in whalers, skiffs, and canoes to insure that the Gospel was carried into all parts of Alaska.

At 3 p.m. the building was dedicated. After the dedication, representatives of seven different denominations spoke briefly, each pledging loyalty on behalf of his own people.

When Dickey departed for the Klondike on April 1, 1898, he left behind in Skagway, a church, a school, a hospital, a humane society, and clubs for men and women.⁵⁰

November and December 1897 were unusually mild on the tidewater side of the Coast Mountains. With the Klondike still monopolizing the news, each steamer leaving the northwestern ports continued to be crowded with passengers and jammed with freight. Although the White Pass Trail had been a bust, an air of optimism and prosperity gripped Skagway. Three of the wharfs had been completed. A Waldorf and a Delmonico's had been opened. There were electric lights with tin wash basins used as reflectors.

Governor Brady was delighted to see that the people at Skagway had shown respect for "our institutions." Without any pressure from his office, they had organized and built a church. On the day after its dedication, a school, attended by 50 pupils, opened in the church. A town meeting had been called, and a city council elected.⁵¹

E. Comments and Recommendations

The exciting and poignant story of the stampede to the Klondike over Chilkoot and White Pass trails should be interpreted both on-site and in the Visitor Center. The trail opened and maintained by the State of Alaska, Division of Lands, leading up the east side of the Taiya from the bridge approach to the summit of Chilkoot Pass, varies at a number of points from the historic trace. If the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park is established, high priority projects should be program-

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 50, 52, 53.

⁵¹ Brady to Secretary of the Interior, Dec. 21, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

med with the object of accurately locating, identifying, and marking the Chilkoot Trail of 1897 and 1898. This will require the construction of several bridges across the Taiya. In reconstructing these bridges, as well as other structures needed to interpret the gold rush story, the Service will be governed by procedures outlined for historic structures in the *Administrative Policies for Historical Areas of the National Park Service*.

Steps will have to be taken to stabilize and preserve the fragile surviving remains at Dyea, Canyon City, Sheep Camp, and The Scales. Protection will have to be afforded the objects abandoned by the men of 1897 and 1898, as they lightened their outfits. Already many valuable artifacts have been carried off by hikers. On-site interpretive markers will be erected at the key points along the Chilkoot Trail between Dyea and the summit.

As packers played the key role on the Chilkoot Trail, the use of horses detract from the significance of the packer. In addition, horses are very damaging to fragile remains. When I hiked the Chilkoot Trail in August 1969, sections of the historic trail between Canyon City and Pleasant Valley had been seriously damaged by horses' hooves.

No attempt has been made to identify and mark the White Pass Trail between Black Lake and the site of White Pass City. If the Park is established, such a project must be given a high priority; otherwise, when construction is renewed on the highway across the Coast Mountains, valuable remains of our heritage will be destroyed. Once identified, the White Pass Trail should be cleared and opened to hikers. Interpretive markers will be erected at points of interest, and bridges will be reconstructed.

□□□□ □□□□



VII. THE WINTER OF 1897-1898

A. Starvation Threatens the Klondike

1. The Warnings

In the struggle for supremacy between Dyea and the champions of the Chilkoot Trail and those backing Skagway and the White Pass Trail, the former had won the first round. With the approach of winter and the freezing-over of Lakes Lindeman and Bennett and the Yukon waterway, traffic beyond the head of Lake Bennett, except for those favored few with dog teams, came to a stop. Until the ice went out in the spring of 1898, the stampede was over.

Even had they had dog teams, it is doubtful that those holed up at Skagway, Dyea, Canyon City, Sheep Camp, Lindeman City, or Lake Bennett would have pushed on to Dawson, because the spectre of starvation haunted the Klondike. As early as April 10, 1897, when the rush was just getting under way, Secretary of the Interior Bliss had issued a warning, calling the attention of all who planned to travel to the Klondike to "the exposure, privation, suffering, and danger incident thereto." Even if they crossed the forbidding Coast Mountains, they would still have 500 miles of difficult river to navigate. He feared that many of those preparing to leave the Puget Sound ports would not reach their goal before the Yukon was closed by ice. The Secretary wished the public to realize the terrible consequences of being trapped in the Arctic wilderness for five or six months, "where no relief can reach them, however great the need."¹

As early as August 10, Inspector Charles Constantine of the North West Mounted Police, posted at Dawson, had notified his superiors in Ottawa that "the outlook for grub is not assuring for the number of people here--about four thousand crazy or lazy, men, chiefly American miners and toughs from the coast towns."² Taking cognizance of this situation, the trading companies instituted a system of voluntary rationing. To make matters worse, as each day passed the number of mouths to feed increased as small boats carrying thousands of stampedeers who had crossed Chilkoot Pass and the trickle that had come over the White Pass Trail in August and the first weeks of September reached Dawson.

¹ Public Release by Bliss, April 10, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

² Canadian Sessional Papers, No. 15, 1897, *North West Mounted Police Report*, 1897.

2. The Flight from the Klondike

It was known that five steamboats, heavily laden with subsistence stores, were en route up the Yukon from St. Michael. But on September 27 it was learned that these boats had been forced, by low water, to tie-up near Fort Yukon, 340 river miles below Dawson. When this word spread, it caused a mad exodus.

Already, one group led by Thomas McGee, the San Francisco capitalist, had chartered the pint-sized sternwheeler *Kieukik* and had started upriver for Fort Selkirk. From there they planned to reach tidewater via the Dalton Trail. The ancient steamboat's machinery soon failed, and McGee and his 15-man party paid off the captain and continued up the Yukon in Indian canoes. Ice floes threatened to crush or capsize their craft. Their Indian guide broke down and wept. Landing at Fort Selkirk, they started on the overland trek.

It was late October and the ground was blanketed under two feet of snow. Fortunately for the McGee party they encountered Jack Dalton and his Indians about 75 miles out from Fort Selkirk, or they would have perished from exposure and lack of food. After securing information from Dalton as to the location of his trail, shelters, and hidden caches of food, they pushed on. After 40 days on the trail they reached Haines Mission on Lynn Canal. From there the Indians took them to Skagway, where they booked passage for home aboard the *City of Seattle*.³

Meanwhile, at least 50 open boats had cast off from Dawson for Yukon. On September 28 these men encountered the steamer *Portus B. Weare* chugging up the Yukon. She pulled into the bank at Dawson that evening and her gangplank was lowered onto the frozen and crowded shore. She was joined two days later by *Bella*. Both boats had been stopped at Circle City by armed men and compelled to unload part of their cargoes. When *Portus B. Weare* left Circle City she was 30 tons lighter, while 25 tons of subsistence stores had been removed from *Bella*. The Circle City miners had cheerfully paid for what they took.⁴

When they departed Dawson, both steamboats were crowded with passengers. The run down the ice-choked Yukon to Circle City was fraught with hazards. *Bella* was plagued with breakdowns and was driven aground by an ice floe which damaged her paddlewheel. Both boats succeeded in reaching Circle City, where they were frozen in for the winter. A warm wind now blew from the southwest, melting

³ Martinsen, *Black Sand and Gold*, pp. 216-218.

⁴ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 175-176.

much of the snow and opening the channel of the Yukon to navigation by small boats.

Before a cold wave swept in on October 23, and the river was covered with a sheet of ice several feet thick, a number of small boats carrying stampedees fleeing Dawson passed Circle City en route to Fort Yukon. Three boats with 60 of those stranded at Circle City on the two steamboats were provided with four days' rations by the North American Trading and Transportation Company, and succeeded in reaching the same destination. With the river flooding and carrying large ice floes, a number of small craft met disaster on the wild flight downstream.⁵

While hundreds were fleeing downstream to escape the Klondike and the threat of starvation, scores attempted to return to the coast over the route they had come. They headed up the frozen Yukon toward the passes. Jagged blocks of ice, sometimes heaped as high as 20 feet, made the waterway anything but a highway. Temperatures plummeted to 67 degrees below zero on November 29. A number made it through to the coast--generally crossing White Pass--some died, while others were incapacitated for life. One of these was 17-year-old William Byrne of Chicago. He was left at Five Finger Rapids by his uncle, with frozen feet. A doctor amputated his legs below the knees, while his uncle pushed on. Young Byrne spent a horrible winter in a shack by the Yukon, "more dead than alive."⁶

3. The Klondike Escapes Starvation

Although food had to be rationed and all restaurants had closed by Christmas, no one starved to death in the Klondike in the winter of 1897-1898. Undoubtedly, the flight of large numbers from Dawson in late September and October had helped the situation and prevented the starvation forecast in Inspector Constantine's letter of August 10. While no one starved, all had to tighten their belts, and scurvy appeared.⁷

B. The Yukon Relief Expedition

1. Secretary Bliss Calls for Information

News reached the United States in the autumn of 1897 that famine threatened the Klondike. Secretary of the Interior Bliss, to cope

⁵ Ibid., pp. 180-181; Martinsen, *Black Sand and Gold*, pp. 251-268.

⁶ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 184-185.

⁷ Ibid., p. 196.

with the situation, determined to investigate the possibility of sending livestock across the Alaskan Panhandle passes to alleviate suffering. He called upon government agents at Dyea and Juneau for information on the practicability of such an undertaking.

Commissioner Smith at Dyea reported that horses had been taken over the White Pass Trail to Lake Bennett, and that 1,000 sheep had been started over the Dalton Trail in July, and that 300 of these had been shipped from Fort Selkirk on rafts. Two hundred beef cattle had been taken over the White Pass Trail, with ten percent being lost. The last 70 had been butchered and were now awaiting transportation to Dawson.⁸ United States Commissioner John Y. Ostrander, at Juneau, knew of several hundred cattle being shipped to the Klondike but no horses or sheep. It was known that several hundred horses and cattle were in transit from Dyea and Skagway to the lakes, but the lateness of the season had doomed efforts to reach Dawson.⁹

2. Congress Acts

By the time Secretary Bliss had received this information, the War Department had received a distressing report from its commander at Fort Yukon, Capt. Patrick H. Ray. A courier, traveling by dog-team, carried an urgent message from Ray concerning the plight of those in the Yukon Basin. Congress, bombarded by petitions for Yukon relief, in December 1897, appropriated \$200,000 for the purchase of a herd of reindeer. It had been argued by The Reverend Sheldon Jackson and others that reindeer could be purchased in Scandinavia, shipped halfway around the world to the Alaskan tidewater ports, driven across the Coast Mountains, and taken down the Yukon in time to be butchered and assuage hunger in the Klondike.

Some people familiar with the region, however, did not believe the situation was critical. At the end of the year, two weeks after Congress had acted, the Alaskan road builder George A. Brackett informed his influential friend, Senator C. K. Davis, that he had traveled from Skagway to Seattle with five men who had left Dawson on November 3. They had told Brackett that "miners who have been there for many years say that there is more provisions there per capita than they have had in years gone by, but people demand luxuries." They were satisfied that no one would starve. Prices, however, were high, bacon selling for one dollar a pound.¹⁰

⁸ Smith to Bliss, Nov. 20, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

⁹ Ostrander to Bliss, Nov. 25, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

¹⁰ Brackett to Davis, Dec. 27, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota His-

Congress, however, had acted and public opinion demanded that the United States do something. The army was placed in charge of Klondike Relief. Herdsmen--including 43 Laplanders, ten Finns, and 15 Norwegians--were recruited. Five hundred and thirty-nine reindeer were purchased in Norway. Shipped to New York they were shuttled across the United States to Seattle in cattle cars.¹¹

3. The Expedition Reaches Dyea

Maj. L. H. Rucker, with a small detachment, was rushed to Alaska to make arrangements for the disembarkation of supplies for the Yukon Relief Expedition. After reconnoitering the White Pass and Chilkoot Trails, he decided that the latter was the more practicable. Orders were issued in early February for the steamer *George W. Elder* to dock at the D. K. T. Wharf, three miles south of Dyea. One hundred and fifty tons of supplies were put ashore on the dock and hauled by wagon to Healy & Wilson's enclosure, where they were stored pending the arrival of the pack train.¹²

Additional supplies for the expedition were landed at Dyea from the steamer *Oregon* on February 23, along with "a goodly quantity of tools." From Capt. David L. Brainerd, the officer in charge, it was learned that the packtrain, consisting of two officers, 22 packers, and 101 mules, was expected momentarily. Seventeen of the packers were civilians, while five were black soldiers of the 9th U. S. Cavalry. The latter, Captain Brainerd boasted, were "among the finest packers in the world. One of them is a record breaker." The Chilkoot Trail packers found this interesting, as they considered that they knew "a few things about packing and pack animals."¹³

The packers and their mules reached Dyea on March 6, and Major Rucker proudly announced that as soon as the reindeer arrived, the expedition would cross Chilkoot Pass and push on to Dawson. But long before the reindeer arrived, Secretary of War Russell A. Alger determined to abandon the Klondike Relief Expedition. By March 1, Alger was satisfied that stories of starvation on the Yukon had been exaggerated and there was no need for the expedition. He forwarded a request to Congress, asking for authority to dispose of supplies purchased for Yukon Relief, including the reindeer herd.

torical Society.

¹¹ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 199-200.

¹² *The Dyea Trail*, Feb. 11, 1898. The Dyea-Klondike Transportation Co. had completed its wharf, the first at Dyea, on February 10.

¹³ *Ibid.*, Feb. 25, 1898. The pack train was commanded by Thomas Mooney,

Alaskans were of the opinion that the soldiers and packtrain should now be employed by the War Department to find new routes "to the Yukon over territory every inch of which should be American." The disposition of the reindeer could be more difficult, because of Sheldon Jackson's influence. As he had championed their purchase, it was anticipated that he would fight to "have Uncle Sam retain every last one of them and send them to Alaska."¹⁴

The necessary authority having been secured, the stores concentrated for the Relief Expedition were sold at public auction on April 19.¹⁵

Thirty-five members of the Klondike Relief Expedition left Dyea in the second week of April for Haines Mission. There they would remain until May 1, when they would be divided into three squads: one group to reconnoiter the Dalton Trail; one, the Copper River area in an effort to find "a new American route to the Klondike"; and the third to cross the "rocky fortresses beginning at Cook Inlet with scientific research" as its goal.¹⁶

The outbreak of war with Spain caused the recall of these expeditions before they could accomplish their objectives. In May the reindeer, having been shipped halfway around the world, were finally put ashore at Haines Mission. Nine months later, in January 1899, the decimated herd finally reached Dawson.¹⁷

the army's chief packer. The packers and animals were being brought from Forts Russell, Washakie, and Robinson.

¹⁴ Ibid., March 11, 1898. ¹⁵ Ibid., April 16, 1898. ¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 199-200.

VIII. DYEA AND THE CHILKOOT TRAIL IN 1898

A. Dyea Becomes a Boomtown

In the autumn of 1897 Dyea began to prosper, as traffic over the Chilkoot Trail ebbed. Adventurers arriving too late to reach the Klondike before the waterways froze over were forced to settle down to await the spring thaw or return to their homes. By mid-December Dyea had grown from a trading post of three saloons, a combination store, hotel, and restaurant, and perhaps 100 tents to a town of 1,200 people. Streets had been laid out and settlers had located town lots. Title was retained by possession and lot jumping was common. Meals and lodging cost 75 cents each.¹

B. Wharves and Shipping

1. The Dyea Wharf

The people of Dyea were confident as the New Year commenced that the Chilkoot Trail would continue to attract the majority of the people traveling to and from the Klondike and insure the supremacy of their town over Skagway. With construction of a system of tramways under way, Dyea was growing rapidly. Word reached town in mid-January that L. C. Henry, a well-known Seattle capitalist, had purchased from L. D. Kinney his interest in the projected Dyea wharf. As pile-drivers, piling, lumber, and capital were available, it was forecast that within 30 days steamers would be tying up at Dyea.

The town now had a newspaper, and the editor of *The Dyea Trail* trumpeted that the townspeople and "the world can now be assured the finest system of wharves and warehouses in all Alaska will be constructed here at the mouth of the Chilkoot pass, the only route to the greatest gold fields known to history."²

¹ *Tacoma Daily News*, Dec. 14, 1897. During the fall, before the waterway was closed to navigation, the rate for packing from Dyea to Lake Lindeman had soared to 50 cents per pound.

² *The Dyea Trail*, Jan. 19, 1898. The first edition of *The Dyea Trail* appeared on the streets on January 12, 1898. Charles S. Ulmer, Sr., edited the weekly newspaper.

Work dragged, however, and it was the second week in May before the long wharf was completed. Extending from low tide to deep water, the wharf, which was securely anchored on piles, was approached by an inclined roadway. There was a depth of 60 feet of water at the end of the wharf. No longer would Skagway be able to belittle Dyea for "a lack of sufficient wharfage." This improvement would rob "our so-called competitors of their ammunition," boasted the editor of the *Dyea Press*, and henceforth Dyea would be "recognized as the undisputed entrepot of Alaska for the Yukon." One line of steamers had already contracted to use the wharf as its terminal, while others had expressed similar interest. A large 50 by 100-foot warehouse was under construction on the south end of the wharf.³

2. The Dyea-Klondike Transportation Co. Wharf

An earlier but less convenient wharf was the one constructed by the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company, located on the west side of Dyea Inlet three miles south of town. In January 1898 a crew was turned to blasting a roadway from the site where the wharf was under construction to Dyea.⁴ The merchants and outfitters celebrated on Thursday, February 10, at news that the last plank had been laid and a team, which had left the wharf, reached town. Hereafter ships would be able to discharge their cargoes directly onto wagons waiting at the dock instead of into lighters. No longer would residents of Skagway be able to reproach Dyea for not having a wharf.⁵ Significantly, the first ship to tie up at the wharf was *George T. Elder* with supplies for the Yukon Relief Expedition.

The three-mile haul by wagon over a difficult road discouraged many stampeders, and this wharf never became popular as a point of debarkation.

³ *Dyea Press*, May 14, 1898. The first ship to dock at the new wharf was the steamer *City of Seattle*.

⁴ *The Dyea Trail*, Jan. 19, 1898. J. P. Jorgenson and E. O. Sylvester in September 1897 had filed on a tract on the west side of Taiya Inlet. A two-story building was erected and a trail opened through the woods to Dyea. This trail was widened and improved in January 1898. Sylvester to Secretary of War, April 10, 1900, NA, RG 49, Records of General Land Office --Abandoned Military Reservations. Jorgensen and Sylvester valued their improvements at \$5,000.

⁵ *The Dyea Trail*, Feb. 11, 1898.

3. Boat Building at Dyea

The first lighters built at Dyea were launched in the second week of January. These vessels, the property of the Northern Trading and Transportation Company, had been three weeks in construction and would be used for lightering the company's freight ashore from steamers anchored off-shore.⁶ Additional lighters and scows were built in the ensuing weeks. Many of these vessels were employed to shuttle stampeders and their outfits around from Skagway, where there were better disembarkation facilities, to Dyea.

C. The Dyea Building Boom

Lumber was bought up almost as fast as it could be unloaded. A lumber famine at Dyea was relieved in mid-January by the arrival of the bark *Colorado* with over a million feet. This with about 500,000 feet brought in by other vessels would enable builders to complete a number of structures. Dyea boosters, however, did not believe this would begin to supply the demand, as scores of buildings were under construction.⁷

The Dyea Trail, which published its first edition on January 12, 1898, reported that from "early morning until dark the sounds of carpentering are heard, and Sunday is as busy a day as any." New hotels were "projected every day," and determined efforts would be made "to afford board and lodging" to the thousands that would soon be arriving for the spring rush to the Klondike. Many improvements had been made "on that part of River Street known as Indian Town." According to the editor, "Every day, almost every hour indeed, ground is broken for some new structure."⁸

Corrugated iron, as roofing material, became popular with Dyea builders. A large shipment was received in mid-February by James P. Daly, who advertised that it was rain, snow, and windproof.⁹ Dyea in the

⁶ Ibid., Jan. 19, 1898.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid. In the third week of January, W. W. Whipple of Astoria, Oregon, had built a restaurant on Main, between 2d and 3d; Knight & Volkman had erected a drygood store on upper River Street; at the corner of 5th and Main, A. P. Benton was building a two-story business house; while the Stark Hotel was "receiving interior finishing touches."

⁹ Ibid., Feb. 25, 1898.

last week of February had a church where Methodist services were held by the Rev. C. J. Larson.¹⁰

The building boom continued. Each issue of *The Dyea Trail* announced the opening of new businesses. Typical was the issue for February 25, 1898, reporting that H. J. Miller, a popular attorney, had completed and moved into "his fine new office on the corner of Main and Third streets." M. L. Toklas and Son had opened "their new stock of gents' furnishing goods in their new store on Broadway"; Scott Lindsay & Co. were operating a grocery and dry goods store on River Street, between Sixth and Seventh; and G. L. Cline was prepared to supply the stamped-ers with all kinds of evaporated goods in his store located opposite the Methodist Church on Main Street.¹¹

By the end of the second week of March, work on a new hotel, which the builders, Nichols & Crothers, boasted would be the largest in Alaska, was nearing completion. It was designed to accommodate several hundred guests. But, the editor of *The Dyea Trail* cautioned, although Dyea was blessed with "many large and comfortable hotels," there would not be enough rooms if people continued to arrive as they had during the past week. The beach and warehouses were jammed, and teams were being worked round-the-clock hauling freight.¹²

By the end of March, the contractors had finished the *Olympic* Hotel, as it was named. The commodious 75-by-100-foot, three-story building, at the corner of River and Third Streets, was at the time the largest hotel in Alaska. The *Olympic* had 115 "large and elegantly furnished rooms, spacious dining room, handsomely filled office and barrooms," and was conducted on "a truly metropolitan plan."¹³

As befitting a rising city, a public meeting was held in late February, a charter drafted, and a board of aldermen and other officials elected.¹⁴

By the late spring of 1898 Dyea had grown to a feverish boomtown of between 3,500 and 4,000, consisting of frame saloons, false-fronted hotels, log cafes, gambling parlors, stores, and real estate offices.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., March 11, 1898.

¹³ "Special Illustrated Edition," *The Dyea Trail*, Aug. 1898.

¹⁴ *The Dyea Trail*, Feb. 25, 1898. Aldermen elected were : J. J. Cavanaugh, _____ Cheadle, Robert Blet, G. L. Klineover, F. D. Boyer, Z. B. Patrick, and _____ Skinner. H. A. Bauer was elected City Treasurer and B. A. Whalen City Clerk.

Tents were everywhere. Competition had compelled hotel and restaurant owners to cut prices for lodging and meals to from 50 to 25 cents each.¹⁵

D. The Bitter Rivalry Between Dyea and Skagway

1. The Dyea Newspapers Headline Difficulties in Skagway

On Saturday evening, April 10, 1898, a meeting was held and a Chamber of Commerce organized. Plans were made to send a "wide awake" agent to the Puget Sound cities to advertise the merits of the Chilkoot Trail.¹⁶ With the completion and opening for traffic of the Brackett Road from Skagway to the Cut-Off and news of the disastrous avalanche of April 3 on the Chilkoot Trail giving adverse publicity to their route to the Klondike, the Dyeans had to take positive action if they were to retain an advantage over their rival city. Since the beginning of the year, *The Dyea Trail* and after it was established in March *The Dyea Press* had been trumpeting the advantages of the Chilkoot Trail and casting aspersions on Skagway, the White Pass Trail, and the Brackett Road.

Dyea interests had boasted in mid-February that freight rates on the Chilkoot Trail had continued to decrease. Supplies were now being moved from Dyea to Sheep Camp for ten dollars a ton. The editor of *The Dyea Trail* claimed on February 11 that the trail from tidewater to Sheep Camp had "become almost like a city street in respect to its condition and amount of traffic going over it."

Writing for the benefit of those en route to or planning to enter the Klondike in 1898, the editor pointed out that it was unlikely freight rates would get any lower. It was now possible to contract one's outfit over the summit of Chilkoot for four cents a pound. "Wise Klondikers," he wrote, "will not neglect this opportunity." A visit to the Dyea merchants showed that they weren't, "for provisions and outfitting goods are being purchased at an astonishing rate, and unless . . . large consignments are brought by incoming steamers, Dyea's stores will be empty."

During the week there had been heavy traffic over Chilkoot. The trail from Sheep Camp and up to the summit was "black with men and their outfits." Persons familiar with the area were of the opinion

¹⁵ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, "Special Klondike Issue," July 21, 1898.

¹⁶ *The Dyea Trail*, April 16, 1898.

that traffic was as heavy as it had been during the height of the rush of '97. "While other supposed trails and routes" cried for "vindication, dog teams, horse teams, elk teams, ox teams, goat teams and men teams" were passing along the Chilkoot Trail "in a steady procession."¹⁷

In the second week of February, the backers of the Chilkoot Trail scored an important victory over their rival city. The North West Mounted Police, which had been using the White Pass Trail to supply their posts in the Yukon, suddenly signed a contract with the Chilkoot Railroad and Transportation Company to move their supplies from Dyea to Lake Lindeman. This coup was widely advertised by *The Dyea Trail*, as was the news that the Yukon Relief Expedition had determined to travel the Chilkoot Trail.¹⁸

Difficulties on the White Pass Trail and in Skagway received a prominent place in *The Dyea Trail*. A spinal meningitis outbreak in the sister city in late February was headlined. It was pointed out that during the past week seven deaths from the dread malady had occurred in Skagway. Strange as it seemed, in spite of the proximity of the two cities, there were no cases in Dyea. Indeed, the editor boasted, "Dyea has not had a death from illness this winter."¹⁹

To add to Skagway's problems, *The Dyea Trail* gloated, "when people were not cursing her trail or dying, the water front is in an uproar over scab longshoremens." There had been a riot on the evening of February 24, as the captain of *Queen* tried to unload with Indian longshoremens.²⁰

All the while newcomers continued to arrive at Dyea. On February 25, 500 persons, including 42 ladies, came ashore from barges that had been chartered to bring them over from Skagway. All planned to travel to the Klondike by way of Chilkoot Pass and Lake Bennett.²¹

By March 10, 1898, the ice had started to melt on Skagway River, and teams had broken through the ice in several places. When he learned of this, Judge L. T. Erwin, although he had several tons cached at a point on the trail several miles above Skagway, signed a contract to have these supplies delivered from the Dyea waterfront to Sheep Camp. This news was widely circulated by the Dyea press.²²

17 Ibid., Feb. 11, 1898.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid., Feb. 25, 1898.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., March 11, 1898

The residents of Dyea had congratulated themselves too soon on escaping the ravages of spinal meningitis. On March 11 the editor of *The Dyea Trail*, in reporting that the epidemic in Skagway was on the wane, admitted that "Dyea, itself, has not been free from the disease, several deaths having occurred."²³

2. The Problem of Law and Order

Skagway's crime problem received excellent coverage in the Dyea press. The readers of *The Dyea Trail* learned on February 4 of the double killing in Skagway on January 31 in which two men, one the assistant deputy marshal, lost their lives. Five weeks later, many Dyeans chuckled as they read of an incident that was not amusing to the forces struggling to bring law and order to Skagway. Early in March, 101 citizens of Skagway had met secretly and swore to take measures to crush the gang of gamblers led by Jefferson Randolph "Soapy" Smith. On the 8th a circular was printed and circulated, reading:

W A R N I N G !

All confidence, bunco, and sure-thing men, and all other objectionable characters are notified to leave Skagway and White Pass Road immediately, and to remain away. Failure to comply with this warning will be followed by prompt action.

Soapy Smith met this challenge. He called a meeting of his followers who numbered 314, organized them into a "Longshoremens' Association," and ran off a broadside reading:

A N S W E R T O W A R N I N G

The body of men styling themselves One Hundred and One are hereby notified that any overt act committed by them will be promptly met by the law-abiding citizens of Skagway, and each member and his property will be held responsible for any unlawful act on their part, and the law and order society consisting of 314 citizens will see that justice is dealt out to its full extent, as no blackmailers or vigilantes will be tolerated.²⁴

²³ Ibid., March 11, 1898.

²⁴ Ibid., March 11, 1898; Harry J. Suydam, "The Reign of 'Soapy' Smith," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, January 1901, p. 218.

According to reports reaching Dyea, Deputy Marshal Maginnis' life had been threatened so often in lawless Skagway that he had locked himself in his office.²⁵

While making certain that prospective stampeders knew of Skagway's reputation as a sin city, Dyeans also had their share of crime. On Friday morning, March 11, Sam Roberts, one of the proprietors of *The Wonder*, closed up for the night and started for his lodgings. He was accompanied by John K. Ross, who carried the night's take from the gaming tables in a sack slung over his back. As they entered their quarters, Roberts struck a match. As he did so, a rustling was heard in the room, followed by the crash of a shot. Ross dived for cover, as four more shots roused the neighborhood. Men raced to the scene with lanterns and found Ross uninjured and Roberts dying, his revolver still smoking with one expended cartridge in the chamber. His assailant had taken advantage of the darkness and confusion to escape.²⁶

The editor of *The Dyea Trail* had some interesting comments on the Brennen murder case, which was tried in Skagway in the second week of April. The bartender in Skagway's *Klondike Saloon* had testified that "between the stove and the door four or five men were scuffling on the floor, while Brennen was pummeling a tall man whom he had bent back over the bar." A shot was fired, and Brennen was killed.

When asked, "Who fired the shot?" the bartender answered, "I don't know."

Asked why he didn't, he replied, "I was drawing two beers."

As a warning to prospective travelers, the editor wrote, "Think of it! A half dozen men fighting all around him and shooting going on and the barkeeper doesn't even think it worth while to cease his work of drawing two beers."

A gambler, when asked a similar question, replied that he "didn't know," because he "was busy grabbing seven dollars and a quarter from the Black Jack table." Thirteen others gave various descriptions of the killer, but agreed that the man who did the shooting was not Kiefer. Notwithstanding their testimony, Judge Smith bound Kiefer over to Sitka for trial.²⁷

²⁵ *The Dyea Trail*, March 11, 1898.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, April 16, 1898.

Meanwhile, there had been trouble on the Chilkoot Trail. The most serious crime on the winter trails to the Klondike was theft, not murder. On the Alaskan side of the border, where the North West Mounted Police had no jurisdiction, any person caught stealing faced the miners' court.

In accordance with Canadian law every person passing through Canadian customs and planning to prospect on the Yukon was required to bring 1,100 pounds of supplies. Along the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails were many unguarded caches, each man having divided his outfit into sacks or packs equal in weight to what he could carry between points on the trail.²⁸

In December 1897 a trio of Californians led by Carter had left a three-ton outfit cached on the Chilkoot Trail at Finnigan's Point. Before returning to California, Carter asked a Dane named Hansen to watch the gear. He was agreeable for a share.

When the trio returned to the Alaskan Panhandle in late January, they were unable to locate Hansen or their outfit. Two of the Californians soon grew discouraged and returned to the United States, but Carter vowed to run down the thieves. At Sheep Camp, he found Hansen and his sled. He quickly learned that Hansen and his Irish partner, Wellington, had his and his partners' outfit.

In response to Carter's complaint, the suspects were taken into custody by a vigilance committee. On February 10 Hansen and Wellington were tried before a miners' court in Stetson's Hall. Wellington, fearing that the gallows would be the verdict, determined to cheat the hangman. He asked permission from one of his guards to step outside, and on so doing, drew a concealed revolver and blew out his brains.

Shaken by Wellington's suicide, the court decided not to hang Hansen, but instead to sentence him to receive 50 lashes on his bare back with a one-half-inch rope. The sentence was carried out the next day before a large crowd, so it would serve as a warning. Hansen was escorted to a large tree in front of Stetson's Hall, stripped to the waist, and his hands tied together behind the tree trunk. Billy Onions, an ex-muleskinner, on second call volunteered to do the flogging.

While a woman squeezed into the front row and snapped a picture with her Kodak, Onions stepped forward. The ex-muleskinner laid

²⁸ Amelie Kneass, "The Flogging at Sheep Camp," *Alaska Sportsman*, Oct. 1964, p. 18.

the rope across Hansen's back with a vengeance. After 15 blows had been tallied, Doc. Renninger protested that to continue would result in the death of the prisoner, and Onions halted. Hansen was then cut down, and half-led, half-carried into the hall. That night he was permitted to rest under guard, and the next morning he was escorted to Dyea by a five-man committee. As an additional humiliation, Hansen was compelled to wear on his chest a board labeled, "Thief," and on his back a similar sign with the added words, "Pass him along."

At Dyea, the miners turned Hansen over to United States Commissioner Smith, with a request that he be sent out on the first ship. Wellington, in the meantime, had been buried in a shallow grave. An itinerant minister spoke a few words, ending with, "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be unpunished."²⁹

Governor Brady of Alaska learned of the justice meted out by the miners' court, while at Canyon City on February 12. He had landed at Dyea that day, and accompanied by the officers of the Revenue Cutter *Wheeling*, had started for Canyon City in a four-horse sled. When told of the punishment, he agreed that although the whipping might not be legal, it would be "salutary to thieves . . . and will be better than a whole lot of moral suasion."³⁰

D. Avalanches on the Chilkoot Trail

1. The Flood of September 17, 1897

While Skagway was plagued by Soapy Smith and his gang and was referred to by Maj. Samuel Steele of the North West Mounted Police as "little better than a hell on earth," and the White Pass Trail soon became known as the Dead Horse Trail, travelers on the Chilkoot Trail had to guard against floods and avalanches.

Travelers for years, whenever they stop to rest, as they climb upward from Sheep Camp to the summit of Chilkoot Pass, have been fascinated by the two huge glaciers crowning the ridges to the east and west. Harry de Windt in 1897, in observing one of these glaciers,

²⁹ Ibid., p. 18, 58; Carl L. Lokke, *Klondike Saga: The Chronicle of a Minnesota Gold Mining Company* (Minneapolis, 1965), pp. 44-45; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 261-262; Addison Mizner, *The Many Mizners* (New York, 1932). pp. 101, 104.

³⁰ Brady to Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 12, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. Governor Brady found the road up the Taiya good, and en route to Canyon City they passed a number of dog teams with heavy loads.

wrote that it appeared "as though a child's touch would send it crashing into the valley below."

In September of that year warm weather and heavy rains caused a lake to build up in one of the glacial pockets. Without warning, before daybreak on September 17, the dike of ice holding back the lake gave way, and a wall of water rushed down "a defile, throwing rocks and debris in all directions." The roar of the water awakened 25 campers who had pitched their tents near the mouth of the gorge at Stonehouse. Keeping their wits, the stampedeers raced for high ground. Moments later, a 20-foot high wall of water struck the main canyon at Stonehouse in such a way as to lift that great rock, weighing many tons, and to wash it a quarter of a mile down the canyon. The hastily abandoned tents and outfits were engulfed, but only one man, Choyinski, lost his life.³¹

The floodwaters now raced down the Taiya toward sleeping Sheep Camp. But as the canyon widened, the crest spread out and lost much of its height. The wall of water was sighted by two men several minutes before it reached the tent city, but they were unable to rouse all the people. As the flood raced through the area, it ripped those tents within its reach from their moorings and swept the occupants into the stream, which had

so increased in width and volume that the little crowd of men on the opposite bank were . . . unable to lend assistance to the half-dozen men who could be seen struggling for their lives in the muddy waters, now sinking entirely from sight, now rising to the surface, catching at stumps and branches, only to be drawn under again. During all the while the grinding noise made by the great boulders that were being rolled along the bed of the stream, and the roar and rush of the turbulent waters were deafening, and the shouts of encouragement to the struggling men were unheard.

Within ten minutes the flash flood had subsided, and the onlookers rushed onto the flat opposite the hotel. They found that where a few minutes before many tents had stood was now covered with several feet of debris, and "the tents and blankets and sacks of provisions were protruding, partially buried, from the sand." Other outfits had been swept downstream. Although all the campers could be accounted for, several spectators swore they had seen three bodies carried away by the torrent.³²

³¹ Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, pp. 53-54; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 263.

³² Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, pp. 53-54.

2. The Palm Sunday Avalanche

Several heavy snow storms during February and March 1898 covered the Coast Range under a deep blanket of snow. In the fourth week of March the weather cleared for five days, but on the 29th a blizzard roared in and dumped several additional feet of wet snow on the ridges and glaciers. On April 1 and 2 there was a strong wind from the south, and the Indian packers and veterans of the Chilkoot Trail, such as Sam Herron and Jack Cavanaugh, took cognizance of the signs and warned people to be on the lookout for avalanches. On April 1 the Indian packers quit work, and refused to pack beyond Sheep Camp. Many stamperers, refusing to be swayed by these warnings, took advantage of a lull in the storm to pack their outfits to caches at the summit.³³

A. Mueller and Ed Joppe had established a restaurant at The Scales. Although the heavy snowfall and the actions of the Indians made the partners uneasy, they did not apprehend that they were endangered until the night of April 2, when there were a number of minor slides. Fears were voiced for the safety of a number of their neighbors sheltered in tents.

About 4 a.m., on Sunday morning, April 3, one of their neighbors burst into their cabin, shouting, "For God's sake come and help me; a slide has buried the Maxsons." They leaped out of bed, snatched up their shovels, and rescued Mrs. Anne Maxson and two others. They now heard the rumble of an avalanche at the higher elevations, and roused the camp. Some left immediately, but Joppe, Mueller, the Maxson party, and about 200 others remained at The Scales. As they huddled around their stoves, they continued to hear the distant rumble of slides. It was about 10:30 a.m. when the Chilkoot Tramway construction gang came down from the summit. As they passed, they shouted, "Get the hell out of here and run for your lives! Make for Sheep Camp!"³⁴

Joppe, Mueller, and their friends and neighbors needed no urging. But as they were unready to move out, the construction people gave them a long rope and pushed on down the trail.³⁵

³³ *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898; *The Dyea Press*, April 6, 1898; Lokke, *Klondike Saga*, pp. 60-61.

³⁴ *Ibid.*; Martensen, *Black Sand and Gold*, pp. 376-377.

³⁵ *The Dyea Press*, April 6, 1898; *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

About 15 minutes passed before the Joppe-Mueller group was ready to move out. After they had got themselves in line, Mueller called that they might need shovels to clear away drifts. The men owning shovels scattered to get them. On their return, about 200 strong, the party took hold of the lifeline and moved out, Joppe in the lead. It was snowing and the trail left by the construction crew was "almost obliterated by the freshly fallen snow." About 1,000 feet below The Scales, they turned off the main trail, which descended "Long Hill," and started passing through "drow-a-low" ravine, a cut-off considered treacherous by experienced packers.³⁶

Unknown to the Joppe-Mueller party, about 90 minutes before they entered "drow-a-low" ravine, there had been a slide at Squaw Hill, between Stonehouse and the power station. Three campers had been crushed to death in their tents. When their bodies were removed, two days later an ox--the celebrated Marc Hanna--was found alive and calmly chewing his cud.³⁷

As they entered the ravine, they heard a "low rumbling sound." Someone shouted, "Snowslide!"

Mueller answered, "No, it is the howling of the wind." A moment later, he found himself buried to his hips in a solid mass of snow and ice. Before he could react, he was pushed over on his side by another mass of snow and buried to a depth of six feet. He knew that the entire party had been engulfed by the avalanche, but he hoped that the construction party that had preceded them had heard the slide and was rushing to their rescue.³⁸

³⁶ *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898. "Drow-a-low" ravine is east of and just above the O & I powerhouse. *The Dyea Press*, April 6, 1898.

³⁷ *The Dyea Press*, April 6, 1898; Monty Attwell, "Marc Hanna--Champion of the Chilkoot Trail," *Alaska Sportsman*, Oct. 1963, p. 40. Two stampeders from Cascade Locks, Oregon, E. P. Ash and Paul Paulson, had reached Dyea in late February and had purchased Marc Hanna for \$150. After securing special shoes for the huge ox, they had put him to work on the Chilkoot Trail. When rescued, it was found that Marc Hanna had tramped out a small cave in the snow, and waited. Some of the diggers, seeing vapor rising from the snow, had dug down to him. He was used to haul the bodies of some of the slide victims down to Dyea.

³⁸ *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898; *The Dyea Press*, April 6, 1898. The area where the Joppe-Mueller party was overwhelmed by the slide was about 50 rods above the powerhouse.

J. A. Rines of Maine was in the line behind Mueller, when he heard a "loud report and instantly began to feel myself moving swiftly down the hill, and looking around saw many others suddenly fall down, some with their feet in the air, their heads buried out of sight in the snow." At this moment, he knew he had been caught in an avalanche. Rines did not panic. He braced himself to keep his feet and let himself be carried along with the slide. When he struck the bottom of the ravine, he was buried under many feet of snow.³⁹

A Mr. Black recalled that when he was engulfed, his legs and one arm were outstretched. The arm lay across Mrs. Maxson's body. His other arm was doubled on his chest. Breathing was difficult. After considerable effort, he worked his hand up his chest and removed a little snow from his mouth and nostrils, which gave him great relief. Next, he tried to work his legs loose but failed. Exhausted by the effort he dropped off to sleep. Several hours later, he awoke refreshed and heard rescuers digging nearby. Otherwise it was quiet, whereas before he had gone to sleep

the voices of the entombed reached me from all directions. Many seemed to be praying and some were saying good-bye to relatives at home. Everyone was talking. It was the most ominous and impressive time of my life. I did not suffer any pain. My agony was mental.⁴⁰

Mueller, unlike Black, found that he could move neither hand nor foot. He was "held as fast as if . . . in a plaster-of-Paris cast." He did not shout, as he realized that if he were to be saved he needed all his strength and breath. He heard groans and praying from those buried nearby, but within a few minutes all was still. He soon lost consciousness.⁴¹

The roar of the avalanche was heard as far down the valley as Sheep Camp. One of those waiting at Sheep Camp for a break in the weather was Dr. Mary Lee Caldwell. She recalled that soon after the roar of a snowslide was heard, an "old man, bent, groaning, and waving his arms," came staggering down the trail. After he had gasped out word that hundreds had been engulfed by a killer

³⁹ *The Dyea Press*, April 6, 1898. The slide rolled over "the victims, and no trees, stones, or ice" were found in the debris. *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

⁴⁰ *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

avalanche, there was a rush to the tents for shovels. Within 15 minutes, 1,500 persons were rushing up the trail to the scene of disaster. On reaching the ten-acre slide area, near the powerhouse of the Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Co., the rescuers began sinking parallel trenches in an effort to locate victims. The ten acres covered by the slide was cluttered with debris. Small air holes sometimes appeared in the snow to indicate where a person was buried. Occasionally they could hear the muffled cries of the entrapped. One old man was heard alternately praying and cursing until his voice was stilled.⁴²

One of the first rescued was Rines. After about 30 minutes he was freed. As soon as he recovered his strength, he turned to and "helped dig out many others." Unlike Rines, Mueller awoke to find himself on the floor of the powerhouse. He was badly bruised. His rescuers told him he had been buried about three hours, and that they had pulled out seven others that were on the rope with him and Joppe. Four of them, however, soon died.

Miss Vernie Woodward, a female packer with a string of four horses, was one of the first to reach the area from Sheep Camp. She visited the powerhouse to comfort the injured. Miss Woodward and Joppe were good friends. As she entered the powerhouse, she saw and recognized his body in the row of dead. She rushed to him, crying and begging for him to come back to life. She manipulated his limbs, unfastened his shirt, and administered mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Until 3 a.m. on the 4th she continued, when to the amazement of the onlookers, Joppe opened his eyes and spoke her name, "Vernie."⁴³

Many were saved by taking hold of a rope used for hauling freight up to the summit. By this means 40 or 50 were pulled from the snow pack. The first person rescued by Dr. Caldwell was a woman. She was unharmed but hysterical, having been entombed head down. She was carried to the powerhouse and treated for shock.

⁴² Mary Lee Davis, *Sourdough Gold: The Log of a Yukon Adventure* (Boston, 1933), p. 52; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 265. P. Young, one of the first to reach the disaster area, reported that some of the victims were buried under 30 feet of snow. A number had been killed instantly by the concussion, as the mass of wet snow that came down the mountain was "almost beyond comprehension." *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, April 9, 1898.

When the victims were uncovered, a funnel, shaped like a megaphone, in the snow, led from their mouths, where their breath had melted a cone of snow. Most of those found alive had slept all or part of the time following their burial. One corpse was found, frozen stiff in the position of running. One 20-year-old was saved after being buried for 12 hours upside down. Those saved stated that the sensation was not as unpleasant as might be supposed, the feeling of cold soon passing and drowsiness, changing to sleep, supervening. There was no great difficulty in breathing, they said, and they could hear their rescuers.⁴⁴

Major Steele of the North West Mounted Police was at Lake Bennett on April 3, when he learned of the avalanche. Reacting with his characteristic alacrity, Steele directed Inspector Bobby Belcher, the officer in charge of the customs station at the summit of Chilkoot Pass to rush a detail to the scene of disaster. Belcher was to render all assistance possible, to organize a committee of good American citizens to see that the property of the dead was taken care of, and make a point of looking after the interests of British subjects, what property they had on them, and the names and addresses of all.⁴⁵

It was fortunate that Steele took this action, because it prevented "shell-game artists and gamblers" from taking charge of the temporary morgue established at Sheep Camp. While Inspector Belcher looked on, a committee composed of "the most prominent and respected men of Dyea and Sheep Camp" was named to take charge of, and inventory, the personal effects of those who had met death in the terrible avalanche. Prior to the organization of this group, charges had been leveled that some of the victims' bodies had been looted. Besides forwarding personal effects to the next of kin, the Committee made out death certificates. The Committee did not handle the bodies of the Chilkoot Tramway Company's dead, as the Company looked after its own.⁴⁶

Major Steele, on being assured by Belcher that the Committee was trustworthy, allowed it to take possession of the outfits on Canadian soil belonging to the dead.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Davis, *Sourdough Gold*, p. 52.

⁴⁵ Steele, *Forty Years*, p. 307.

⁴⁶ *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

⁴⁷ Steele, *Forty Years*, p. 307.

The senior United States officer in the area was Col. Thomas Mc. Anderson of the 14th United States Infantry, with headquarters at Dyea. Like Major Steele he soon learned of the disaster. When he reached Sheep Camp, he found a temporary morgue, and was told that hundreds of men were digging for victims. Satisfied that there was no need for additional manpower, he returned to Dyea and turned a detail to digging graves for the dead. By the 6th the army had received and interred 44 bodies in the Slide Cemetery.⁴⁸ By April 15, 49 bodies had been identified. While most of the victims were laid to rest in the Slide Cemetery, some were shipped by express to their relatives for burial in family plots. There are varying estimates as to the exact number of persons killed by the avalanche, with most authorities placing the number somewhere between 50 and 70.⁴⁹

To the people of Dyea it appeared that the Skagway press was seeking to capitalize on the disaster to frighten stampeders into abandoning the Chilkoot Trail for the White Pass route. Commenting on this, the editor of *The Dyea Trail* thundered:

But Skauans have no shame. Their ambition seems to be to heap misery upon others, they glory in publishing false statements; they are ghoulish enough to wish that there had been 500 buried if it only happened on the Chilkoot trail. What care they for the thousands of anxious relatives at home? They show no respect for the dead; but apparently take hell-

⁴⁸ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, April 5, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. Dr. Caldwell recalled that she saw one convoy of sleds with 17 bodies en route from the morgue to Dyea.

⁴⁹ *The Dyea Trail*, April 16, 1898. The bodies recovered and identified by April 15 included: C. M. Holt, J. B. Pearce, Albert F. King, J. E. Doran, and Albert England all of Tacoma, Wash.; Gus Ziebarth, Frank Sprague, C. P. Hardson, W. L. Riley, _____ Stevenson, Con Geptert, E. J. Hudson, R. L. Esterbrook, Oscar Johnson, and Chris Johnson of Seattle, Wash.; C. L. McNeil, Elk River, Minn.; Mrs. Anna Maxson, Jefferson County, Pa.; Ras Helgard, Baker City, Ore.; Joseph Smallwood, Tim Glynn, and Thomas Cullman, Portland, Ore.; John A. Morgan, Emporia, Kan.; L. Weidelin and John Reddy, Kansas City; C. Beck, Florida; E. D. Atwood, New York; O. A. Ulem, Woodley, Wash.; J. K. Clark, residence unknown; W. F. Warner and Geo. Eggart, Menlo Park, Calif.; John Merchant and Austin Preston, Grizzly Bluff, Calif.; G. F. Smith, Sedro, Wash.; Geo. Lewis, Spokane, Wash.; Mark Welch and Mike Miller, Butte, Mont.; C. W. Kenney, Prescott, Ari; John Vogel and Henry Jaeger, Los Angeles, Calif.; Jeff Saling, Weiser, Ida.; William Falke, William Carroll, O. A. Anderson, and Andrew Anderson, San Francisco, Calif.; W. A. Dahlstrom, Lincoln, Neb.; S. M. Grimes, Calif.; Curtis C. Turner, Omaha, Neb.; Albridge Bissell, Palatine, Ill.; and Thomas J. Wall, Hazel, S. D. Ibid.

ish delight in magnifying the awful fiction, and in the hour of death to take advantage of this sad calamity by advertising their fever-stricken hole of hell.⁵⁰

By April 8, five days after the slide, the Chilkoot Trail between Stonehouse and the summit was again open to traffic. It was briefly closed again on the 15th, when a small avalanche between The Scales and Stonehouse engulfed three men. It took the rescuers two hours to pull the men out alive.⁵¹

E. The Chilkoot Tramways

1. Winter Gives the White Pass Route the Edge

Several businessmen with large sums of capital at their command, interested in investing funds in transportation facilities to reach the Klondike, put their money in steamboat companies. At first, the financing of modes of transportation across the Coast Mountains, the shortest route to the land of gold, was left to men with little capital but plenty of energy and perception.

A comparison of the two routes should have been sufficient to convince big business of their relative merits. Dawson is 1,600 miles from the Puget Sound ports. Of this distance, 1,000 are by the inland passage, 40 across the Coast Mountains, and the remainder down the inland waterways. This route is open eight months of the year. By way of St. Michael it is over 4,000 miles to Dawson--2,700 miles of Pacific Ocean and about 1,500 of Yukon River--which touches the Arctic Circle and has numerous bars at its mouth and elsewhere. The steamboats were accordingly limited to a draft of three feet, and the river was navigable for seven months. The extent of this transportation delusion is evidenced by the increase of steamboats on the lower Yukon from about a dozen in 1897, to 110 by the summer of 1898.⁵²

Packhorses and packmules, once the snow came and the river and bogs froze in the late autumn of 1897, gave Skagway the edge over Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail. Horses between Skagway and Lake Bennett carried 250 pounds besides feed for the four-day roundtrip.

⁵⁰ Ibid., April 9, 1898.

⁵¹ Ibid., April 9 and 16, 1898.

⁵² Harrington Emerson, "The Engineer and the Roads to the Gold Fields," *The Engineering Magazine*, 17, No. 5, 1899, pp. 759-760.

Six to seven horses or mules made a packtrain under the care of one man, the driver riding on an extra animal, sometimes in front, often in the rear. Rates for packing fell to 20 and then 12 cents a pound and fortunes were made and lost. Six horses carrying 1,500 pounds of net freight represented gross earnings of \$180 to \$300 per trip. Expenses for the roundtrip were: wages \$40, hotel bills \$12, forage for the animals \$25, \$20 depreciation, and \$15 toll, for a total of \$112. Some packers who had 40 to 50 horses on the trail put in their own boarding camps, thus cutting their expenses. The biggest packers were able to net \$1,000 per day on an investment of \$2,000 to \$3,000. One energetic capitalist met the incoming Klondikers at Seattle and contracted for the delivery of their freight at Lake Bennett. He used the required advance cash payment to purchase horses and pack saddles and went north on the same steamer with his customers.⁵³

To compete against the packtrains, plans were made for the construction of tramways to get the stamperders' outfits and supplies over Chilkoot Pass at reasonable rates. As early as 1895 Peterson and Moore had tried and failed in an effort to employ engineering to conquer Chilkoot. In 1897 a crude horse-powered windlass was in operation. But this was just the beginning. By late April 1898 four tramways were in operation up Chilkoot Pass, freight rates had been cut to 10 cents a pound from Dyea to Lake Lindeman, and Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail, despite the unfortunate publicity associated with the killer avalanche of April 3, again secured the lion's share of the traffic from the backers of Skagway and the White Pass route.

2. The Chilkoot Railroad and Transportation Co.'s Aerial Tramway

The most expensive and important tramway, but the last to be completed, was the one constructed by The Chilkoot Railroad and Transportation Company. It is also the tramway that is best known to students of the Klondike Gold Rush.

In September 1897 a party of surveyors under the direction of A. Mel Hawks of Tacoma made a topographical survey of Chilkoot Pass to determine the most feasible route for the tramway projected by the Chilkoot Railroad and Transportation Co. Initially, the intention was to use a cable system for covering only the mountainous portion of the route from Sheep Camp to Crater Lake.⁵⁴

⁵³ Ibid., p. 762.

⁵⁴ William Hewitt, "Across the Chilkoot Pass by Wire Cable," *Cassier's Magazine*, 13, No. 6, p. 529.

The promoters of the aerial tramway were Tacoma businessmen, and as soon as they received Hawks' favorable report, Britton Gray on October 13 filed with Secretary of the Interior Bliss, articles of incorporation for the Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Co. The goal was to construct a tramway from Dyea into Canada.⁵⁵

Money was raised in Tacoma by Gray and his associates, and Hugh C. Wallace was placed in charge of construction. It soon became apparent that it would be expensive and difficult to build a road through the Taiya Canyon, and it was determined to extend the tramway to Canyon City.⁵⁶ Plans also called for the construction of a horse tramway from Dyea to the mouth of the Canyon. The Company in its announcements stated that the aerial tramway, when completed, was expected to transport 120 tons of freight daily from the mouth of the canyon over the summit to Crater Lake.⁵⁷

Construction was started on December 10, but "little beyond shovelling snow was accomplished" before March 15, 1898. As built, the aerial tramway consisted of two loops, one from Canyon City to Sheep Camp, four miles, and the other from Sheep Camp over the summit and one-fourth mile down the other side. This loop was four and one-quarter miles in length. The trolley automatically switched from one loop to the other. The load limit was 400 pounds, generally transported in boxes 40x20x24 inches.⁵⁸

Although it had been publicized that the tramway would be ready to accept traffic by February 1, two additional months were to pass before the Canyon City-Sheep Camp loop was opened and another three weeks before buckets were operating on the Sheep Camp-Crater Lake loop.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Gray to Secretary of the Interior, Oct. 13, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

⁵⁶ Hewitt, "Across the Chilkoot Pass by Wire Cable," *Cassier's Magazine*, 13, No. 6, p. 529. Canyon City was the camp that had grown up at the mouth of the canyon.

⁵⁷ *Tacoma Daily News*, Dec. 14, 1897.

⁵⁸ Emerson, "The Engineer and the Roads to the Gold Fields," *The Engineering Magazine*, 17, No. 5, pp. 765-768.

⁵⁹ Lyson, *Map-Guide*, p. 20.

The Bleichert System was employed by the Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Company, and consisted of suspending the buckets from carriages running on stationary cables. The buckets were moved by a light, endless rope, called a traction rope, to which they were attached. The traction rope traveled continuously about terminal sheaves. This system was popularly referred to as the "double rope" or "fixed rope," as opposed to the "single rope" system in which one rope performed both functions.⁶⁰

The track cables heretofore employed on tramways of this type were of unusual construction, and were known as "locked-coil" cable, because the outer wires were of such shape that they interlocked with each other, thus presenting a smooth surface, yet possessing sufficient flexibility to be shipped in coils. These cables were manufactured in lengths of from 800 to 2,400 feet. When installed they were joined by special couplings. These were fabricated in halves.⁶¹

At Chilkoot it was found necessary, because of the high cost of transportation, to make everything as light as possible, "consistent with the necessary strength." It therefore was found impracticable to employ locked-coil cable, because of the difficulty of manufacturing this cable as small as the exigencies of the circumstances demanded. The Company accordingly adopted the "smooth coil" cable. This cable was composed of a series of round wires, considerably larger than the wires of ordinary wire ropes or cables, and laid up in the manner of a single strand. The Chilkoot cables were 5/8-inch in diameter, and weighed about 7/10 of a pound to the foot. They were of a special grade of crucible steel (plow steel), possessing a high tensile strength. The finished cable had an ultimate strength of 36,000 pounds.⁶²

⁶⁰ Hewett, "Across the Chilkoot Pass by Wire Cable," *Cassier's Magazine*, 13, No. 6, p. 530. Adolph Bleichert of Leipsig-Gohlis, Germany, had developed the double "rope system," which was perfected by the Trenton Iron Co., of Trenton, New Jersey, which had introduced several improvements in the construction of track cables and grips for attaching the cars to the moving rope.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 531.

⁶² Ibid., p. 532. There was one disadvantage to a cable of this type of construction: when it broke the "smooth coil" was liable to strip or uncoil for a considerable distance.

A loaded bucket was shared to a certain extent by both the track cables and the traction rope. On the level, most of the weight was borne by the track cables, and the stress on the traction rope was little more than the tractive force required to move the loads. On slopes the stress upon each varied according to the inclination: the steeper it was, the greater the stress on the traction rope and the less on the track cables.⁶³

The usual practice was to lay out the line of track cables for a safe working tension, and erect the supports to this line, the cables being weighted to a somewhat lower tension. Such a practice ensured there would be no possibility of their rising out of the saddles on which they rested. Where the cable lines passed at a considerable height above the ground, it was not necessary to put in supports. The supporting points were generally located on ridges and the more elevated portions of the route. On the Chilkoot line there was one clear span of 1,600 feet, and another span only slightly shorter.⁶⁴

The bucket employed on the Chilkoot Tramway used a Webber Grip. The jaws of the grip were operated by an arrangement of toggle-pointed levers that produced a bite on the rope sufficient to hold securely on any grade.⁶⁵

Two types of supports were used by The Chilkoot Railroad and Transportation Company. The most common consisted of one or more sections of iron pipe, bolted together and imbedded in rock, and bearing cross timbers supporting the saddles upon which the track cables rested, and the rollers upon which the traction rope traveled. At key points, the familiar A-shaped frames braced against longitudinal pressure were employed.⁶⁶

With the opening for traffic of the aerial tramway, the stamper in May 1898 traveled from Dyea to Canyon City over "a fine level wagon road." Drayage over this road cost from one-fourth to one-half cent a pound. At Canyon City, outfits and supplies were transferred to buckets and taken to Sheep Camp, and then to the summit, for a fee only 1/5 to 1/10 as costly as it had been in the summer of 1897.⁶⁷ At the summit, the Company, after the outfits and supplies had passed through customs, released the

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 534-535.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 535.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*, "Special Klondike Issue," July 21, 1898.

freight to packers who took it on to Lake Lindeman. The charge for transporting one's outfit from Canyon City to Lake Lindeman by the Company was seven and one-half cents a pound.⁶⁸

3. Burns' Hoist

The first successful engine-powered hoist at Chilkoot Pass was put into operation early in December 1897 by Archie Burns, a Sour-dough from Fortymile and Circle City. Burns' "contrivance" consisted of a pulley drum, 1,500 feet of cable, and a gasoline engine at the summit, with sufficient rope to reach the foot. Sleds were hitched onto this cable, which was wound around a drum, and pulled to the top. Burns' charge for this service was two cents per pound.⁶⁹

4. The Alaska Railway and Transportation Co.'s Operation

Two miles above Sheep Camp, in the spring of 1898, stamperders found the bucket tramway of the Alaska Railway & Transportation Company. This tramway was supported on poles closer to the ground than those of the Chilkoot Company. As it was powered by a gasoline engine, instead of steam, the buckets moved "quite slow." By July 1898, the two aerial tramways had consolidated their operations and were no longer competitors.⁷⁰

5. The Dyea-Klondike Transportation Co.'s Bucket Tramway.

At The Scales, in April 1898, was found the D. K. T. Company's bucket tram. A traveler reported that the

most wonderful of these [tramways] was the one called the "Scales" road. It simply carried goods from the bottom of the pass to the top. All there was to it was a heavy cable stretched from the top of the pass to the bottom. On this cable were buckets, swung onto wheels, that were hauled to the top of the pass by a steam engine. There were two buckets and each could carry about 500 pounds. They made the round trip in about fifteen minutes, and were kept busy all day long. There were no supports to this cable, except at

⁶⁸ *The Dyea Trail*, "Chilkoot Pass Special Illustrated Edition," Aug. 1898.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Special Klondike Issue," July 21, 1898. The wooden whim previously in use had been chopped up for fuel by adventurers, while Burns had been in the interior. *Tacoma Daily News*, Dec. 14, 1897.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

the ends, and in one place it swung about 300 feet above the ground. This cable road charged 5 cents a pound to take freight from the bottom of the pass to the top.⁷¹

6. The Tramways Give a Boost to Dyea and the Chilkoot Trail

Like the Alaska Railway and Transportation Company, the D. K. T. Company soon joined the Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Company. Under an agreement, the three tramways were "to be operated in common, and a through [freight] rate of 10 cents per pound from Dyea to Lake Bennett" was charged. Plans were made, but never implemented, to dismantle the shorter tramways and use the equipment to extend the Canyon City-Crater Lake line through to Lake Lindeman.⁷²

As to be expected, the tramways put the Indian packers out of business on the Dyea-Crater Lake section of the Chilkoot Trail. Indians, who continued in the trade, now confined their activities to the Crater Lake-Lake Lindeman section. In theory the combination should likewise have put the White Pass Route out of business, and guaranteed the supremacy of Dyea, but "it could not handle the freight offered." Frequently there were long delays. There were charges of favoritism. Sufficient business was secured at the Skagway rates of ten cents per pound to keep the tramways busy, so the combination did not cut its rates to the point where it would have put the Skagway packers out of business.⁷³

Competition by the tramways, however, forced a reduction in tolls on the Brackett Road. The rate was lowered to one cent a pound from Skagway to the summit of White Pass and three-quarters of a cent a pound to those who made their way up the river bed.⁷⁴

F. The Winter Trail Across Chilkoot

1. The Road up the Taiya

Early in January 1898, the road up the Canyon and across the ice of the Taiya was improved by the Canyon Road Association. By mid-

⁷¹ *The Dyea Trail*, "Chilkoot Pass Special Illustrated Edition," Aug. 1898

⁷² *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Special Klondike Issue," July 21, 1898.

⁷³ Emerson, "The Engineer and the Roads to the Gold Fields," *The Engineering Magazine*, 17, No. 5, pp. 765-768.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 768.

January teams could be driven as far as Sheep Camp "without the slightest trouble."⁷⁵ Teams were able to use this route until early April, when the ice in the Taiya broke up. From then until the opening of the aerial tramway, stampeders and packers in moving outfits and freight from Canyon City to Sheep Camp had to again rely on the rugged trail up the east side of the canyon.

2. Sergeant Yunera Reconnoiters the Route

The best description of the winter trail across Chilkoot is the report made by Sergeant William Yunera of the 8th United States Cavalry to Major Rucker.⁷⁶ Prior to receipt of orders to abandon the Yukon Relief Expedition, Major Rucker sent Yunera to reconnoiter and map the Chilkoot and White Pass routes.

Yunera left Dyea on February 28, 1898, with a handsled and 200 pounds of baggage. Between Dyea and Canyon City, at this season, the frozen Taiya served as the road. Canyon City consisted of 30 cabins. Here the valley "narrowed down to a gulch of only sufficient width to pass one man or wagon at a time." For the next two miles, the grade, which heretofore had been imperceptible, steepened. Two miles above Canyon City, he debouched from the gorge and pushed on to Sheep Camp, which was at the head of "a narrow and level valley."⁷⁷

Sergeant Yunera camped for the night at Sheep Camp, which he estimated to be populated by from 350 to 400 persons, the majority of whom were transients. He saw that "the permanent or business portion" of the camp was "marked by a row of log cabins and frame houses to the west of the trail. Wagons could not be taken above Sheep Camp."⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *The Dyea Trail*, Jan. 19, 1898.

⁷⁶ Yunera to Rucker, March 21, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. In the first week of April, it was reported that at Canyon City there were "comfortable hotels, saloons, and business houses." Here was located the "mammoth powerhouse of the Chilkoot Railroad and Tramway Co." *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

⁷⁷ Yunera to Rucker, March 21, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. According to the editor of *The Dyea Trail*, in an article dated five weeks later, Sheep Camp was reported to be "a rough, rugged, rocky spot with scant space for a town-site. There was one street, 16 feet wide and a mile long, winding haphazard along the east bank of the Taiya. There were many saloons, two drug stores, a hospital, 15 hotels and restaurants, numerous coffee-stands and hotels, two laundries, a bath-house, and several stores." *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898.

On March 2 the weather was favorable, and the sergeant started for the summit. A large number of men were also on the trail. He recalled that the worst part of the climb was from Sheep Camp to The Scales. "The ascent," Yunera reported, "is by no means a gradual one but consists of a series of steep inclines utterly impossible to surmount without ice creepers, especially if one is hampered by a pack or sled." The climb from Sheep Camp to The Scales took ten and one-half hours. If he had to do it again, he would have packed rather than pulled a sled.⁷⁸

The ascent from The Scales to the summit was abrupt, the first rise being 500 feet at an incline of 45 degrees, followed by a second 200 feet above the first and not so steep, with the summit of Chilkoot finally being reached "after ascending gradually a distance of 250 yds."

Burns' Hoist was in operation from The Scales to the summit, and outfits were hauled at two cents a pound. Those unwilling to pay this price either packed their own supplies or hired professional packers. To ascend the summit, men climbed the "golden stairs," a pathway consisting of "foot holes in the hard snow and a guide rope" to hold onto with the right hand. Those descending, slid down in "furrows to the sides of the stairs, which through constant use had become very deep and narrow." An ascent with a pack took about 45 minutes, the descent barely five. It took the sergeant four trips to get his outfit to the summit of Chilkoot.⁷⁹

When Yunera reconnoitered the area, he saw that the trail to the Petterson Gap was longer but not as steep. He made his final descent via that trail and found "it worse than the other as it does not offer a direct downward course." He was satisfied, however, that the Peterson Trail might be made practicable for animals by "cutting a winding path in the snow."⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Yunera to Rucker, March 21 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept of the Columbia. At The Scales, except in the summer, there was snow. The half dozen shacks and 40 tents were "mostly eight and ten feet below the surface of the snow."

⁷⁹ Ibid. A cheechako recalled that to slide down from the summit to The Scales he employed a bundle of grain sacks tied together to make a soft seat. These he placed under his rump and pushed off from "the top and slid into space like lightning." The first time he tried it, he wished he was back at the top, but after a short distance he began to feel the exhilaration. "There was a good deal of bumping, but the sacks saved any hard shocks." It took about six minutes to slide from the top to the bottom. *The Dyea Trail, "Chilkoot Pass," Special Illustrated Edition, Aug. 1898.*

⁸⁰ Yunera to Rucker, March 21, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

After his outfit was examined by the North West Mounted Police, Sergeant Yunera headed for Lake Lindeman. The rapid, 400-foot descent to Crater Lake was made by guiding one's sled from behind, with ropes attached to the frame. From Crater Lake to the foot of Deep Lake, the trail led across the frozen surfaces of three lakes and their outlets. At the foot of Deep Lake, the trail forked; the right prong, called the Canyon road, passed through "the gulch," and was used by those with dog- and handsleds. The Hill Trail used by packers paralleled the canyon and came out on Lake Lindeman, near the mouth of "the gulch."

Timber, which was first seen after crossing the summit on the hillside east of Deep Lake, was "plentiful" at frozen-over Lake Lindeman. A small settlement, chiefly transients, was located at the point where the trails converged at the lake. Sergeant Yunera spent several days with two North West Mounted Police, who were guarding a huge pile of supplies belonging to their command.

A storm which kept Yunera in camp for two days, abated on March 5, and he proceeded to the head of Lake Bennett. There he found a few log cabins and tents and 20 Mounted Police. The police had a station east of the mouth of the stream, connecting Lakes Lindeman and Bennett.⁸¹ Yunera then returned to Dyea by way of White Pass and Skagway.

3. Joe Brand Crosses the Coast Mountains with Dog Teams

During the period from October 1897, when the Canadians opened their customs stations, to mid-May, 1898, about 30,000 persons crossed over the Chilkoot Trail. This figure did not include an estimated 2,000 who had slipped into Canada with parties having more provisions than required to cross the international boundary.⁸²

Although most traffic was northbound, a few rugged individuals reached Dyea from the Klondike during the winter. Typical of these was Joe Brand, a well-known Yukon freighter. Brand brought with him his sleds pulled by 14 powerful dogs and a party of adventurers. The male stamperers had paid Brand \$1,000 each, while Miss Lou Keller had been charged \$1,500, but she had been allowed to ride a sled, while the others walked. One of the prospectors, Dan Campbell, brought out a sack of gold dust weighing 90 pounds.⁸³

Sourdoughs preferred to use dogs and sleds, if they could be had, for travel during the months that the waterways were frozen over. The favored sleds were 16 inches wide, six feet long, eight inches high, and well-braced. Some were made with a gee pole on the right

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² *The Dyea Trail*, May 14, 1898.

⁸³ *The Dyea Trail*, Jan. 19, 1898.

side, and the driver straddled the rope or chain by which the dogs pulled. Four to eight dogs made a team. On a good trail, the "native dogs, 'insiders'" as they were called--one-quarter, one-half, or even three-quarters wolf--would drag 100 pounds to the dog. They were fed on boiled rice, cornmeal, and bacon, and refused to eat dog biscuit. Good dogs at Dyea cost from \$50 to \$100 each. "Outside" dogs could be secured for \$18 to \$20.⁸⁴

G. The Transportation of Freight Across Chilkoot Pass

While freight rates were high, the opportunities for huge profits were so great that, even in the dead of winter, heavy machinery was disassembled and taken across Chilkoot Pass to the lakes. The Kerry Canadian Mill Company in early February shipped to Dyea equipment for sawmills it planned to establish on the lakes. The mills were to cut lumber for boats. Their first project, once set up and in operation, would be to saw lumber for two sternwheel steamboats to be built for operation on the lakes. Each craft was to be 75 feet long, with an 18-foot beam, and a draft of 18 inches. The projected daily output of the mills was to be 40,000 feet of lumber.⁸⁵

Capt. Jack Crawford, the "poet scout" of the West, was ready to start for the Klondike in April. As he planned to establish a gold-washing operation, he would be bringing with him four tons of machinery. Before sailing from Seattle on April 11, 1898, aboard *Brixham*, Crawford questioned people who had recently returned from Juneau, Dyea, and Skagway as to the possibility of purchasing supplies at these points and their cost. What he heard satisfied him that prices were about the same in the Puget Sound and Panhandle cities, except for "bacon, crystallized eggs . . . some other condensed food, and hardware." He accordingly determined to purchase his outfit at Skagway or Dyea.

Information that it would be impossible to transport components of machinery weighing as much as 700 pounds over the Coast Mountains caused Crawford and his six men to leave their dredge in Seattle. Before boarding ship, Crawford was handed a sealed letter from the company president, which he was not to open until at sea. On doing so, he found that he was to "avoid the Chilkoot Pass, if possible." Undoubtedly, news of the killer avalanche of April 3 was giving that route an evil reputation.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Emerson, "The Engineer and the Roads to the Gold Fields," *The Engineering Magazine*, 17, No. 5, pp. 765-766.

⁸⁵ *The Dyea Trail*, Feb. 11, 1898.

⁸⁶ Crawford to Editor, *Dyea Press*, May 7, 1898, found in *Dyea Press*, May 14, 1898.

Brischam docked at Skagway on April 19, and Crawford asked the captain to hold his supplies until he went ashore to ascertain conditions on the trails. When he checked with the freighters, he learned that it would cost 13 cents a pound to get his gear across White Pass to Lake Bennett. This was too high. Returning to the ship, he talked the captain into landing his supplies at Dyea.

Crawford stepped onto the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company wharf at 8:30 p.m., April 19. The road up to Dyea was one of the worst he had seen, "up and down hill, through mud, slush, rocks, and corduroy." It was after 10 when they entered Dyea. Retracing his route, he was debating with himself over returning to Skagway, when an official of the D. K. T. Co. told him his firm would move the supplies to Lake Bennett for ten cents a pound. This shocked Crawford, as he had been told at Skagway that "freight rates were higher at Dyea, and that they would guarantee nothing, and that other destructive slides might come at any moment." Crawford said he would pay nine cents a pound if the agent would guarantee delivery in nine days. Whereupon, the young man telephoned Superintendent Hammond at Canyon City. When Hammond learned that Crawford had about 13,000 pounds of freight, he said he would guarantee delivery at Lake Bennett in eight days, barring storms or accidents.

"All right," said Crawford, "make out your contract." Next, he told the captain to begin unloading his outfit.

While several of the men started for Lake Bennett, Crawford and two others remained in Dyea until April 24, purchasing groceries and items they had overlooked.⁸⁷ Leaving Dyea on Sunday morning, on horseback, they reached Sheep Camp about 1 p.m., in a blizzard. Crawford left his two men in a store and rode on. The trail was "fairly good, but owing to the fresh fall of snow, and on turning out for packers coming back who warned me that it was dangerous to go on, my horse broke through the soft snow twice, and rolled over." The second time the horse's head and Crawford's bumped. Crawford, however, succeeded in reaching The Scales. It had turned very cold, and no one could be seen on the "golden stairs."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid. The two men who remained with Crawford were Dr. Wilcoxon and J. Crook.

⁸⁸ Ibid. The "Golden Stairs" referred to the steps cut into the snow and ice, by which the adventurers scaled Chilkoot Pass during the snow season. In good weather there was "a continual string of people going up these snow stairs." *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898. Miss Davis recalled that the steps in the "golden stairs" were three feet long, and at every 20th step a bench had been cut on the upper side of the trail. Here packers could take a break and rest with their packs. There was room for four to sit and rest at a time. When the steps and rest stations were cut, stakes were inserted which froze into the lower side of the trail, and

Crawford learned from a representative of the D. K. T. Co. that all his freight, except his personal baggage, was at the summit, or en route to Lake Bennett. This worried Crawford as he knew the duty had not been paid. He determined, despite the storm, to climb to the summit. The three-quarters of an hour climb was the hardest this veteran of the trail had yet experienced. He found the custom house closed, not because it was Sunday but because of the storm. Crawford and several others spent the night in the custom broker's office. Several North West Mounted Police, whom he knew, invited him to a roast beef dinner. The next morning, the 25th, he discovered that McKay, a freighter, had advanced \$100 as part payment for Crawford's outfit, and as he was well known to the authorities, his property had been allowed to proceed.⁸⁹

Crawford, having taken care of his business, he picked up his personal gear, and started for Lake Lindeman at 2 p.m. After spending the night there, he pushed on to Lake Bennett, where he arrived at 10 a.m., April 26, just 50 hours after he had left Canyon City.⁹⁰

In the same edition of the *Dyea Press* in which Captain Crawford's letter appeared, the city's Chamber of Commerce announced that the Chilkoot Trail provided the quickest and cheapest route from tidewater to Lakes Lindeman and Bennett. Cheechakos were urged to purchase their outfits from Dyea merchants. Hundreds of outfits had been bought in the city for less money than they could have in Seattle. The Dyea merchants, at the same time, having discussed the situation with "old Yukoners" knew what to stock. Persons outfitting at the Puget Sound cities, Portland, Victoria, and San Francisco, usually brought along hundreds of pounds of useless articles. At Dyea, the adventurer would find a number of merchants who knew "how to pack outfits in the best possible manner." They could come to Dyea, buy their outfit, and be at Lake Lindeman in 48 hours.⁹¹

With the opening of the aerial tramway of the Chilkoot Company for business, the daily capacity of the four tramways had been increased from 20 to 200 tons. Operating out of Dyea, the cheechako would find 27 transportation companies, employing more than 200 teams and 400 pack animals.⁹²

ropes were stretched from them the entire length of the climb. Davis, *Sourdough Gold*, p. 53.

⁸⁹ Crawford to Editor, *Dyea Press*, May 7, 1898, found in *Dyea Press*, May 14, 1898.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ *Dyea Press*, May 14, 1898.

⁹² Ibid.

H. Experiences on the Chilkoot Trail in '98

Stampedeers traveling the Chilkoot Trail in the late spring and summer of 1898 found conditions greatly improved over those prevailing on the route the previous year. Accommodations had improved, prices paid for food and lodging were lower, freight rates had been slashed, and improvements had been made to the trail.

Typical of these improvements was the bridge built by the Kinney Brothers across the Taiya, a short distance north of Dyea. While the Taiya was no obstacle to travelers in the late summer, during the spring run-off it could not be forded below the mouth of West Creek. Turning a crew to the Kinney Brothers by April had completed a 1,000-foot toll bridge.⁹³

Many stampedeers of '98, like those of '97, kept diaries or journals. These provide the researcher with valuable source material as to what they experienced on the trail in 1898. Material extracted from three of these accounts, two published and one unpublished, were digested to give an overview of experiences on the Chilkoot Trail during the closing months of the rush to the Klondike.

1. A British Correspondent Crosses Chilkoot

Julius M. Price was a correspondent and artist for the *Illustrated London News*. He was given an assignment to the Klondike in 1898 by his employers. Price determined to start from Vancouver because the Canadian Pacific Railway was operating two crack liners between there and Skagway. Instead of building a boat at Lake Lindeman, he determined to travel "light." He would purchase a large canoe in Vancouver and chance getting it over Chilkoot Pass. For \$100 he purchased a Strickland, "a fairly big and roomy boat," that, he was told, "would carry easily four men and a ton of baggage." This struck him as a bold statement, as her dimensions were only 20 feet by four feet, with a depth of two feet. Included in the price were a pair of sculls, three paddles, two poles, a mast and lateen sail with bamboo gaffs, brass adjustable rowlocks, and a quantity of rope, together with tow, resin, and odd pieces of thin boards to repair damage to the hull. He christened her *The News*.⁹⁴

⁹³ *The Dyea Trail*, April 9, 1898; *Tacoma Daily News*, Dec. 14, 1897.

⁹⁴ Julius M. Price, *From Euston to the Klondike: The Narrative of a Journey Through British Columbia and the North-West Territory in the Summer of 1898* (London, 1898), p. 56.

This party of three would require at least two months' provisions. According to rules issued by the North West Mounted Police no person was to be permitted to cross the international boundary unless provided with at least one year's supplies. This measure had been instituted because of the acute shortages of foodstuffs suffered in the Klondike during the winter of 1897-98. Because of his letter of introduction to the authorities, and as it was known that his was to be a flying trip, no difficulty in this respect was anticipated.

Price purchased his supplies, 1,600 pounds, at the extensive stores of the Hudson's Bay Company.⁹⁵

Price reported that on the completion of their journey he and his companions found that they had not brought too much. Their surplus food, flour, beans, dried fruit, etc., was disposed of at a handsome profit.⁹⁶

Before boarding the steamship *Tartar*, the newspaperman received two invitations: one from the Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Co. and the other from the management of a line of steamers being constructed on Lake Bennett for service between there and Dawson City. The former offered free use of the tramway for transportation of the canoe and "baggage from Dyea to Lake Lindeman, with prior right of way to enable" him to get through ahead of anything that might be waiting at their depot.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp. 59-60. Items purchased included: 150 pounds flour; 30 pounds bacon; 30 pounds beans; 17 pounds ham; 20 pounds dried beef; 50 pounds dried fruit; 10 pounds rice; 20 pounds sugar; 10 pounds coffee; 10 pounds butter; 5 pounds tea; 5 pounds salt; 3 pounds baking powder; 2 dozen tins of sardines; 2 dozen tins canned meat, pudding, etc.; 4 jars jam; 2 dozen tins milk; 1 dozen soups (dried); 1 dozen Bovril rations; 1 gallon Keg Hudson's Bay rum; 1 bottle old brandy; 1 dozen maggis bouillon; mosquito bars and headresses--"Hills"; mosquito lotion; 10x12-foot light canvas tent; waterproof ground sheet; 2 suits of clothes with Norfolk jackets--one rough tweed and the other gabardine; 3 Jaeger flannel shirts, apiece; Jaeger flannel underclothing; Gauntlet mosquito gloves; 1 pair brown field boots, each; 1 pair rubber wading boots; one pair ordinary rough shooting; two pocket fillers; cooking utensils; 1 gross matches; tin dutch oven for baking bread; 1 gold pan; 1 shovel; 1 pick; 1 saw; 1 hammer; 1 axe; nails; 1 12-gauge shotgun and cartridges; 1 Kodak; 1 fishing rod with tackle, comprising flies, spoon-bait, landing net, etc; 1 canvas bath, bucket, and basin; Burroughs & Wellcome Medicine; case containing drugs in tabloid form; 2 Wolseley valises with cork mattresses and camel-hair sleeping bags; plenty of spare pipes, and five pounds tobacco in tins. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 60.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

On the fourth day out from Vancouver, the ship reached Skagway. Price observed:

The town itself is built on a good flat site some distance back [from the harbor], and is connected with the landing-stage by several [four] wooden piers. It presented a very picturesque and animated appearance the morning of our arrival, as several steamers were unloading and many people were about. Work on the wharves and piers was evidently being diligently prosecuted, and everything being put in readiness for the railway which is shortly to be started. The town itself is a typical specimen of what the American can do in record time. In fact, it is difficult to realize that it is barely four months old. The streets are well graded, sidewalks laid, and it has the telephone and electric lighting.⁹⁸

Because of the lawless reign of Soapy Smith and his gang, half the Americans with whom Price spoke made no secret of their regret that Skagway was not under the British flag, "because then they would be sure their property would be protected from the ruffians hanging around the neighborhood."⁹⁹

As soon as their baggage had been cleared through customs, Price and his traveling companions caught the Dyea ferry. The water at the head of the inlet was so shallow that carts were driven out into the water and backed against the lighter which landed them from the ferry. Dyea consisted of "one long, dusty, straggling street of wooden and canvas shanties," about two miles in length. It boasted one good hotel, the *Olympic*, said to be the best north of Victoria.¹⁰⁰

The Chilkoot Railway & Transportation Co. took charge of Price's outfit at Dyea, and he and his companions, for one dollar each, secured seats in a light carriage, with "good cushions and springs,

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 68-69. En route to Skagway, *Tartar* had tied up for several hours at Wrangell on the third day out from Vancouver. Price was mistaken as to how long Skagway had been in existence. The time of Price's visit was May 1898, and Skagway was 10 months old.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 71.

¹⁰⁰ Dyea consisted of one long street, River, and three short parallel streets--Main, Broadway, and West--and a number of cross streets.

and an awning to protect one from the almost tropical sun." The carriage picked them up at the *Olympic* at 9 o'clock, and the team trotted down River Street "in blissful ignorance of the tough journey in store for them." In addition to the driver, there were four passengers.

Immediately on leaving Dyea, the road "passed through a broad, smiling valley, that looked very beautiful in the glory of its spring verdure in the bright morning sunlight." The road, however, soon became terribly rough, as it passed over a rocky track. Price complained:

Our light vehicle, which was quite unfitted for such work, (it came direct from the streets of Victoria . . .) rocked and heaved about from boulder to boulder, till one expected at any moment something or all would give way, we the while clinging as though for dear life to the backs of the seats, and bracing ourselves with our knees so as not to be thrown out.

The Taiya River was crossed and recrossed, the water at the fords rushing over the floor boards, and threatening to overturn the carriage. This was the longest nine-mile drive Price had ever taken.¹⁰

Canyon City was "a small collection of rough wooden shanties and tents." Fortunately, Price had already learned to distrust the high-sounding appellation of "city." The *Canyon City Hotel* was a hut somewhat larger than the others. There they planned to have lunch, before proceeding on foot to Sheep Camp. The repast was not "extravagant," though the "price charged for the unappetizing food put before us would have paid for a nice little *dejeuner* at many a London restaurant."¹⁰²

The walk up the Canyon was "a pretty stiff up and down climb, with much mud in places." Alongside the trail for much of the way ran the tramway. As he trudged along, Price had an opportunity to admire its "wonderfully ingenious workmanship, whilst not a little regretting that human freight could not be taken by it." It consisted of a moving steel cable, hung on trestles. On this

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 79-81.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 81. Another traveler disagreed with Price. He reported that at Canyon City's *Red Onion Hotel* you could get as good a meal as at *The Waldorf*. *The Dyea Press*, May 14, 1898.

cable at intervals were "buckets" slung from grooved wheels. The freight was transported in the buckets. The only inconvenience reported was that the line of buckets had the knack of stalling in awkward places, often high over deep ravines.¹⁰³

The Price party spent the night at Sheep Camp. The next day they started for the summit. The trail climbed rapidly through a constantly narrowing valley, cluttered with big boulders. Patches of snow were now seen. Snowclad mountains towered 3,500 feet above them, their rugged slopes crowned with glaciers. At the foot of a steep ascent, a huge snow-slide almost blocked the way; a narrow trail had been cut through it. Here was the scene of the April 3 avalanche.¹⁰⁴

From The Scales to the summit it was about 1,000 yards, but because of the steep grade it was a fatiguing climb. A thin rope-line had been fixed to posts the greater part of the way to enable packers to pull themselves up the series of steep steps in the ice that had been formed by the thousands of people who had passed this way since October. It took Price about one-half hour to gain the summit. The view, he pronounced magnificent. When the sun had set the sky was "a blazing glory of red, which gradually merged into tender opalescent tints till on the opposite horizon it finally merged into the most delicate grey-blue, against which the distant snow-clad peaks stood out in faint relief." Looking back toward The Scales, he could see others slowly making their way toward the summit. "How small and insignificant" they seemed "in comparison to these glorious mountains."¹⁰⁵

Nearby could be seen a Union Jack waving above a half-dozen "wretched tents." Price presented his letter of introduction to Inspector Belcher, the officer in charge of the post. Stepping into the Inspector's quarters, a rough "canvas shanty," he learned that at least 22,000 people had crossed Chilkoot Pass since the start of the stampede in the spring of 1897. While the North West Mounted Police examined their outfits, Belcher produced a "big jar of Canadian whiskey," and urged his visitors to help themselves "liberally to keep out the cold."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Price, *From Euston to the Klondike*, pp. 82-83. By coincidence the hikers reached Sheep Camp just as their canoe passed overhead.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-86.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

Price determined to push on in an effort to reach Lake Lindeman before morning. "The bracing air of the mountains acted like a strong tonic, and one felt curiously less fatigued than one would have . . . after such an arduous walk."

The snow and ice on the Pacific slope of the summit proved a foretaste of what was to be found between the crest and Long Lake. "It was as though one had been suddenly transported to the heart of Siberia in the middle of winter." Crater Lake was still held fast in the icy grip of winter. On the slope leading down to the lake, they overtook a man "vainly struggling with a sled heavily packed with goods. On the steep hillside the sled kept overturning . . . as he attempted to guide it down the course." Price rushed to his aid, and as he was holding on behind, the sled headed down the grade at breakneck speed, "the man vainly trying to act as a brake in front, whilst I was dragged along on my stomach, endeavouring the while to check the speed with the toes of my boots." At the bottom of the grade the sled overturned, throwing the two into a drift.¹⁰⁷

The route led across Crater Lake. As they pushed on, they passed several sleds to which the owners had affixed sails. These presented "a curious effect in the distance of boats sailing across." There was a stiff breeze blowing, and occasionally one of the sleds, lacking outriggers, was overturned.¹⁰⁸

At Happy Camp, above Long Lake, they found a tent dimly lighted by candles. Inside was a long counter set with iron cups and plates, and behind it was a man standing over a stove, brewing coffee. The weary and cold travelers nevertheless were glad to get a hot cup of coffee, a slice or two of bread and butter, and a plate of tinned beef.

The owner told Price that he, his wife, and family had reached the area during the winter and had established the restaurant. His profits, however, were small, because of the high cost of freight-ing in supplies, wood alone costing five cents a pound.¹⁰⁹

Both Crater and Long Lakes were still frozen solid, but the ice on Deep Lake had started to break up. They reached the foot of Deep Lake about dawn, to find the situation worse than expected.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 90-92.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 94-95.

After leaving Deep Lake the track got worse. The distance, because of their exhaustion, seemed to be immeasurable. At last, on topping a rise, they could see some distance below, "a large, placid sheet of water, looking like a huge piece of rose-colored silk, spread between the mountains." On the point nearest them, on a flat promontory, was a large tent city, which Price likened to "a flock of seagulls on a distant beach."¹¹⁰ Scattered about the tents and along the shore were yellow objects, boats, in various stages of construction. Price estimated the population of Lindeman City at 10,000.¹¹¹

It was 3:30 a.m. when they found the *Hotel Lindeman*, "a fairly large log cabin." Their knocks and calls elicited no response. They tried another hotel across the street with the same result. A man now came down the street, and after listening to their tale of woe, took them to the *Dawson House*. On being admitted, they found it was "a very large place, and down the centre and reaching up to the slant of the roof was a big structure with four double sections of four tiers of bunks, these bunks being formed by canvas stretched from side to side." Along one side was another half-section, making 48 bunks, all of which were occupied but the two which they rented. In one corner of the bunkhouse was a kitchen, and alongside it three or four iron basins on a narrow shelf, the toilet accommodations. Beyond the kitchen was the dining room, with a high counter similar to those found in England's cheaper boarding houses. Scattered over the filthy floor around the bunks were boots, while on the wall hung "dirty garments that would have in most cases reflected discredit on an average coalheaver in London."

They paid the attendant 50 cents each for a bunk, and in return were handed "two doubtful-looking blankets apiece."¹¹²

After he had caught up on his sleep, Price toured the camp and examined the boats to be used for the rush down the waterway to Dawson. The craft were of all shapes and sizes, from "big unwieldy barges to tiny craft that reminded one of the paper boats dear to children." Many of the vessels were being built with great skill, and were the products of experienced boatwrights, others were little better than "flat open boxes fitted with thwarts and thole-pin."

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 101-102.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 103.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 105-106.

Many of them were constructed from a stock pattern. Not a single one was seen with a rudder.

The lumber for the boats was hauled in from the hills, south of the lake. It could be purchased ready-cut into planks, provided one could afford it and did not feel equal to cutting up the logs with a whip-saw. There were several professional boat-builders, who for a price would construct a craft capable of holding three or four men and two tons of provisions. In addition to the boats built and building, there were Peterborough and Strickland canoes, steel boats built in sections, collapsible boats, and punts.¹¹³

A small iron steamer had just started operating from Lindeman City to the foot of the lake. Price and his companions paid a dollar each and took passage on the steamer for the foot of Lake Lindeman. Going ashore at the landing, they walked one-half mile over the narrow tongue of land separating Lakes Lindeman and Bennett. Bennett, if anything, presented a more lively appearance than Lindeman City. It was larger, and "showed indications of a possible permanency in the several large log-built cabins." As the White Pass Trail also terminated at Lake Bennett, there was a huge crowd of excited adventurers milling about. A number of big freight wagons used on the haul down from the summit of White Pass were parked. On the marge of the lake was a boatyard at which several "large stern-wheel steamers were being rapidly put together, the different parts having been sent up in sections." Many steam sawmills were in operation. The beach at the head of Lake Bennett was "packed several deep with boats heavily laden and ready to start, their sails already spread." Many of the stampedeers had placed small flags at the mastheads. The Stars and Stripes predominated, but a number of Union Jacks showed as well.¹¹⁴

On May 29, 1898, the electrifying word spread that Lake Bennett was clear of ice and the great boatrace to the Klondike began. Before the day was over, 800 craft had cast off for Dawson City. Within 48 hours both Lakes Bennett and Lindeman were clear of ice, and the entire flotilla of 7,124 boats was in motion.¹¹⁵

2. Mrs. Georgia White Travels the Chilkoot Trail

In 1898, unlike 1897, many women traveled the Chilkoot Trail. One of these was Mrs. Georgia White of San Francisco. Mrs. White sailed for the Alaskan Panhandle aboard *Australia* on February 21.

¹¹³ Ibid., pp. 110-111.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 113-115.

¹¹⁵ Berton, *Yukon Fever*, pp. 276-277; Steele, *Forty Years*, p. 310.

The steamer made numerous stops between the Golden Gate and Skagway, where she docked on March 4. The weather was very cold, and it was the 6th before Mrs. White was able to land at Dyea.¹¹⁶

At Dyea she went to work at the *San Francisco Hotel*. During the next three months she changed her employment twice. On June 15 Mrs. White started for the Klondike. She and her traveling companions, Miss Minna and Mr. McLennan, rode the stage to Canyon City. On the stage they met Mr. Karn, one of the proprietors of the *Lindeman Hotel*. The stage reached Canyon City at 12:30 p.m.

After eating lunch at Mr. Hudelson's restaurant, they started for Sheep Camp, afoot. The scenery was "beautiful. Numerous waterfalls, and most beautiful ferns and flowers" were seen. To the west they saw the glacier which scarred the sides of Mt. Hoffman. It was about 4 p.m. when they reached Sheep Camp. Mrs. White now got a "dreadful cramp" in her knee. After supper she and Minna "entertained Mr. Karn and Mr. McLennan until ten. Wrote a letter, took a whiskey bath and retired."¹¹⁷

They left Sheep Camp at 5 a.m. on June 16. The trail was "rough, rocky and bad-smelling from the dead horses and dogs." At The Scales, Mrs. White stopped briefly at a stand where she purchased and drank two glasses of lemonade and rested.¹¹⁸ They then started for the summit. Every few minutes they stopped to rest, and "take a sip at the bottle."

It was 8 a.m. when they reached the summit, and as the customs officers were not ready for business, they had breakfast. "It was cold and windy," Mrs. White recalled, and

the bottle had gone a little to my head and standing and waiting was tiresome, so seeing a pan lying beside me and some walnut shells I commenced a shell game and had the men laughing.

¹¹⁶ Diary of Georgia White, files Alaska Historical Library and Museum, Juneau, Alaska. Mrs. White had attempted to reach Dyea aboard the ferry *Alert* on the 5th, but the inlet was so rough that the little vessel was unable to tie-up to the DKT Company's wharf and had to return to Skagway. On the 6th the seas moderated and Mrs. White landed at Dyea in a row boat.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. The two ladies on the 15th traveled with Mr. McLennan and a Mr. Mahoney.

After they had passed through customs, they started for Lake Lindeman. The descent to Crater Lake was steep but short. Once at Crater Lake, the route was level and led across the frozen surface of the lake and over banks of snow ten to 30 feet deep. A recent snowfall had blanketed the area north of the summit with six to eight inches of fluffy down and made walking difficult. At Long Lake, the ice was melting and treacherous. The water came over their boots, and Mrs. White and her companions reached shore "cold, wet, and shivering."

When they pushed on, Mrs. White fell "in a couple of feet of mud," and had to be assisted to her feet. The weary travelers reached Lake Lindeman, a "pretty camp on a flat beside the lake and surrounded by mountains" at 4 p.m. Mrs. White's bones ached, so after she drank a glass of hot lemonade and had an arnica bath, she went to bed without supper.¹¹⁹

Mrs. White stayed in bed until 10:30 on June 17. A breakfast of ham and eggs at the *Hotel Lindeman* made her feel better. While the men began building a boat, the ladies toured the area and went for canoe rides on the lake with Mr. Karn. They visited the cemetery where ten were buried, and found "the graves were nicely taken care of and decorated." Mrs. White remained at Lindeman City until June 22, when she resumed her journey.¹²⁰

3. Mrs. George Black Recalls Her Trip Over the Chilkoot Trail

Mrs. George Black, who crossed Chilkoot Pass in July 1898, had a distinguished career of public service in the Yukon. She was the second lady to be elected to the Canadian House of Commons. Born in Chicago in 1868 to George and Susan Munger, she first married William Purdy of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, in 1887. The Purdys sailed for Alaska in June 1898 on the steamship *Utopia*, out of Seattle. Reaching Skagway late in the month, the ship lay to for several days, unloading miners' outfits, rails for the White Pass Road, and cattle. *Utopia* then cast off for Dyea, where about five days later the Purdys disembarked. There they saw their outfit, like thousands of outfits before them, rudely "dumped" on the sandy shore. Martha Louise Purdy heard the *Utopia* reverse engines, and saw her swing into the channel for the return trip to Seattle without them, and as she watched the ship disappear down Taiya Inlet, she realized she had indeed burned her bridges, and left civilization with its comforts behind her.¹²¹

119 Ibid.

120 Ibid.

121 Mrs. George Black, *My Seventy Years* (London, 1938), p. 99.

Captain Spencer of their party became acquainted with a young man "who most generously placed his rough board shack" at the disposal of Mrs. Purdy, "while he, the owner, 'bunked' with a friend next door." The shack was a one-roomed shanty, 12 by 14 feet, furnished with a sheet-iron cookstove, two chairs, and a table. It had a built-in narrow bunk and some packing-box cupboards. The men pitched tents for their sleeping quarters.

A fortnight was spent at Dyea while William Purdy, traveling light, hiked both the Chilkoot and White Pass trails to ascertain which was the easier. While awaiting his return, the rest of the company fished and climbed mountain trails. Mrs. Purdy was impressed to see entire hillsides covered with bluebonnets and wild blue irises. She was also chief cook and bottlewasher, but this work was simplified by a limited diet, and the dish-washing minimized, as "we carried the fewest of granite dishes and cooking utensils."¹²²

They left Dyea at noon on July 12. With staff in hand, Mrs. Purdy took her place in that "continuous line of pushing humans and straining animals." The men toted 60- to 80-pound packs, in addition to "driving dogs and horses harnessed to . . . carts, herding pack ponies and the odd cow, while one woman drove an ox-cart." The Purdy company, however, traveled light, having "let out" a contract to a company of packers for the transportation of their outfit weighing several tons. The price paid, after much haggling, was \$900 in cash, which in the words of the packers was "a damn low figger."¹²³

One-fourth mile from Dyea they crossed Kinney's toll bridge. After the attendant had collected the toll of one dollar each, he abused them for refusing to buy five-dollar steering paddles to use for navigating the waterways on the far side of the pass. The route for five or six miles followed a good wagon road through the woods. Several mountain streams were forded by leaping from stone to stone. The trail became rockier. Mrs. Purdy's bulky clothes made walking difficult. At 3 o'clock they stopped one-half hour for refreshments at a cabin, kept by a widow and her son, at Finnigan's Point. She brewed the weary travelers cups of strong tea, as they wolfed down ham sandwiches.

¹²² Ibid., p. 100. On the evening of July 1, the day before they were to start for Dawson, they celebrated by having an oyster stew, at a reasonable price--the oysters a dollar and one-half a quart and fresh milk at a dollar a gallon. Ibid., p. 101.

¹²³ Ibid., p. 102.

Pushing on, they soon reached Canyon City. Here they recrossed the Taiya and took the trail through the Canyon. As she walked along, Mrs. Purdy realized she was "on a trail of heartbreaks and dead hopes." On every side were "mute evidences--scores of dead horses that had slipped and fallen down the mountain-side . . . and caches of miners' outfits." They passed a deserted shanty, and looking inside saw a mildewed and ruined outfit. A man standing nearby told them that this had been the home of two brothers who had died of exposure during the preceding winter.¹²⁴

At Sheep Camp, where they would spend the night of the 12th, Mrs. Purdy stopped at the *Grand Pacific Hotel*, which she compared to her parents' woodshed, fitted with "standees." Besides the regular supper bill-of-fare, she ate half a canned peach. She was given the only "private room" in the house, a cubicle partitioned off by a wooden wall, "two-thirds the height of the room, with a built-in bunk filled with hay and covered with two pairs of grey army blankets --and comfort of comforts!--a real feather pillow!"¹²⁵

After a hearty breakfast of cornmeal mush, bacon and cold-storage eggs, condensed milk, prunes, and an orange, the hike was resumed. The hotel charged one dollar cash for the meals and bunks.

In passing over the area where the April 3 avalanche had occurred, Mrs. Purdy saw in the melting snow a bit of blue ribbon. Bending down, she tugged at it and pulled out a baby's bootee. "Did it belong to some venturesome soul who had come to seek a fortune for wife and baby? Would those who were waiting for him wait in vain? Was this one of the hundreds of tragedies of this mad stampede?"¹²⁶

As the day advanced the trail became steeper, the air warmer, and footholds in the scree, without support, impossible. Mrs. Purdy shed her sealskin jacket. She cursed her hot, high, buckram collar, her tight, heavily-boned corset, her long corduroy skirt, and her full bloomers which she had to hitch up with every step.

When within ten feet of the summit of Chilkoot her foot slipped, and she lost her balance, tumbling a few feet into a crevice in the rocks. The sharp edge of one of the boulders cut through one of her boots, and she felt the flesh of her leg throbbing with pain. Unable to bear it any longer, Mrs. Purdy sat down and cried. "Can I help you?" several men shouted. Her husband, unable to get her

124 Ibid., pp.103-104.

125 Ibid., pp. 104-105.

126 Ibid., p. 105.

to take hold of herself, bellowed, "For God's sake, Polly, buck up and be a man! Have some style and move on!"

Infuriated she got to her feet and marched triumphantly into the broker's tent--"an ancient canvas structure at the summit." A cold wind was blowing, and she asked for a fire, and was told, "Madame, wood is two bits a pound up here."

William Purdy now spoke up, "All right. All right, I'll be a sport. Give her a five-dollar fire."

After resting for one hour, they passed through Canadian customs. Standing about were many people, their outfits partially unpacked and scattered about in the snow. Here Mrs. Purdy saw her first North West Mounted Police, and she thought a "finer, sturdier, more intelligent-looking man would be hard to find."¹²⁷

The walk to Happy Camp was made without difficulty. There they ate a two-dollar supper of bean soup, ham and eggs, prunes, bread, and butter. The bread was served with the apology of the proprietor, "The middle of it ain't done, but you don't have to eat it, I hurried too much."¹²⁸

Like many stampedeers, Mrs. Purdy recalled that the last two miles to Lake Lindeman were "the most excruciating struggle of the whole trip." Forty years later, it was still a hideous nightmare. The trail led through a scrub pine forest, "where we tripped over bare roots of trees that curled over and around rocks and boulders like great devil fishes." Her brother put his arm around her and carried her most of the last mile. Captain Spencer hurried into Lindeman City, to the *Tacoma Hotel*, to get a bed for her. It wasn't much of a bed, however, a canvas stretched on four logs, with a straw shakedown.¹²⁹

The Purdy party pushed on by boat to Dawson City. Mr. Purdy soon became disenchanted with the Yukon and returned to the United States. After they had obtained a divorce, Martha Louise married George Black, who was destined to become commissioner of the Yukon with responsibility for the North West Mounted Police operations in the territory.

¹²⁷ Ibid., pp. 105-107.

¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 107-108.

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 108.

I. Comments and Recommendations

If the proposed Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park is established, the few surviving structures at Dyea and the remains of the wharf must be stabilized, while the sites of the Dyea and Slide Cemeteries must be protected. The fragile remains at Canyon City, Sheep Camp, and The Scales will have to be stabilized and protected. The Kinney Bridge should be reconstructed for the use of the visitor and hiker.

A Historical Resource Study Proposal should be programmed to enable the Service to secure additional data on the four Chilkoot Pass tramways. A team, to consist of a research historian, a master planner, and historical architect should be sent to the area to identify and locate on the ground the Chilkoot Trail, the remains of the tramways and other significant structures, the site of the April 3 Avalanche, the Stonehouse, and Pleasant Valley.

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IX. THE ARMY ON TAIYA INLET

A. The North West Mounted Police Take Position

1. Major Walsh and Reinforcements Reach the Yukon

There were stationed in the Yukon District, at the time gold was found on the Klondike, 20 men of the North West Mounted Police. This force had been sufficient to preserve order and collect revenue. Inspector Charles Constantine, realizing the importance of the discovery and foreseeing a rush to the remote region, asked his headquarters in Regina, Saskatchewan, to increase his force. Accordingly, on June 12, 1897, Inspector W. H. Scarth with 19 men reached Fort Constantine, having crossed Chilkoot Pass.¹

They were followed in the first week of August by a detachment which landed at Skagway. On the 6th these men started up the White Pass Trail for Lake Bennett, where they planned to levy "a duty of about 20% valuation on all goods going in [to Canada], whether for speculation or necessity." To the Americans it looked as if they meant business, because they were loaded for "bear with guns, bil- lies, and handcuffs." One of the mounties had remained at Skagway, "in a semi-official capacity to watch over their interests."

The inspector in charge had been quoted that his men would not be hard on those transients currently en route, who were uninformed as to the regulations, but those who followed had better be ready to pay Canadian customs.

In reporting this flexing of Canadian muscles, Deputy Marshal Richardson observed that British goods were daily being landed and sold at Skagway, while bootleggers in violation of the laws of the United States were vending whiskey to Indians.²

Meanwhile, the Canadian government had detailed and dispatched officials to relieve Inspector Constantine of many of his extraneous duties. Thomas Fawcett came as Gold Commissioner and General Agent of the Honorable Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, and D. W. Dean as Collector of Customs. Fawcett was none too careful of

¹ Walter R. Hamilton, *The Yukon Story* (Vancouver, 1964), pp. 117-118.

² Richardson to Shoup, Aug. 6, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

his associates and bribes were offered. Petitions were soon received at Ottawa requesting his removal, and the appointment of William Ogilvie as Commissioner "with full powers and N. W. M. P. assistance, to investigate all charges, dismiss dishonest officials and hire needed employees." These complaints were promptly acted upon, and Maj. J. M. Walsh, a respected veteran of the North West Mounted Police, named commissioner of the newly created Yukon Territory.³

Major Walsh, accompanied by Minister Sifton and other officials, reached Skagway by ship from Vancouver on October 8, 1897. With him Walsh brought Inspector Zachary Wood, ten constables, a dog driver, and 100 Mackenzie River huskies.⁴ There they were met by Assistant Commissioner McIllree. Learning that McIllree was ill, Major Walsh ordered Inspector Wood to replace him as officer in charge of the Skagway office and commander of the Upper Yukon District. Major Walsh and several of the others then started for Dawson by way of Chilkoot Pass.⁵

On reaching Lake Bennett, Major Walsh found a post manned by a detachment of North West Mounted Police. This post had been established by Inspector Harper's detachment. A post had also been organized at Lake Tagish by Inspector Strickland in early October. Several customs officials had joined Strickland's detachment at Tagish Post, which commanded the inland waterway to the Klondike. It was almost impossible for persons entering the Yukon by way of the Chilkoot and White Pass trails to travel this route without being seen by the authorities. Craft of every description were stopped by Strickland's people, customs collected, and the vessels numbered. The names and addresses, as given by the occupants, were recorded.⁶

2. North West Mounted Police Establish Posts at Chilkoot and White Pass

Three months later, on January 7, 1898, more North West Mounted Police landed at Skagway. This detachment was led by Inspector Rob-

³ Hamilton, *The Yukon Story*, pp. 117-118.

⁴ Members of Sifton's party included: Justice McGuire of the Supreme Court of the North West Territory; Fred Wade, legal advisor; T. Dufferin Patullo, Walsh's secretary; and William Ogilvie. Inspector Wood was President Zachary Taylor's grandson.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119; Steele, *Forty Years*, pp. 290-297.

⁶ Hamilton, *Yukon Story*, pp. 118-119; Steele, *Forty Years*, pp. 289-290.

ert Belcher. Wood, to whom Belcher reported, told him to take charge at the tidewater post. Wood, with 22 men, nine dog drivers, and 43 packhorses, started for Big Salmon, where Major Walsh's party was detained. At Lake Bennett, Wood planned to organize parties to haul freight to Tagish Post and Lake La Barge, where it would be loaded on boats in the spring. The trip across the Coast Mountains was difficult. There were storms and the snow was so deep on White Pass that, at times, it nearly smothered the packhorses. For a week, the temperature hovered near 40 below zero. At Lake La Barge, Wood met Major Walsh returning to the coast.⁷

On February 14, 1898, a legendary member of the North West Mounted Police, Inspector Samuel B. Steele, landed at Skagway from *Thistle*, a small but seaworthy craft. Steele had been ordered to the Klondike on January 29 from his station in southern Alberta. As he and his traveling companion, Inspector Perry, stepped ashore, the thermometer stood at 30° below, and as they walked up the wharf they were punished by a "biting blast which came roaring down the White Pass."⁸

Inspector Wood returned to Skagway from Lake Bennett on the 16th and told Steele and Perry that he had "organized two strong parties of the force, and posted them on the Chilkoot and White Passes, with Inspectors Belcher and Strickland in command to establish customs offices on the true boundary and guard the passes." Each station was provisioned for six months, had machine guns, and ample supplies of ammunition. The men were quartered in tents, and a cabin was under construction on each summit, which was to serve a dual function--as a custom house, and quarters for the officer in charge.⁹

3. A Long Standing Dispute

This move by the Canadian government to collect customs at the summits of Chilkoot and White Passes was certain to provoke a howl from the United States and could have grave international complications, because the boundary of the Alaskan Panhandle was in dispute. This disagreement between the United States and Great Britain focused on that part of the international boundary beginning at the 56th degree of north latitude and extending northwestward about 30 nautical miles inland until it intersected the 141st degree of west longitude.

⁷ Steele, *Forty Years*, pp. 290-297.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

⁹ *Ibid.*

The dispute had its origin in Article III of the 1825 Convention between Great Britain and Russia, which was incorporated into the boundary definition of the United States-Russian Convention of 1867 ceding Alaska to the United States.

The Convention of 1825 had provided:

whereas, where the summit of the mountains which shall extend in a direction parallel to the coast, from the fifth-sixth degree of north latitude to the point of intersection on the 141st degree of west longitude shall prove to be of the distance of more than ten marine leagues from the ocean the limit between British possessions and the line of the coast, which is to belong to Russia . . . shall form a line parallel to the sinuosities of the coast, and which shall never exceed the distance of ten marine leagues therefrom.¹⁰

Her Majesty's government took the position that under the three-mile rule, championed by Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson in 1793, that Skagway and Dyea were in Canada. The British and Canadians argued that international law held that territorial limits should extend "one marine league from the shore at high water mark, and, where an inlet or arm of the sea extends two marine leagues in width, between its headlands, a straight line drawn from one headland to the other is equivalent to the shore line."

As Skagway and Dyea were more than ten marine leagues from the Pacific Ocean, as they interpreted the documents, the Canadians claimed the area at the head of Lynn Canal and Taiya Inlet. This had constituted the rationale for the posting of a customs officer, P. S. Busby, and a detachment of North West Mounted Police at Skagway, which the Canadians considered a port of entry to the Yukon District.¹¹

The United States rebuffed the efforts of the Canadians to collect customs at Skagway. Officials of the State Department in Washington held that the "sinuosities of the coast," as defined in the Convention of 1825, meant the heads of the inlets. Consequently, the head of Taiya Inlet, as well as the summits of Chil-koot and White Passes, was well within jurisdiction of the United States. Alaskans and their supporters in the nation's capital argued that the United States boundary extended as far north as Lake Bennett.

¹⁰ Hamilton, *Yukon Story*, p. 228.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.

4. Inspector Steele Visits the Forward Customs Posts

The Canadians were ready to challenge the claims of the United States. Inspector Steele was given the mission of making certain the customs posts were manned and the Union Jack flying. To do so he boarded a Dyea-bound tugboat. The craft was sheeted with ice, and when Steele and Constable Skirving disembarked on the wharf of the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company, also ice-covered, several of their traveling companions slipped, lost their footing, and fell into the inlet. Fortunately the tide was out, and they were rescued, but their clothes froze solid.

Steele and Skirving started on the morning of February 22 for the summit of Chilkoot. They traveled with several teams employed by one of the companies building aerial tramways over the pass. A howling blizzard made walking dangerous. They spent the night at Canyon City in the company stables. It was still storming on the 23d, as the mounties pushed ahead. They overtook a number of prospectors above Sheep Camp, "staggering blindly along, with heavy loads on their backs, some of them off the trail and groping for it with their feet." These men were helped, otherwise they might have wandered off and plunged into a crevass.¹²

At The Scales the storm was so wild that it was impossible to locate the lifeline which had been emplaced to help people up the "Golden Stairs." They retraced their steps to the camp of the men building the tramways. Because of the snow and wind, they despaired of finding it. Just as they were about to give up, Skirving called, "Here it is, sir!" Joining him, Steele found a tunnel leading into a huge drift which covered two large tents. One was occupied by the civil engineers and the other by the labor force and cooks. Two men were shoveling snow out of the tunnel to prevent the occupants from being suffocated. The two policemen were hospitably received by the engineers, who made them feel at home and offered them quarters for as long as they cared to stay.¹³

The next morning the storm still raged. Shortly after Steele had wired Superintendent Perry the cause of the delay, Corporal Pringle came down from the summit and reported that Inspector Belcher's party was ready to begin work. Steele sent him back with instructions for Belcher to begin collecting customs the next day,

¹² Steele, *Forty Years*, pp. 293-294. Inspector Steele on the night of the 22d had had supper with Major Rucker and two of his officers.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 294.

February 25. After forwarding his baggage to Lake Bennett and learning that the Union Jack had been hoisted on the summit, Steele returned to Dyea.¹⁴

Belcher's post at the summit consisted of a wooden cabin. His men camped on the frozen surface of Crater Lake. On the night of February 18, five days before Steele left Skagway, the water in the lake rose six inches, flooding the camp. The tents could not be moved, and the sleds had to be taken into them to enable the men to keep above water. On the 21st the storm abated sufficiently to permit the tents to be moved to the summit, where, although the cold was intense, it was better than on the water-covered ice of Crater Lake.

The nearest firewood was seven miles away, and the men sent after it often returned badly frost-bitten. Belcher exercised a variety of duties, both military and police, under most trying conditions, while living in a shack which had all the "discomforts of a shower bath." Snow fell frequently, and to such depths that everything was damp and papers became mildewed. On March 3 a six-foot snow-fall buried the cabin and tents.¹⁵

At White Pass, the North West Mounted Police at first pitched their tents on the ice of Summit Lake. No timber for cabins or firewood was nearer than 12 miles. A blizzard raged for ten days, and there were fears that men would be frozen to death. On February 27 the Union Jack was hoisted in a commanding position, and Inspector Strickland organized his men into reliefs to examine goods during the day, and at night to shovel the snow away from the door of the customs cabin lest the occupants be smothered.

The great rush over White Pass began on March 3, and Strickland, suffering from bronchitis, was swamped by his tasks.¹⁶

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 294-295. The weather had now moderated, and as Steele retraced his route, many people were encountered, packing supplies to the summit or to caches near The Scales. This work was severe, because everyone entering the Yukon was required by Canadian law to carry at least 1,150 pounds of "solid food" besides tents, cooking utensils, and tools. Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 297-298.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 298.

B. Secretary of War Alger Orders Troops to Taiya Inlet

1. The Alaskans Call for Soldiers

As early as August 1897, Secretary of the Interior Bliss began receiving complaints from officials in Alaska that Canadian interests were operating south of the boundary claimed by the United States to the detriment of its citizens. Commissioner Jones of the Revenue Service complained on August 19 that a Canadian syndicate controlled the White Pass Trail and was collecting a toll of two cents a pound on miners' supplies on the United States side of the border.¹⁷

When Jones boarded the steamer *Danube* out of Victoria, the master refused to show his clearance papers or manifest. As soon as he had discharged his cargo, he took his ship down the inlet.

It was apparent that large quantities of whiskey were being landed, and with cargoes being unloaded from vessels along a mile and one-half of beach, it was impossible to establish any controls. Many of the owners, to avoid paying customs, claimed that their merchandise was in transit to Canadian territory. If he questioned them, they told him there were no docks or wharves where cargo could be bonded.¹⁸

More serious was the report that Canadians were cutting timber in Alaska and hauling it across the boundary to a sawmill on Lake Bennett. When he visited Dyea and Skagway at the beginning of September, Governor Brady questioned James S. Sallee and Fred H. Lysons, who had recently traveled the Chilkoot and White Pass trails. They reported that the sawmill was owned and operated by two Americans, Rudolph and Marcus, from Juneau. Satisfied that his country's sovereignty had not been trifled with, Governor Brady then dropped the subject.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jones to Secretary of the Interior, Aug. 19, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

¹⁸ Ivey to Secretary of Treasury, undated, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

¹⁹ Smith to Brady, Aug. 19, 1897, and Brady to Bliss, Sept. 16, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior. The mill was powered by a five-horsepower steam engine that had been removed from a launch at Juneau and packed over the Chilkoot Trail. The mill was capable of handling trees up to six inches in diameter, the lumber of which was sold to boatbuilders for \$40 per 100 feet. Timber for the mill was

By January 1, 1898, the government was being pressed to send troops to the head of Taiya Inlet to keep order. Commissioner Smith wrote Secretary Bliss urging that squads of mounted soldiers be posted on the White Pass and Chilkoot trails. If these men were deputized, it would negate the need for miners' courts, which had assumed "authority and hanged men for the most trivial offences."²⁰

George A. Brackett, the Alaskan road builder and former mayor of Minneapolis, had contacted his friend the influential United States Senator from Minnesota, C. K. Davis. He trusted that Davis would see Secretary of War Alger and discuss with him the need for a company of soldiers to keep order on the trails and see that "the mass that will be moving through this country may be kept in line." Moreover, as the boundary was in dispute, Brackett believed it would strengthen the United States claim, if Washington did as much as the Canadian Government toward "keeping order in this lawless country."²¹

Senator Davis accordingly met with Secretary Alger, and urged him to dispatch troops to Skagway and Dyea.²² No action, however, was taken until after the receipt of Governor Brady's report of February 3, describing the death of Deputy Marshal Rowan. The Governor complained that the ships reaching Lynn Canal during the past several weeks had been landing many "gamblers, thugs, and leud women from the worst quarters of the coast." These people were in control at Skagway and Dyea, and the deputy marshal was powerless. To cope with this situation, Governor Brady recommended that Congress authorize the intervention of the military to keep order.²³

obtained at the head of Lake Bennett.

²⁰ Smith to Secretary of the Interior, Dec. 13, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

²¹ Brackett to Davis, Dec. 17, 1897, George A. Brackett Papers, 1855-1932, MS Collection, Minnesota Historical Society.

²² Davis to Brackett, Jan. 3, 1898, Brackett Papers, 1855-1932, Minnesota Historical Society.

²³ Brady to Bliss, Feb. 3, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

2. The War Department Responds

Secretary Alger, upon being apprised by Secretary Bliss that the civil authorities were unable to cope with the situation, telegraphed the commander of the Department of the Columbia, Brig. Gen. Henry C. Merriam. The army officer was to be prepared to rush a battalion of the 14th U. S. Infantry to Dyea and Skagway. As the troops might have to remain in the area until the end of summer, thought should be given to providing temporary quarters.²⁴

General Merriam responded to the War Department's message of February 8 with alacrity. To facilitate matters, both departmental and regimental headquarters were at Vancouver Barracks, Washington. Col. Thomas M. Anderson of the 14th Infantry was instructed to see that his men were in readiness for service in the field. Preparations would be attended to as quietly as possible, because the government did not wish to prematurely alert Great Britain that it was sending troops into disputed territory. If feasible, regimental headquarters, the band, and an infantry battalion would be ready to ship out for Alaska as soon as transportation could be secured by the post quartermaster. General Merriam trusted that this would be within 72 hours.²⁵

When they went aboard ship, the soldiers were to be equipped for field service. Colonel Anderson with Companies B and H was to take position at Dyea, while Lt. Col. George B. Russell with Companies A and G was to be billeted at Skagway.²⁶

While the soldiers were getting their gear ready and the officers were making arrangements for supplies, General Merriam received additional instructions from Assistant Secretary of War G. D. Meiklejohn. President William McKinley wanted it understood that the troops, in addition to showing the flag, were to see that good order was maintained at Dyea and Skagway and to oversee "the safety of persons and property." If force were required to preserve the peace, it was to be used with discretion.²⁷

²⁴ Adj. Gen. to C. O., Dept. of the Columbia, Feb. 8, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

²⁵ Merriam to Adj. Gen., and Barry to Post Commander, Vancouver Barracks, Feb. 8, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Columbia. Maj. Thomas H. Barry was assistant-adjutant general, Department of the Columbia.

²⁶ Barry to Anderson, Feb. 8, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Columbia.

²⁷ Meiklejohn to Merriam, Feb. 9, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

To enable Colonel Anderson to discharge his dual mission of showing the flag and keeping the peace, General Merriam on February 18 constituted the District of Lynn Canal. Anderson was free to establish his headquarters at either Dyea or Skagway.²⁸

3. The Troops Move North

Colonel Russell was about to retire, so Capt. Frank F. Eastman, as senior officer present, assumed charge of the first battalion to depart Vancouver Barracks on February 15. Boarding the steamer *Undine* at Portland, the battalion took passage for Lynn Canal. The ship made frequent stops as she chugged up the coast. It was 8 a.m., on February 25, before she tied up at one of the Skagway wharves. Captain Eastman went ashore as soon as possible, and called Major Rucker of the Yukon Relief Expedition to report his arrival.

There was trouble during his brief absence. The Skagway Ship Company began to unload baggage, employing a number of Indians that had been embarked at Juneau. The Indians were assailed by longshoremen, who pushed them off the dock into the cold water, 20 feet below. Lt. William D. Conrad had been left in charge by Captain Eastman, and he reacted swiftly. The troops were called out under arms, formed on the wharf, and drove the longshoremen from the area. Sentries were then posted, with instructions to protect the Indians as they unloaded the government property.

That afternoon Major Rucker and Captain Eastman went into Skagway and selected a camp site, one and one-half miles from the landing. In locating the camp, the officers exercised extreme care, because the "sanitary condition of the town was very bad and there had been many deaths." By late afternoon of the 26th, all the gear and supplies had been unloaded, and at 7 a.m. the next morning the troops landed and marched out State Street to the campsite and pitched tents.²⁹

²⁸ Barry to Anderson, Feb. 18, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Columbia.

²⁹ Returns for Cos. A. & G, 14th Infantry, NA, Microcopy M-617, Returns for U. S. Military Posts, 1800-1916; Eastman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia. Companies A and G, 14th Infantry, on February 28, mustered four officers and 108 enlisted men. The camp was between Main Street and Skagway River.

Colonel Anderson with the headquarters detachment and Companies B and H, 119 strong, departed Vancouver Barracks on the same day that Eastman's battalion reached Skagway. At Portland the troops boarded *Cottage City*, the ship scheduled to take them to their new station. *Cottage City* cast off at 5 p.m., February 25, and stood down the Columbia River and out to sea. Eight days later, the vessel docked at one of the Skagway wharfs.³⁰

C. Colonel Anderson's Three Months on Taiya Inlet

1. Anderson Keeps Cool

Major Rucker and Captain Eastman were glad to see Colonel Anderson, and they excitedly informed him that Canadian authorities had moved forward, established themselves in Chilkoot and White Passes, and were demanding the payment of custom duties on all dutiable items. In reply to Anderson's questions regarding the strength of the Canadians, they reported that at each pass there were "18 Mounted Police, fully armed . . . with Winchester rifles."

Mr. Van Dorn, an American en route to Lake Lindeman to establish a store, had been stopped by the police and compelled to pay the demanded duties. This troubled the army officers, because it was their understanding that the "ten marine league line crossed Lake Bennett, four miles below the head of the lake." If so, Canadian authorities were collecting duties and exercising authority on territory claimed by the United States. This action on the part of the North West Mounted Police had caused a storm of protest in Skagway and Dyea, "not because it mattered . . . where the duties are paid, but because it is looked on as an assertion of right on our territory." What especially galled the Americans was that no longer would they be able to build boats on Lake Lindeman and at the head of Lake Bennett without paying duties on construction materials.³¹

Colonel Anderson and Governor Brady were compelled to exert themselves to keep certain of the citizens from taking matters into their hands and precipitating a nasty border incident. Judge Smith was a leader of the fire-eaters. When he learned of the actions of the Canadians, he volunteered to place himself at the head of a

³⁰ Returns for Cos. B & H, 14th U.S. Infantry, Feb. & March, 1898, NA, Microcopy M-617. En route to Skagway, the ship put in at Seattle, Tacoma, Port Townsend, Victoria, and Juneau.

³¹ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, March 4, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

force and return the "Stars and Stripes" to Lake Bennett. Governor Brady, backed by the military, vetoed his proposal, and cautioned "him not to attempt such rash action."³²

Before taking any action, Colonel Anderson spent several days questioning persons returning to the coast from Lake Bennett. He was able to ascertain that the North West Mounted Police had deployed 60 men between the passes and Lake Bennett, rather than 100 as initially reported. He was satisfied by what he heard that the Canadian authorities were determined to exercise full sovereignty over the disputed territory, and fly "the Union Jack in both passes." Unless directed by the War Department to take action to support United States claims, he was not prepared to press the issue, because of the great number of American citizens crossing the border en route to the Klondike.³³

For guidance as to how he was to proceed, Colonel Anderson had a copy of the 1867 Treaty with Russia which defined the Alaska-Canadian boundary. This document indicated that as the passes were less than ten marine leagues from tidewater, they were well within territory claimed by the United States. His superiors, however, had given him no advice in determining what action to take, as they merely referred him to the treaty. To further cloud the issue, the United States Treasury Department had posted a collector at Lake Bennett. Anderson believed the subject should be referred by General Merriam to the State Department to avoid an international incident.³⁴

Colonel Anderson was disturbed when he was shown three notices posted by the North West Mounted Police at Lake Lindeman on March 12. These warned that all goods on which Canadian customs had not been paid would be seized and sold within 14 days. The colonel, still not wishing to cause an incident, forwarded the notices to Inspector Steele, with a request for an explanation why the Canadians "found it necessary to exercise civil and military authority over

³² Brady to Secretary of the Interior, April 6, 1899, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

³³ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, March 16, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

³⁴ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, March 20, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

American territory," or territory in dispute. He asked that these "extreme measures" be suspended until the boundary question was settled.³⁵

Inspector Steele referred Anderson's letter to his superior, Commissioner Walsh. The crusty Walsh would not budge. He notified Anderson that the authority the North West Mounted Police exercised over British possessions north of Chilkoot and White Passes is the "same as we have exercised since our officials were first placed in this district." To strengthen his hand, Walsh pointed out that the disputed region commenced at the summit of the Coast Mountains and extended south of Skagway. Over this region, he countered, the mounties had not exercised their authority.³⁶

When Colonel Anderson relayed this correspondence to General Merriam, he observed that a number of Americans had settled between the passes and Lake Bennett, believing they were in Alaska or at least disputed territory. They had been notified by the mounties that they were subject to Canadian jurisdiction.

Passions were enflamed. A number of adventurers had been turned back at the passes, because of restrictions placed on travel by the Canadians.³⁷

2. The *Modus Vivendi* of October 20, 1899

The United States and Great Britain were eager to avoid a confrontation where no vital interests were at stake. Her Majesty's government accordingly proposed that the boundary question be submitted to "three Commissioners who should be jurists of high standing . . . to fix the frontiers at the heads of the inlets, through which the traffic for the Yukon Valley enters; continuing subsequently with the remaining strip or line of coast." Secretary of State John Hay acceded to this suggestion. At a meeting of representatives of the two governments held on May 27, 1898, the problems existing between the United States and Great Britain were defined. Three days later, the protocols of these and previous meetings were approved and accepted. The International Joint High Commission growing out of these meetings was established on August 23, 1898, at Quebec.

³⁵ Anderson to Steele, March 15, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

³⁶ Walsh to Anderson, March 17, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

³⁷ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, March 20, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

By early 1899 the Commission had made considerable progress, but an impasse was reached on the Alaskan boundary. The United States Commissioners proposed that other matters be taken up in place of it, but the British Commissioners disapproved. The Commission then adjourned until the boundary dispute could be settled by the two governments. Direct negotiation, however, failed. On October 20, 1899, the United States and Great Britain concluded a *Modus Vivendi* that fixed a provisional boundary about the head of Lynn Canal and across Chilkoot and White passes. This *Modus Vivendi* provided that the acceptance of the provisional boundary line did not "prejudice . . . the claim of either party in the permanent adjustment" of it.

O. H. Tittman, Superintendent of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, represented the United States and W. F. King represented Great Britain in overseeing the marking of a temporary line in 1900. On January 24, 1903, the two countries concluded a convention for the submission of the Alaskan boundary question to a tribunal.³⁸

3. Colonel Anderson and Three Companies are Recalled

In view of the decision by the State Department to seek an accommodation with Great Britain, Colonel Anderson concluded that three of the four companies serving in his battalion could be better employed elsewhere. Since the arrival of the battalion there had been little violence, and "few violations of criminal law more serious than misdemeanors." He knew of no instances where civil authorities had been compelled to call on the military for help in keeping the peace.³⁹

The only domestic problems experienced by the battalion since its arrival on Taiya Inlet had been with the longshoremen at Skagway on February 25 and with the captain of *Cottage City*. The captain had refused to put Anderson and his two companies ashore at Dyea, and had insisted that they make the movement in lighters. But a severe storm blew in and the whitecaps were too rough for small craft to make the run for 72 hours. By March 7 the winds had moderated sufficiently to embark the men in a large lighter. When the craft ven-

³⁸ Baugh to Bearss, Aug. 15, 1969. Virgil E. Baugh of the National Archives made available for study a report he has prepared on Record Group 76, Records of Boundary and Claims Commissions for Alaska.

³⁹ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, April 17, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

tured out into Taiya Inlet, the winds picked up and the craft nearly foundered. The lighter returned to the wharf, and on the 8th the soldiers were shuttled to Dyea in detachments. The battalion's gear was put ashore by lighters on the mud flat and then hauled to the camp selected by Capt. George Ruhlen on River Street, one-half mile north of the landing.⁴⁰

The troops posted at Skagway had suffered one death from spinal meningitis, while the battalion stationed at Dyea had prepared graves in the Slide Cemetery for the victims of the Palm Sunday avalanche. In the two weeks preceding the avalanche and in the fortnight immediately thereafter there had been a general exodus from Dyea and Skagway by persons bound for the goldfields. It looked to Colonel Anderson as if the worst of the rush, for 1898, was over. In his opinion, most of the people currently at the two boomtowns would soon be on their way to the Yukon, or they must return to the United States.

If General Merriam agreed that one company was sufficient to keep order, the commanding officer of the unit remaining should be provided with a "small but staunch steam-powered vessel to shift his troops to points on Lynn Canal where they might be needed."⁴¹

Colonel Anderson was accordingly distressed to read in the Portland *Oregonian* that he had declared martial law in the District of Lynn Canal. This story, which was false, plagued him, because it gave the public the impression that at least a battalion of troops was needed to keep the peace. In the two months since his arrival in Alaska, he had sent several detachments to points where violence threatened, but so far there had been no trouble. The only arrests made had been a few shell game gamblers. When haled before United States Commissioner Smith, these swindlers had been let off with light sentences.

⁴⁰ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, March 10, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. The captain of *Cottage City* told Colonel Anderson that it was too dangerous to land the soldiers at the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Co. wharf. Anderson was satisfied by what he saw that one harbor was as safe as the other, however. The controlling factor, he suspected, was the five dollars additional fare per person the Pacific Coast Transportation Company charged for landing at Skagway and lightering over to Dyea. In the future, Anderson trusted the government would contract for transportation with companies agreeable to landing public freight and military personnel at the Dyea wharf. The camp-site was on land rented from Healy & Wilson.

⁴¹ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, April 17, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

News that the United States had declared war on Spain had the anticipated effect on the regulars. When he wrote General Merriam contradicting the story in the *Oregonian*, Anderson pointed out that although they were "frantic to get away," he would not for that reason recommend the withdrawal of the battalion. He believed, however, that a "set of green volunteers under a judicious officer" could handle the situation as well as the regulars.

War fever had gripped the area, and many of the civilians now put glory ahead of gold. At least 400 men were clamoring to enlist at Skagway, Dyea, and Sheep Camp.⁴²

General Merriam recognized Colonel Anderson's estimate of the situation. Orders were drafted recalling to Vancouver Barracks the battalion at Skagway and regimental headquarters. All portable buildings, transportation, forage, and commissary stores not required on the trip back to the United States were to be transferred to Dyea. Upon leaving Dyea, Anderson was to proceed to Wrangell to inquire into the situation there. If the presence of troops was warranted to preserve order, he was to call on his successor to order one of the two remaining companies to that point.⁴³

Colonel Anderson, after turning over command of the District of Lynn Canal to Capt. R. T. Yeatman, traveled with Captain Eastman's battalion to Vancouver Barracks by way of Wrangell. The brief stop in Wrangell satisfied Anderson that troops were needed to keep the peace. When informed of this, Captain Yeatman directed Capt. Bogardus Eldridge to proceed there with Company H, 14th Infantry. Leaving Dyea on May 22, Company H disembarked at Wrangell two days later.

Upon reaching his new station, Colonel Anderson notified his superiors that at the time he left Alaska, order prevailed. Relations with Canadian officials were "cordial and there was no friction between the civil authorities and no" need of interference on

⁴² Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, April 30, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. A number of these men joined the company recruited by Soapy Smith in Skagway.

⁴³ Barry to Anderson, May 2, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Sent, Dept. of the Columbia. At both Dyea and Skagway, the army had made use of Arctic portable houses, purchased in Portland, as storehouses. They had been floored, braced, and strengthened. While these structures were satisfactory, Anderson believed that more economical and better buildings for storage and barracks could have been built from lumber. Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, April 15, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

the part of the military. The principal problem in Alaska, as he saw it, was a shortage of civil authorities charged with administering and interpreting the laws.⁴⁴

D. Captain Yeatman Keeps Order on Taiya Inlet

1. Captain Yeatman Evaluates the Situation

Two days after taking over from Colonel Anderson, Captain Yeatman was called on by Headquarters Department of the Columbia for a report on the activities of the troops assigned to the District of Lynn Canal. Since their arrival, there had been only one threat of violence and that against the Brackett Road. On investigating, the army had found that Brackett was not afraid of mobs, but feared that some of the freighters might dynamite his property. A watchman would suffice as well as the army to guard against sabotage. Soon thereafter, the difficulty between the freighters and Brackett was adjudicated and tensions eased.⁴⁵

Yeatman categorized the inhabitants of the area as three types: (a) traders, temporarily here; (b) transients, en route to the interior; and (c) gamblers. While the latter class might cause trouble, it had not made any. By mid-May, travel from Dyea and Skagway to the interior had slumped, and many adventurers, having become discouraged, were returning to their homes. With the opening of the Brackett Road and the aerial tramways, facilities for moving freight were such as to insure against any future congestion over the passes.

As for maintaining the peace, Yeatman saw no need for the presence of the military. Zeroing in on Commissioner Smith, who had just been replaced by Judge C. A. Sehlbrede, he expressed the opinion that "one honest commissioner and two deputy marshals at each town" could control the domestic situation. With the nation at war with Spain, Company B's services would be of more benefit elsewhere.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Anderson to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, May 23, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia; Returns for U. S. Military Posts, 1800-1916, NA, Microcopy M-617. Colonel Anderson left Dyea for Vancouver Barracks on May 11, 1898.

⁴⁵ Secretary of War to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, March 19, and Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, May 14, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁴⁶ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, May 14, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

2. The Army Is Called to Pyramid Harbor and Skagway

Captain Yeatman's plea to remove his company from Taiya Inlet elicited no response on the part of his superiors. This was fortunate, because within the next two months the soldiers were compelled to intervene three times to keep the peace and prevent bloodshed. At the end of the third week of June 1898, there was trouble near Pyramid Harbor. John Dalton had opened a cut-off enabling persons traveling the Dalton Trail to the Klondike to avoid ferrying the Chilkat River. As tolls for ferriage had been a source of income for the Indians, Hard Working Jim shot at Dalton from ambush, but missed. Captain Yeatman, on learning of this incident, proceeded to Pyramid Harbor with a ten-man detail. The Chilkat, on the arrival of the army on June 21, became less belligerent and Hard Working Jim gave himself up to Captain Yeatman.

Yeatman and his troops then returned to Dyea. As soon as they left, the Chilkat again made threats, and Yeatman, on the 24th, sent one of his sergeants and a detachment to bluff the Indians. An officer should have been sent, but with the departure of Capt. H. A. Cabell, Yeatman was the only officer present. On reporting the situation to headquarters, he complained that unless his company were reinforced, it should at least be relieved by a company of volunteers.⁴⁷

Yeatman, himself, was compelled to return to Pyramid Harbor on June 25, on receipt of "a pitiful request" from persons "representing large interests and stating that the lives of white people were in imminent danger." Before returning to his Dyea headquarters, the captain made a careful investigation. His findings contradicted the stories told by the whites. It was discovered that the Alaska Packing Association, who since 1882 had operated a cannery at Pyramid Harbor, had recently razed 12 Chilkat houses. When questioned about this, the cannery superintendent told Yeatman, "The Indians can obtain redress from the courts."

Indian passions had been further enflamed by the actions of the Dalton Pony Express Company. Dalton and his confederates had taken over the Chilkat Trail, and, having made some improvements, claimed a right-of-way and charged toll of the Indians, as well as the whites. In addition, Dalton had erected considerable fencing, enclosing a Chilkat house and potato patch.

⁴⁷ Yeatman to Adjt. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, June 24, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

Yeatman, in an effort to secure justice for the Chilkat, wrote the Commissioner of Public Lands protesting against the issuance of land patents to the Alaska Packing Company and the Dalton Pony Express Company.⁴⁸

Captain Yeatman's vigorous action poured oil on troubled waters, and the situation at Pyramid Harbor became less tense. The army was next called upon by Judge Sehlbrede to prevent mob rule at Skagway following the killing of Soapy Smith. The timely arrival of Captain Yeatman and a platoon of soldiers kept the mob from lynching Slim Jim Foster and possibly others.

3. Camp Is Moved and a Reservation Established

Captain Yeatman, in July 1898, was faced by problems other than white-Indian hostility and the threat of mob rule. The mail situation was deplorable and a better camp site for his troops was needed. When he checked into the first, he found that the Pacific Coast Steamship Company had been awarded the contract by the Postmaster General for bringing the mail from the United States to Taiya Inlet. Mail destined for Dyea was landed at Skagway and sent to Dyea in lighters whenever it was convenient. In effecting the transfer of mail between the two towns, 24 hours or more was habitually required. On occasions, Captain Yeatman had had to detail a man to locate missing mailbags. Outbound mail was as unreliable.

There was a wharf at Dyea, and the only reason he could ascribe for the position taken by the carrier was that he did not own it.⁴⁹ Ships of the Washington & Alaska Steamship Company docked at Dyea. Moreover, they had been considerate, having picked up his unit's mail. Yeatman trusted that, in the future, the mailbags for his troops would be placed aboard ships of that line, rather than those of the Pacific Coast Steamship Company.⁵⁰ His superiors were agreeable, and despite the protests of the contractor, this was done.

The rainy season, which was due to commence, caused Captain Yeatman to be apprehensive about the security of his camp. The two portable storehouses were badly worn and would be destroyed by the first violent storm. Although the site occupied was a good summer camp, Yeatman had seen enough to question its qualities as a permanent site. After a rain, water would stand for several days in

⁴⁸ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 4, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁴⁹ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 7, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

nearby sloughs, and worse, the camp was so exposed to winds that only sturdy buildings could survive an Alaskan winter. Drinking water for the troops had to be hauled one-half mile, which could be difficult during bad weather.

To solve his dilemma, Captain Yeatman investigated other camp sites. Skagway was rejected because of the high incidence of sickness in Eastman's battalion during its three-month tour of duty.⁵¹

Prior to his departure, Colonel Anderson had visited a site three miles south of Dyea, on the west side of Taiya Inlet, which appealed to Yeatman. It had the advantages of high ground and good water. The only problem was transportation. Lighters could be employed to shuttle his troops and their gear from Dyea to the dock of the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company, which was within 600 yards of the site.

Lumber for buildings to be erected at the camp could be purchased in Dyea for "\$12 to \$25 per thousand for rough and \$15 to \$30 for dressed." This would be a propitious time to buy, because the lumber yards were overstocked. If the government did not desire to build, the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company had two unoccupied buildings at their dock available for rent, "which would give ample protection for troops and supplies."

To assist his superiors in making a decision, Captain Yeatman pointed out that while the dock of the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company was substantial and would last through the winter, the Dyea wharf, in all probability, would not.⁵²

Department Quartermaster John L. Clem, on reviewing the information submitted by Captain Yeatman, recommended that the camp be transferred and quarters rented from the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Company for \$125 per month. Both General Merriam and the War

⁵¹ At least one of Eastman's men, Sergeant-Major James Kelley, had died at Skagway. Kelley had expired on March 19 of spinal meningitis. Cain to Adjt., Dept. of the Columbia, undated, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. Cain was assistant adjutant general, District of Lynn Canal.

⁵² Yeatman to Adjt. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 28, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. At the moment, his quartermaster stores (hay and grain) were "raised from the ground and covered with paulins." While this was satisfactory for the present, additional protection was needed during the approaching winter.

Department concurred. On October 8 Captain Yeatman transferred his command (Company B, 14th Infantry, and three medics) from Dyea, and the troops took up quarters in buildings rented from the transportation company.⁵³

As soon as his office was provided with a description of the location of the camp, Secretary of War Alger on December 31, 1898, established a military reservation. Its boundary was to commence about 200 yards north of the dock of the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Co.; run north along the shore of Taiya Inlet two miles; then west one mile; then south two miles; and then east one mile to the point of beginning.⁵⁴

4. The Troops Keep Order

In the late winter and early spring of 1899, Captain Yeatman and his troops were called out on four occasions to help the civil authorities control situations which threatened to get out of hand. There was trouble on the Brackett Road in the last week of February, when several packers refused to pay toll and damaged private property. Brackett had them arrested and a riot was feared. The presence of the military prevented violence, and the packers were brought to trial. Personally, Yeatman sympathized with the packers, because their complaints against Brackett were justified. He knew that Brackett, contrary to his sworn statement to the Secretary of the Interior, had not completed a passable wagon road to the summit of White Pass. At White Pass City, wagons had to be unloaded and the freight taken the four and one-half miles to the summit on pack animals.

When he examined testimony in the case of the United States vs Brackett, February 3, 1899, Yeatman found that one of Brackett's sons, Thomas, had admitted that it was impossible for wagons to reach the summit and Lake Bennett from Skagway. Witnesses had sworn that:

- (a) the Brackett Road occupied much of the White Pass Trail; and
- (b) that Brackett had fenced the river bed, which was used as a trail in the winter, thus forcing packers and freighters to pass through his tollgate. The objectionable tollgate was above White Pass City, where Brackett had made no improvements.

⁵³ 2d-6th, Indorsements to *ibid.*; Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, Oct. 9, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. Yeatman's command mustered one officer and 56 enlisted men.

⁵⁴ GO6, War Department, Jan. 14, 1899. Although the army abandoned the post near Dyea in July 1899, the War Department continued to hold title to the 1280 acres until January 22, 1925. On that date President Calvin Coolidge, through an executive order, transferred the Dyea Reservation from the

Currently, there were about 500 packers who would be driven out of business if shut off the trail by Brackett's tollgate. These packers, because of the low freight rates charged by the railroad (three to three and one-half cents per pound) and the two cents per pound toll charged by Brackett, could not compete successfully with the railroad.⁵⁵

Captain Yeatman was called up to Dyea on March 6, when vigilantes began searching houses to locate stolen property. The captain asked to see their search warrants. Although they did not have any, they explained that they had telephoned Commissioner Sehlbrede and Deputy Marshal Tanner at Skagway.⁵⁶ Yeatman told them they must halt their unlawful actions until they could secure the necessary warrants.

Not trusting the vigilantes, Yeatman at 10:50 a.m. called Commissioner Sehlbrede. At 6 p.m. a special deputy with the warrants disembarked at Dyea and the search was resumed.⁵⁷

With the coming of winter, the White Pass & Yukon Route had reduced the working day of its construction crews from 11 hours to nine, while raising the wage rate from 30 to 35 cents per hour. This policy continued in effect until March 1, 1899, when the working day was extended to ten hours and the wages again pegged at 30 cents per hour. The laborers howled, and asked the company to reconsider. Management refused, and the men struck.

Within three days, 1,200 men had dropped their tools, passed the paymaster's window, received their time-checks, and joined the army of unemployed. A subscription paper was circulated in support of the strike. Mass-meetings were held daily by the strikers. A minister gave his meeting house to the men to meet and sleep in. By the end of the week, many of the men had spent their cash reserves.

War Department to the Department of the Interior. Executive Order No.4131, Jan. 22, 1925, NA, RG 49, Records of the General Land Office--Abandoned Military Reservations.

⁵⁵ Yeatman to Adjutant General, U. S. Army, March 4, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁵⁶ Commissioner Sehlbrede, having observed that the construction of the railroad across White Pass had insured the permanency of Skagway, had moved his office there.

⁵⁷ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, March 26, 1899, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

To the amazement of the townspeople and the chagrin of the strikers, the railroad made no effort to compromise and end the strike. Management argued that they had done nothing to bring on the strike, and moreover recent snows had brought work almost to a standstill. If the men remained off the job for several weeks, the corporation would be able to save their salaries.

By March 13 agitators were able to turn a mass-meeting into a mob, and the strikers charged out of the meetinghouse shouting, "To the shops, to the shops!" The purpose of the leaders was to proceed to the shops, terrorize the few employees still at work, and force them to join the strike.⁵⁸

En route to the shops, the mob encountered the minister, who sought to prevail on them to return. While he delayed them for a few moments, Assistant Engineer John Hislop telephoned Construction Superintendent Mike Heney, who was at the shops. Heney ran a locomotive outdoors, and then fixed the head lamps so as to illuminate every route leading from the town to the shops. When the strikers came into the glare of the light they paused. Heney called for them to retreat, but they refused. They slowly advanced. Heney, backed by Dr. F. B. Whiting, the company surgeon, and a handful of employees--some armed with revolvers--confronted the mob. White, the leader, told Heney his voice was shaky. Whereupon, Dr. Whiting clubbed his rifle and struck White, knocking him to the ground and breaking the buttstock. The mob, seeing their leader felled, fled. White was carried into the shops, where the doctor dressed his wounds and turned him over to Deputy Marshal Tanner.⁵⁹

Early the next morning, Commissioner Sehlbrede and Deputy Marshal Tanner called Captain Yeatman at the Dyea Barracks, and announced that "they feared great trouble, which they would be unable to control." They told of the confrontation at the shops, and expressed fears that the strikers would be joined by disgruntled packers thrown out of work by the Brackett Road.

Captain Yeatman could move with alacrity. He turned out a 23-man detachment, supported by Asst. Surg. F. S. Bailey and two corporals, and caught the next boat for Skagway. Backed by the military, Commissioner Sehlbrede closed saloons and stopped all street meetings.

⁵⁸ Cy Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, pp. 423-424.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 423-424.

Overawed by the show of force, the strike collapsed. The men began trailing out to the grade but only 200 were re-employed at this time. The weather was bad, and the corporation determined to go slow until the snow melted. By March 16 the situation had so improved that Captain Yeatman and his platoon of regulars returned to their base, and the few still on strike could not be distinguished from the town loafers. It was expected that these people would either find work in Skagway or return to the United States. Thus the first labor strike in Alaska ended, leaving as the editor of the *Daily Alaskan* wrote, "Only one evidence to recall it to memory, the prisoner [White] in the city jail."⁶⁰

After almost a year there was again trouble with the Chilkat Indians. On April 25 several citizens reached Dyea from Haines Mission and excitedly told Captain Yeatman that 40 Indians, armed to the teeth, had stopped a crew clearing the Dalton Trail. Unless troops were rushed to keep order there could be bloodshed. Alarmed by this news, Yeatman ordered one of his sergeants to proceed to Haines with a detachment. He was to make an "investigation and prevent any breach of peace by either party."

The next day Yeatman and Deputy Marshal Tanner joined the troops at the mission. While the soldiers looked on, the lawman arrested those Indians guilty of causing the trouble. Haled before Commissioner Sehlbrede, eight of them were sentenced to 30 days in the Skagway jail. The Chilkat then hired a lawyer, and he succeeded in obtaining their release. On May 4 Captain Yeatman, satisfied that the crisis had passed, recalled his soldiers.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, March 26, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia; Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 424; *Morning Alaskan*, March 14-17, 1899. Judge Sehlbrede sentenced White to six months in the Sitka workhouse.

⁶¹ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, May 7, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. The Indians, when taken before the commissioner, claimed that: (a) if the trail were completed they would lose the money they had formerly earned ferrying freight up the Chilkat; (b) the trail passed over ground used by them to cure Solachen; and (c) animals passing over the trail would eat the berries they were in the habit of drying for food.

E. Black Soldiers on Taiya Inlet

1. Company L, 24th Infantry Is Ordered to Alaska

The War Department, with the end of the Spanish-American War, was confronted by numerous problems. Many units that had been engaged were redeployed to the United States, while numerous volunteer organizations were mustered out. Units were sent to the Philippines to crush the uprising led by Emilio Aguinaldo. The new commander of the Department of the Columbia, Maj. Gen. William R. Shafter, determined to relieve Captain Yeatman's company. Capt. Henry W. Hovey was alerted to proceed to Alaska with his unit, Company L, 24th United States Infantry.

The 24th United States Infantry was one of four black regular army units. It possessed a proud tradition dating to its organization in 1869 by a consolidation of the 38th and 41st Infantry Regiments. The 24th Infantry had spent the years between 1869 and 1896 on the frontier, participating in campaigns against the Indians. It had been ordered to Fort Douglas, Utah, in 1896, and was stationed there when the Spanish-American war broke out. The regiment had been rushed to Tampa, Florida, and assigned to the V Corps. From there the regiment had proceeded to Cuba and had distinguished itself in the fighting on the eastern approaches to Santiago, where in two days it had suffered casualties totaling 38 percent. The regiment was then ordered to Siboney to guard the yellow fever hospital. It soon became necessary for the blacks to nurse the sick rather than guard them. When the regiment returned to the United States at the close of the war, it had lost to battle and fever 300 of the 500 officers and men who had sailed from Tampa.

The 3d Battalion, 24th Infantry, was organized at Fort Douglas following the regiment's return from Cuba. Many of the officers and non-commissioned officers were veterans of the Santiago Campaign. Company L was stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco, when orders were received to move to the Alaskan Panhandle.⁶²

⁶² *Daily Alaskan*, January 1, 1900. An Act passed by Congress on April 26, 1898, had authorized the organization of a third battalion to consist of four companies in each of the regular infantry regiments in the United States Army. These companies were to be designated I, K, L, and M. Companies I and K had been permitted to wither away in 1892, while there had never been any previous provision for Companies L and M in the regular infantry establishment of the United States Army.

Captain Hovey and his blacks left the Presidio on May 3 by rail for Vancouver Barracks. After spending nine days at Vancouver Barracks, the company traveled to Seattle by rail, where on May 15 the troops embarked on the steamship *Humboldt*. At Fort Wrangell, on the 18th, one officer and 46 enlisted men were disembarked and relieved Company H, 14th Infantry. Forty-eight hours later, Captain Hovey and 112 enlisted men landed at Dyea and relieved Captain Yeatman's Company B, 14th Infantry. Yeatman's people, having spent almost 15 months in Alaska, were overjoyed to be heading for a new duty station. The ship which returned them to the United States landed them at Angel Island on May 27.⁶³

2. A Forest Fire Destroys Camp Dyea

Captain Hovey, on checking with Deputy Marshal Tanner, learned that no further trouble was anticipated with the Chilkat Indians. He also found that Dyea was becoming a ghost town. Early in July the economic plight of Dyea worsened, when the White Pass & Yukon Route bought out the tramway and shut it down. This removed from Dyea its only industry, which during the past several months had supported the 75 persons still in residence. Barge traffic between Skagway and Dyea would soon cease and no longer would coastal vessels call at the dock.

Hovey felt that within several weeks mail service also would be suspended and the town deserted. The end of mail service would cause little inconvenience, because it took from 24 to 28 hours to get mail from Skagway to Dyea. But if the telephone line were abandoned, it would isolate the camp from all communications, "with the outside, except such as may be had by a small boat." This boded trouble, because all too frequently Taiya Inlet was too rough to be navigated by small craft.

When he forwarded this news to General Shafter, Captain Hovey suggested that his company be transferred to Skagway, because: (a) it was now the center of commercial activity on Lynn Canal; (b) it was the terminus of the railroad leading to Lake Bennett; and (c) it possessed facilities which would permit him to "be in communication with the officials, and keep informed from other sources, of conditions which may influence his action in any emergency which may arise."

⁶³ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, May 27, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia; Post Returns from U. S. Military Posts, 1800-1916, Dyea, NA, Microcopy M-617.

Already the sea-worms, teredos, were at work on the dock piling. Some piles had been replaced, but unless this work was continued there was danger the dock would be wrecked in the winter's first storm.⁶⁴

General Shafter, after reviewing Hovey's communication, went on record as agreeable to moving the camp to Skagway, whenever Dyea was abandoned.⁶⁵

Before word of Shafter's decision reached Captain Hovey, a natural calamity compelled the abandonment of the post at Dyea. In mid-July a forest fire broke out about two miles south of camp. The flames roared through the tinder-dry woods, and as the only escape was by water, Captain Hovey made preparations to evacuate his command to Skagway. Fortunately for the soldiers, what wind there was was from the north, and the flames died out before they had to flee.⁶⁶

On July 28 a second forest fire was discovered by the troops, 1,000 yards north of camp. The blacks were turned out, but the flames soon gained the upper hand. With the fire raging out of control, Captain Hovey called on the Pacific Coast Steamship Company for help. Two ships and a number of scows soon pulled into the dock.

From 8 a.m. until 6 p.m. the fire appeared to be making "no great progress towards the post," as there was little wind. During this period, three boatloads of public property were shuttled across Taiya Inlet to Skagway. A north wind now made up, the fire spread rapidly. There were at this time two loaded scows at the wharf. Captain Hovey called for his troops to board the steamer *Lady Lake*, and the scows were towed out into the inlet, but considerable property was abandoned on the dock. Hovey planned to return in the morning with another scow and load this gear. A five-man detachment was left to guard the property.

⁶⁴ Hovey to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 12, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁶⁵ 1st Ind., July 26, 1899, found in *ibid.*

⁶⁶ Hovey to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 14, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. The camp was surrounded on three sides by forest, and the only road into it led to Dyea, three miles to the north. The ground was covered with moss, in varying thicknesses, which during a drought burned like tinder.

Within 20 minutes after *Lady Lake* had chugged out into the inlet, the fire roared in on the camp. The buildings and wharf were engulfed, and the guard detachment fled for their lives, escaping in a small craft.⁶⁷

Upon reaching Skagway, Captain Hovey rented a warehouse in which the public property was stored, and the troops were placed in an emergency camp. Floors were put down and tents pitched. When they looked across Taiya Inlet, after the fire had burned itself out, the soldiers saw that the entire eastern face of Halutu Ridge had been burned to the water's edge. They realized that they had been fortunate to escape with their lives, personal effects, tents, and rations.⁶⁸

3. The Blacks at Skagway

At Skagway, camp was first made on a tract belonging to Captain Moore, who allowed the army full use of his property without compensation. Although the land was lower than Captain Hovey would have liked, fewer men were on sick call than at Camp Dyea. Permanent quarters for the enlisted men were secured in mid-September in the *Astoria Hotel*, a two-story structure (25' x 100') with an offset 12' x 16'. In the yard were two wooden buildings, 14' x 16' and 10' x 24', which were converted into a kitchen and coalshed. The rental for this property was \$175 per month.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Hovey to Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, July 29 & Aug. 1, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia; *Alaska Sportsman*, July 1965, p. 25. The Captain of *Orizaba* on reaching Juneau from Skagway reported that the entire western side of Lynn Canal was a mass of flames "from Dyea about down to Haines Mission." Fires also raged in Skagway Valley. At Glacier Station in Warm Pass Valley, a large water tank, a roundhouse, and several frame dwellings were destroyed. Several railroad bridges were threatened. On the 28th the Skagway-bound train was delayed for three hours, "then ran through flame and smoke on both sides of the track from the summit about to the outskirts of Skagway."

⁶⁸ Hovey to Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, July 29 and Aug. 1, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. Destroyed were the dock, the soldiers' barracks (the *Coleman Hotel*), the log cabins used as officers' quarters, and the storehouses.

⁶⁹ Hovey to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, Dec. 19, 1899, NA, RG393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. As there was no plumbing in the hotel, the army had to put in bath tubs and connect with the city water-main. A dry earth closet was erected.

A storehouse and office building was rented from P. W. Snyder for \$80 per month. This structure was about 350 yards and two blocks from the barracks. To provide security one man slept there during the night, while a patrol visited the building at 20-minute intervals from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. Opposite the barracks, Snyder had erected a structure which he rented to the army for \$50 a month as officers' quarters. On the next block was the old railroad hospital, which, after some renovating, was rented as the post infirmary. Adjacent to the officers' quarters were several small cabins used as storehouses to enable Captain Hovey to divide his supplies in case of fire, which was an ever-present threat.⁷⁰

Company L's principal duty at Skagway was to show the flag. On September 13, 1899, Captain Hovey and a detachment of blacks caught a train to the summit. There they met a company of troops organized in the Yukon and en route to South Africa to fight the Boer republics. The Canadians were escorted to Skagway and seen aboard the steamer *Alpha*.⁷¹

Early in December reports reached Department headquarters telling that members of the North West Mounted Police, besides maintaining an office in Skagway, were wearing uniforms on United States territory. General Shafter asked Captain Hovey for a report on this situation. Replying on the 18th, Hovey reported that "no member of the force has appeared in Skagway for some time in uniform, and the officials of the force do not now permit it." One member of the North West Mounted Police, however, was posted in Skagway to facilitate forwarding of supplies, but he was not uniformed and the sign identifying his office had been removed.

The completion of the telegraph line to Dawson had speeded communications and lessened the chance for border incidents becoming unmanageable. Moreover, the establishment of the *Modus Vivendi*, in Hovey's opinion, assured a peaceful solution of any minor difficulties that might arise to plague relations between the United States and Great Britain in the Alaskan Panhandle.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Captain Hovey had experienced considerable difficulty in securing suitable quarters, because of Captain Moore's claim. Until it was adjudicated, Hovey foresaw the construction of few permanent buildings. Although Skagway had an elected mayor and council, they had no formal authority, because there was no provision for a municipal government.

⁷¹ Hovey to Adjt. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, Sept. 13, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia. The company of Canadians numbered four officers and 88 enlisted men.

In the future, it was hoped, an agreement could be reached between the respective authorities regarding the wearing of uniforms while crossing from Skagway to the summit.⁷²

The blacks of Company L, 24th Infantry, were destined to remain in the Alaskan Panhandle for 29 additional months. It was May 15, 1902, before they were relieved by the 106th Company of Coast Artillery. The artillerists had left Fort Lawton, Washington, four days before.⁷³

F. Comments and Recommendations

Little-known or understood facets of the Klondike Gold Rush Story were the activities of the United States Army on Taiya Inlet. Troops were rushed to the Alaskan Panhandle in February 1898 to preserve law and order and to show the flag in support of United States claims in the boundary dispute with Great Britain. When the soldiers arrived the situation along the boundary was tense, as Canadian authorities had pushed into territory claimed by the United States. Customs stations had been established and manned by the North West Mounted Police at the summits of Chilkoot and White Passes. Many adventurers in Dyea and Skagway clamored to be permitted to return the "Stars and Stripes" to Lake Bennett. The army refused to take precipitant action and tempers were allowed to cool.

Negotiations between the United States and Great Britain led to the *Modus Vivendi* of October 20, 1899, and in 1903 to a final settlement of the Alaskan boundary issue. This was the last problem of this nature to vex relations between the United States and Canada.

On numerous occasions the presence of the military enabled civil authorities to control dangerous situations and prevent bloodshed. The timely arrival of soldiers prevented lynchings at Skagway in 1898, following Soapy Smith's death. In March 1899 soldiers helped maintain order during Alaska's first labor strike. Their presence prevented the trouble between Brackett and the freighters and packers from getting out of hand. Hostilities between the Chilkat and whites at Pyramid Harbor were prevented by the intervention of the army.

⁷² Hovey to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, Dec. 18, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁷³ Post Returns for U. S. Military Posts, 1800-1916, Skagway, NA, Microcopy M-617.

In interpreting the army's role in maintaining peace and order on Taiya Inlet, the Service must recognize the role of the black soldiers of Company L, 24th United States Infantry. Captain Hovey and his black soldiers spent three years in the area. Their good discipline and appearance made a favorable impression on all with whom they came in contact.

In interpreting the role of the army on Taiya Inlet, in the period 1898-1900, the camp sites should be identified. The two sites at Dyea and those at Skagway have been indicated on the Historical Base Maps.

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X. THE RISE AND FALL OF SOAPY SMITH

A. A Commissioner with Questionable Ethics

Judge John U. Smith, the United States Commissioner, was more interested in making money than in maintaining law and order. This attitude, which was shared by others, helps explain why the lawless element gained a foothold in Skagway almost as soon as the town was platted.

Commissioner Smith owed his position to Senator George W. McBride of Oregon. He had been appointed on July 8, 1897, and had qualified for his position five days later, before the United States District Judge for Oregon. When Skagway was laid out, he rushed over from Dyea to secure the position of town recorder. Smith made no effort to hide his activities. So many complaints were received that the Attorney General was compelled to send an agent to the Alaskan Panhandle to investigate charges that Judge Smith was using his office for private gain.¹

The special agent, John E. Smith, soon learned that Commissioner Smith, as town recorder, was charging five dollars for recording deeds, a figure believed by Governor Brady to be exorbitant.

Several cases were also uncovered by the investigator, where it seemed that the Commissioner had pocketed fees. It was found that Thomas Walls of Nanaimo, British Columbia, had drowned in fording the Taiya River. Commissioner Smith had held an inquest on the body and had taken charge of the deceased's effects, along with \$149.10 collected by miners for the benefit of the widow. Smith charged \$30 for holding the inquest, and did not forward to the widow the collection made up by the miners until he had received several letters, calling the subject to his attention. On another occasion, Deputy Marshal A. A. Richards had brought a man before Commissioner Smith charged with drawing a pistol on an Indian. Smith fined the man \$20 and assessed him \$40 in costs. The investigator was certain that these costs were excessive.

When he submitted his report, the agent went on record as satisfied that the Commissioner had "misused his official power for private gain, and . . . under color of his office, extorted big sums from hundreds of prospectors at Skagway and Dyea."²

¹ Smith to McBride, Sept. 25; Smith to Attorney General, Oct. 2, 1897, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

² Ibid. Commissioner Smith, it was pointed out, had no right to

Judge Smith was a close ally of Senator McBride and the Attorney General hesitated to remove him. He was suffered to hold onto his position until May 1898, almost eight months after the agent had submitted his unfavorable report.

B. Soapy Smith Rides High

1. Soapy Smith Arrives in Skagway

As to be expected, a number of individuals interested in taking advantage of the stampeders to make easy money appeared in Dyea and Skagway. One of the first to arrive was a native of Georgia in his mid-30s, Jefferson Randolph Smith. An intelligent individual of considerable personal magnetism, Smith was an accomplished confidence man, having learned the tricks of the trade in Denver and the Colorado mining camps of Leadville and Creede.

He had stated his philosophy of life and had coined words that were to become popular with the Panhandle newspapers in describing Smith and his confederates. These were the phrases "sure-thing game," and "sure-thing men." They came into the language as a result of a retort made by Smith to the Clerical Association of Denver, which vainly fought him.

"I'm no ordinary gambler," Smith had stated. "The ordinary gambler hazards his own money in an attempt to win another's. When I stake money, it's a sure thing that I win."³

Smith was known to friend and foe alike by his pseudonym "Soapy." He owed this nickname to his skill at selling for ten dollars, each, small cakes of soap, around which were wrapped one dollar bills. The Denver police called him "Soapy," and this nickname remained with him through life. It was in Denver that the police first learned of the soap trick, and he was arrested for selling soap in the streets without a license. An officer escorted his prisoner to jail, and then booked him. As the prisoner was a chance acquaintance, he was unable to recall either the "Jefferson" or the "Randolph," so he wrote "Soapy" in parenthesis.⁴

record claims as Dyea and Skagway were within the Juneau Recording District. Walls, the first man to lose his life in 1897 on the Chilkoot Trail, was buried in a clump of trees. The grave was marked with a headboard upon which was printed the deceased's name and date of death. Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 44.

³ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 334-335.

⁴ Harry L. Suydam, "The Reign of 'Soapy' Smith," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Jan. 1901, p. 217.

Soapy Smith, at the time of his arrival in Skagway in August 1897, was

just a trifle under the average in height, of rather stocky build, and wore a very thick growth of black beard, which was closely cut and plainly outlined his square set jaws. His eyes were very dark and shining, and altogether he looked the desperate and cunning character he was.⁵

When he disembarked in Skagway, Smith was accompanied by five henchmen, "Reverend" Charles Bowers, Syd Dixon, George Wilder, "Slim Jim" Foster, and "Red" Gibbs. Bowers was a notorious bunko man "whose saintly appearance, gentle voice, and benevolent mien made it possible to masquerade" as a man of God. His task was to guide cheechakos to fake business establishments, where they were separated from their money. Wilder served as the advance man for the gang, looking and acting the part of a prosperous businessman. He played the role of friendly stockbroker letting a new-found acquaintance in on a sure-thing.⁶

By October 1897 Smith's gang was well established in Skagway. Its success attracted con men, cutthroats, pimps, and strong-arm men. Many of these hard characters threw in with Smith, and he became the acknowledged leader of the Skagway underworld. His righthand man was a newcomer, Walsh, who was recalled as "a most brutal-looking man of almost herculean physique."⁷

2. Initial Efforts to Organize a Vigilance Committee Fail

Soapy Smith did not hide his activities, and several of those favoring law and order--including City Assessor Harry L. Suydam, City Surveyor Frank Reid, and J. M. "Si" Tanner--sought during the winter of 1897-98 to organize a vigilante movement to rid Skagway of Smith and his ilk. These meetings, held in secret, were poorly attended. Until the gang overstepped itself, it would be impossible to rally a force to take action.

Much better attended than the meetings of the vigilance committee were "miners' meetings" held to compel men who had built along the trail to move their cabins and conform to the new street system, which had been adopted. The "miners' courts", if their

⁵ Ibid., p. 212.

⁶ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 336-337.

⁷ Suydam, "The Reign of 'Soapy' Smith," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Jan. 1901, p. 212.

orders were not carried out, would march upon the objectionable building. Though they were frequently opposed by rifles, shot-guns, and axes, the offenders would invariably weaken, and their property be demolished. If no resistance were encountered, the structure and its furnishings were moved.⁸

Lot jumpers were also a problem. They would put up a tent or cabin on another's lot, while he was up the trail. When the owner sought to regain his property he was given a hard time, because the jumpers usually had confederates.

Suydam was a member of a five-man executive committee which sat twice a week to hear and adjust grievances. Whenever their decisions were protested by the losing party, they were empowered to call on 200 enrolled citizens to execute their judgment. More than once they were threatened by death by shooting. Suydam was held up twice and beaten once for his activities.⁹

Occasionally caches were rifled by desperate men, but this was dangerous business. Several of these men were caught and strung up to the nearest tree, where their bodies were left hanging for several days as a warning. Some were more lightly dealt with. These were tied to trees, their bare backs lashed, then freed, and marched into town with placards tied to their shoulders with the word "THIEF" printed thereon.

Soapy Smith was careful not to implicate himself in any dark deeds that occurred on the trails, but he frequently came to the aid of the guilty parties. Suydam had helped arrest several men caught stealing from caches, but after they were turned over to the deputy marshal for a hearing before Judge Smith, nothing was done to punish them and they invariably escaped.

As Skagway grew, so did Soapy's enterprises. At one time he ran three gambling houses, and to be even more accommodating, he had rented for the benefit of those who were not attracted by his fascinating games, two cabins "near the wharves, on which were posted large signs, reading, "GENERAL INFORMATION BUREAU." Within were well-dressed men behind counters, who described for the visitor conditions on the trails, charges for packing, etc., until their confederates entered. The conversation then led to cards, and a deck would appear.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid., pp. 213-215.

⁹ Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 215.

3. The Rowan-McGrath Murder

A double killing on the night of January 31, 1898, provided the community with evidence of Soapy Smith's hidden power. On the night in question, Deputy Marshal McInnes had gone to Sitka, leaving his assistant, Rowan, in charge at Skagway. Rowan was sitting in an all-night lunchroom when Andy McGrath, a laborer on the Brackett Road, dashed in with blood streaming down his face from a head wound. He shouted for some one to give him a gun, and Rowan, explaining that he was acting marshal, inquired as to his trouble. The injured man blurted out that while at the People's Theatre he had been robbed and beaten.

"Come with me, and I will investigate this matter," said Rowan. When they reached the People's Theatre, McGrath opened the door, and as he did he made a motion as if he were pulling a pistol. John E. Fay, the bartender, was expecting him. Quick as a flash he pulled his pistol and fired, dropping McGrath dead in his tracks. Rowan, his revolver in his fist, pushed his way into the saloon to be gunned down by the bartender, who then fled.

Billy Jones employed by the citizens as a fire watchman was passing, and being intoxicated he drew his pistol and emptied it at random. One of his slugs struck and wounded Harry Lamont, the proprietor of the Nugget Saloon, who was eating at a sidewalk lunch counter. Rowan crawled around the corner to Dr. J. J. Moore's office, where he died. Strange as it may seem, Dr. Moore had just returned from Rowan's home, where he had delivered the deceased's wife of a baby.¹¹

Skagway was in an uproar. A mob turned out and began the search for Fay. Soapy Smith, in an effort to keep the bartender from being lynched, threatened, "We muster upwards of two hundred men with their guns, and if anyone tries to put a rope over Ed Fay's neck he'll get a bullet in his own head mighty quick." Reacting with his characteristic alacrity, Smith planned a twofold operation. While getting control of the mob, he would curry favor with the populace.¹²

The next morning a posse searched the town to apprehend Fay. Realizing that with the townspeople inflamed he faced lynching if caught, Fay surrendered to an influential merchant, who promised to keep his hiding place secret until the citizens agreed to

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 215-216; *The Morning Alaskan* (Skagway), Feb. 1, 1898.

¹² Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 341.

an impartial trial. Meanwhile, Smith had placed himself at the head of a subscription drive that netted \$400 for Rowan's widow.¹³

A mass-meeting was called for the evening of February 1, in the Union Church to bring Fay to trial. Smith did not attend, but he dominated the affair. Major Strong, who was chosen to preside, named ten men to watch and protect Fay, while 12 others were appointed to hear witnesses and to bring in a verdict at 3 p.m. the next day. The twelve failed to carry out their instructions, and shirked their responsibility by recommending that a committee of 100 investigate the double-murder, and that the meeting elect a judge to sentence Fay. Strong was disappointed and after a heated speech said he would censure the jury.¹⁴

After considerable debate Major Strong was elected judge. He hesitated to sentence a man to be lynched, when it was possible to turn him over to the authorities. Strong asked the citizens to give him until 9 o'clock in the morning, when the church bell would be rung and the sentence announced, "adding that he felt sure the majority would have what they wanted." The people were pleased with this promising remark.

That night Soapy saw his friend Judge Smith, and told him where Fay was in hiding, and demanded that he effect his escape. The Commissioner went with Soapy to the place where Fay was being held and deputized the ten guards as marshals. This done, he commanded them to escort the prisoner to a steamer that was ready to sail. The guards obeyed, and Fay escaped.¹⁵

The Rev. J. A. Sinclair, a Presbyterian minister, who disembarked in Skagway soon after Fay's escape, was shocked by this miscarriage of justice. "A lynching bee held in a church!" he wrote his wife:

And the Robin Hood of the town controlling that meeting's proceedings and practically nominating the committee; and the desperado at the same time protecting the murderer, and taking up a public subscription for the relief of the widow of his victim.¹⁶

¹³ Suydam, "The Reign of 'Soapy' Smith," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Jan. 1901, p. 216.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 217. The names of the 12 were suggested to Major Strong by the editor of the *Daily Alaskan*, who was a friend of Smith's. Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 341.

¹⁵ Suydam, "The Reign of 'Soapy' Smith," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, Jan. 1901, pp. 217-218.

¹⁶ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 341-342.

4. Governor Brady Calls for Help

The death of Deputy Marshal Rowan had immediate repercussion. Relaying the news to Secretary of the Interior Bliss, on February 3, Governor Brady complained that the ships reaching Lynn Canal during the past several weeks had been putting ashore many "gamblers, thugs, and lewd women from the worst quarters of the cities of the Coast." These people had seized control of Skagway and Dyea, and the populace was powerless to cope with the situation as they did not have a municipal government. The deputy marshal was powerless, and his deputies, when they took action, were singled out as targets by the ruffians.

One of the lawless, when haled into court for the murder of Deputy Marshal Rowan, had been permitted to escape. In mid-January a group of longshoremen had called for Captain Patterson of *Alki* to fire the Indians engaged to unload his ship. When he refused, they attacked the Indians with fists and clubs, although a deputy marshal was standing nearby. Patterson was compelled to compromise with the toughs to get his ship unloaded.

To cope with this situation, Governor Brady recommended that Congress authorize the military to intervene and keep order, if called upon by civil authorities.¹⁷

In the second week of February, Governor Brady boarded the revenue cutter *Wheeling* and visited the Lynn Canal cities. Landing at Skagway, he found the people dependent on Commissioner Smith, who because of his political influence had managed to hold on to his position. Tainted as he was, Smith did not command their respect, and they complained to Governor Brady about his "hunger and thirst for fees." Brady favored his prompt removal, and his replacement by an individual with "honest heart & horse sense."¹⁸

Governor Brady's call for troops to keep order galvanized the War Department into action. For several months the government had been under pressure to rush troops to the Alaskan Panhandle to support United States claims in its boundary dispute with Canada. Secretary of War Alger, upon being informed of the breakdown

¹⁷ Brady to Bliss, Feb. 3, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

¹⁸ Brady to Secretary of the Interior, Feb. 12, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

of law and order at the head of Lynn Canal, seized the opportunity to rush a battalion of the 14th U. S. Infantry from Vancouver Barracks to the Panhandle. Two companies reached Skagway on February 25 and a similar number disembarked at Dyea on March 8.

Judge Smith, because of his political influence, was able to hold onto his position until the beginning of May. His replacement was C. A. Sehlbrede, a distinguished looking man with aquiline features and white muttonchop whiskers. Judge Sehlbrede reached Dyea on May 6 and established his quarters in the Olympia Hotel. He soon impressed Dyeans with his knowledge of Alaskan affairs.¹⁹

5. Soapy Smith Parades his Power

Soapy Smith and his henchmen continued their lawless ways. Their activities gave Skagway a bad name, and with the completion of the Dyea wharf, and the opening of the through tramway from Canyon City to Crater Lake, more and more stampedeers favored the Chilkoot Trail over the White Pass route.

The declaration of war by the United States against Spain on April 24, 1898, gave Smith an opportunity to strengthen his position at the expense of the law and order forces. As soon as the news reached Skagway, Smith named himself captain of Company A, 1st Alaska Volunteers, and opened a recruiting office. Men, many of them Smith's followers, were soon drilling. Disappointed stampedeers, swept up by patriotism and the desire to revenge the rape of Cuba and the destruction of *Maine*, stormed the recruiting office where a sign read, "UNITED STATES ARMY RECRUITING STATION." Inside, they were signed up, congratulated on their patriotism, and sent to the rear of the tent for a medical examination. While a "doctor" examined the recruits, his confederates rifled the pockets of their discarded clothing for valuables. If the patriot protested, he was thrown into the street in his underwear.

On Sunday, May 1, Smith paraded his company. He marched at its head, while 2,000 people stood on the walks and cheered. Hundreds wore badges of gold, white, and blue reading, "Freedom for Cuba! Remember the *Maine*! Compliments of Skagway Military Company, Jeff R. Smith, Captain."

Following the parade, Smith made a speech. In a loud voice he offered the services of himself and his unit to his President and Country. As soon as the cheers subsided, he shouted:

¹⁹ *The Dyea Trail*, May 7, 1898.

There is one man who, in this terrible strife, has transcended the bounds of fair war. He has murdered the helpless and the weak, debauched women, butchered and starved little children. Mr. Chairman, this man we have here with us today. I have him here, and we will proceed to hang and butcher Weyler!

When Soapy Smith gave the signal, an effigy of the Spanish Captain-General of Cuba, General Valeriano Weyler, was hoisted to the top of a pole and a bonfire lighted beneath. On this day Smith stood at the apogee of his power.

Soon afterwards, Smith received an official letter signed by Secretary of War Alger, thanking him for his patriotism but declining to accept his and his unit's services. Smith had the letter framed and displayed on the wall of his oyster parlor.²⁰

C. Soapy Smith Falls

1. Stewart Loses his Poke

On July 4, 1898, at the Independence Day celebration, Soapy Smith occupied a seat on the rostrum as Governor Brady addressed the crowd. Although no one knew it, Smith's days were numbered.

For several weeks, sourdoughs who had spent the winter and spring in the Klondike had been passing through Skagway and Dyea on their way back to their homes in the United States and Canada. Those who had made strikes were carrying gold. One of a small party who reached Skagway by way of White Pass on July 7 was J. D. Stewart of Nanaimo, British Columbia. He had with him a bag containing \$2,000 in gold dust and nuggets. Friends cautioned him about Smith's gang and urged him to lock his gold in a safe at one of the hotels and leave it there until he could get passage on a southbound ship. For some reason he did not take their advice.

The next afternoon, the 8th, Stewart visited Soapy Smith's *Parlor* while looking for one of his friends. He walked out into the backyard and found three men ("Reverend" Bowers, Van B. Triplett, and Slim Jim Foster) playing monte. He watched them briefly, and as he turned to leave, the cardplayers began to scuffle. They brushed up against him, and the first thing he knew two of them had

²⁰ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, pp. 352-353.

seized him and pinned his arms, while the third grabbed his poke which he had slung from his shoulder, and fled. The two strong-arm men now released Stewart and likewise disappeared in different directions.

Stewart, unlike many who had suffered at the hands of the cut-throats, refused to be quiet. He complained to Deputy Marshal Taylor, and all that would listen, of the robbery. His story was corroborated by a man and woman, who were able to identify one of the culprits as Triplett, or "Old Man Tripp" as he was called. Marshal Taylor told Stewart and those rallying to his aid that if they would keep quiet he would get the men and the gold.

2. The Revival of the Vigilantes

Shortly afterwards, the marshal and a carpenter were seen walking up Broadway to do some work. It was now apparent that what many had suspected was true--the lawman was in league with Soapy Smith and was not interested in apprehending those who had rolled Stewart. The people favoring law and order knew that if the crime were permitted to go unpunished, Skagway would suffer economic disaster. Stampeders, on returning from the Klondike, would avoid the White Pass route in favor of the Chilkoot Trail or take steamboats down the Yukon to St. Michael. With the town's economic well-being threatened, public opinion turned against Smith. Frank Reid, Major Tanner, and Capt. J. L. Sperry accordingly experienced no difficulty in finding many recruits for the vigilante force which they revived.

A telephone call was made to Judge Sehlbrede at Dyea, and he promised to come over on the first boat. He called back later to urge that every precaution be taken to prevent any mob rule, pending his arrival.²¹ A number of men determined to do what they could to prevent bloodshed. At least a dozen called on Soapy Smith between 2 and 6 p.m., when Judge Sehlbrede arrived, and tried to talk him into disavowing the robbery and giving up the suspects. But to each appeal, his answer was, "No one has been robbed, and that Stewart had lost his money gambling." Finally, he smirked, if Stewart had not "hollared" he would have got some of his money back.

Judge Sehlbrede now sent for Smith. In the marshal's office, they discussed the problem. To every appeal by the judge and marshal, Smith answered, "the boys who had the money won it in

²¹ *Daily Alaskan*, July 9, 1898.

a fair game and they should keep it." He also boasted that he was backed by 100 men "who would stand behind him and see that they were protected." Judge Sehlbrede cautioned Smith that he couldn't afford to stand up for a gang of thieves. Whereupon Smith roared and pounded the table, "Well, Judge, declare me in with the thieves. I'll stay with them." Smith leaped to his feet and walked out.

One hour later, Sehlbrede again confronted Smith, but the results were the same. He would do nothing and "would stand by the boys." He did agree to surrender one of them, but conditioned this concession on the provision that certain men be named to guard him. Sehlbrede refused, and he called upon bystanders to ascertain whether, if he issued warrants, they would arrest Smith and his followers. They would. He explained that he wanted them alive if possible, but dead if necessary.²²

3. The Shoot-Out on the Juneau Company Wharf

Word now arrived that Soapy Smith had been seen running down State Street with a 45-caliber Winchester on his shoulder. Earlier he had told Denny Brogan, "Well, I am about due to kill a man and I have lived long enough myself anyway." When he left his quarters on 6th Avenue, it was 9 p.m. and he had been drinking heavily, something that he did rarely. He headed for the wharf of the Juneau Company, where the vigilantes were meeting.

Earlier in the day, the vigilantes had attempted to hold a meeting in Sperry's warehouse, but the proceedings had been thrown into confusion by friends of Smith who had infiltrated the gathering. The meeting had adjourned to reconvene in Sylvester Hall. By 9 p.m. the hall was so crowded that the vigilantes were again compelled to shift the meeting, this time to the end of the Juneau dock. Four men, including City Surveyor Frank Reid, were posted at the end of the ramp leading to the dock, while a chain across the entranceway stopped each newcomer until he could be challenged and identified.

Reid and Smith had had words earlier in the day. Smith had tried to provoke Reid, who was unarmed. Reid had then returned to his cabin, strapped on his revolver, and walked over to Smith's parlor. He had asked John Clancy as to Smith's whereabouts. But Smith did not appear.

22 Ibid.

Now the two men were about to confront one another again. Smith came up on the run and started swearing at Reid. He struck at Reid with his rifle, but the surveyor grabbed the barrel with one hand and drew his revolver with the other. Smith now jerked his piece away, striking Reid across the forearm, drawing blood. As Smith raised his rifle to club Reid a second time, the surveyor pulled the trigger, but his pistol misfired. Before he could squeeze again, Smith raised the barrel of his rifle and fired. Reid again grappled for the piece and fired twice, both balls striking Smith. One hit him in the right thigh and the other in the right chest.

Smith died instantly, while Reid collapsed. The crowd, which had followed Smith, rushed forward. Some of Smith's bodyguard had drawn their guns. One of Reid's companions, Jesse Murphy, snatched up Smith's Winchester and held them at bay. They stood for a moment and then, seeing on the dock the onrushing mob whose attention had been drawn by the shots, they fled.

As soon as it was found that Reid lived, several of the vigilantes raced for a stretcher. He was then carried toward his house two blocks away. By this time three doctors were on the scene, and Reid was carried into the *Occidental*. Here he was examined, and it was found that Smith's bullet had broken his pelvis and had punctured his abdomen.²³

4. The Vigilantes Move Against Smith's Gang

Within one-half hour of the shooting, Judge Sehlbrede had sworn Major Tanner in as deputy marshal. Tanner raced up Broadway, calling the townspeople to arms. "I advise all good citizens to go home and get their Winchesters!"

Two hundred citizens were organized into a company of vigilantes, and every house suspected of sheltering members of Smith's mob was searched. Guards were posted on the four wharves and along the bay. The railroaders were alerted and a watch established to prevent fugitives from escaping into Canada.²⁴

²³ Ibid. After Reid had been attended to, Judge Sehlbrede had Smith's body removed from the wharf and sent to *Peoples Undertaking Parlor*. At the inquest, it was determined that Smith had been shot to death by Reid in self defense. Ibid., July 12, 1898. Smith was the second man killed by Reid. In 1879 at Sweet Home, Oregon, Reid had killed James Simmons in a brawl. At a trial in Albany the next year, Reid pled self defense and was acquitted by the jury. Ibid., Aug. 3, 1898.

²⁴ Ibid., July 9, 1898.

By 6 p.m. on Saturday, July 9, the vigilantes had rounded up 14 of Smith's henchmen and placed them under guard in the log building that served as the city hall. Later that evening the man who had followed Soapy to the wharf was dragged from his bed and escorted to the city hall.²⁵ More arrests were made on Sunday, and soon there were so many prisoners that Captain Tanner had to requisition the upper story of the *Burkhard Hotel*. The exact number taken into custody was 30, but the names were kept secret.²⁶

Meanwhile, Deputy Marshal Taylor had been taken into custody. When arrested the marshal, a powerfully built man, was found hiding under a bed in his cabin. His weeping wife and two little girls begged the vigilantes not to take Taylor away, but he went without complaint.²⁷

It was 5 a.m. on Sunday, the 10th, before the vigilantes learned the whereabouts of Bowers, Tripp, and Slim Jim. A guard, returning from duty to his cabin on Herman and Shoup streets, saw from his window the figure of Dan Tripp. He rushed outside and arrested him. Tripp was talkative and told the committee that he and his two confederates had fled the town upon learning of Smith's death. They had gone up the waterworks trail and had spent the night in a cabin near Dewey Lake. Not having any food, other than berries, they had tried to return to Skagway on the night of the 9th, but had sighted patrols. Tripp had lagged, and that was his undoing.²⁸

A force of vigilantes moved out, determined to find Bowers and Slim Jim. That morning a woman saw them dodging through the trees near the cemetery. She sounded the alarm, and the duo were captured hiding in the underbrush nearby. It was 11 a.m. when the volunteers returned with their two prisoners. A huge crowd had assembled around the city hall, and there were shouts of "Hang them!"

²⁵ Ibid., July 11, 1898. As he reached the wharf, someone had shouted, "They have killed Soapy, and if you don't clear out quick they will kill you too!" Whereupon he had fled, and nothing more had been seen of him until his capture.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 362.

²⁸ *Daily Alaskan*, July 9, 1898. Tripp admitted his part in the robbery. It was he who had grabbed Stewart's gold, and he had taken it into Smith's parlor and had handed it to the bartender.

5. The Army Prevents a Lynching

Judge Sehlbrede kept his head. Hurrying to the scene, he asked the people to keep order, and had Tanner remove the prisoners to the *Burkhard Hotel*. The mob, however, refused to disperse. Slim Jim Foster panicked. He leaped out a second-story window, onto a shed roof, and landed in French Alley. Someone at the back of the building shot at him, but missed. The roar of the gun brought the mob running for the rear of the hotel as the cry was raised, "Bowers has escaped!" Slim Jim was quickly engulfed. The crowd roared, "Lynch him! Lynch him!" and a rope was produced.

Slim Jim begged for his life, as a man prepared to slip a noose over his head. Deputy Marshal Tanner and several of his men fought to protect the prisoner, but just as they were about to be overpowered, Capt. Richard T. Yeatman and a platoon of United States regulars came up on the double with fixed bayonets and the mob scattered.²⁹

On learning that Soapy Smith had been killed, Captain Yeatman had telephoned Commissioner Sehlbrede, at Skagway, and asked, "Can the civil authorities control the situation?" The reply was, "We have control of matters here. Do not need you. If we do, will let you know."³⁰

As he did not wish to interfere in matters which the civil authorities could control, Yeatman had remained at Dyea until 11 p.m., July 10, when he received an urgent telephone call from Commissioner Sehlbrede. Because of the ineffectiveness of Deputy Marshal Taylor a riot was expected. Captain Yeatman, fearing such a development, had placed a platoon on standby. Within a few minutes, he was en route to the dock with a 17-man detail. Disembarking at Skagway, Yeatman had reported to Judge Sehlbrede, "as the civil authorities did not wish to acknowledge their inability" to keep order.

Backed by the presence of the military, Judge Sehlbrede was able to prevail on the mob to disperse, thus winning Captain Yeatman's admiration.³¹

²⁹ Ibid. Slim Jim had escaped from a second-story, rear window, and was recaptured on Broadway.

³⁰ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 9, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

³¹ Yeatman to Adj. Gen., Dept. of the Columbia, July 19, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

6. The Vigilantes Make a Clean Sweep

The citizens' committee now proposed to bring the prisoners before Commissioner Sehlbrede. Those against whom there was "direct evidence" were to be sent to Sitka for trial, while those known to be disorderly characters would be banished from the community. The committee detailed to locate Stewart's gold had not completed its investigation, so Judge Sehlbrede determined to postpone the public hearing. But as a large crowd had assembled at the city hall, it was "deemed advisable to inform the citizens of what was being done and also to ask their further pleasure."

At this time the people were told that Captain Yeatman and his troops had returned to their barracks at Dyea, but before doing so the army officer had told Judge Sehlbrede that "the first act of violence would bring the soldiers back and result in the town being placed under martial law." Continuing, Sehlbrede assured the citizens that those found guilty would be punished.³²

On the afternoon of July 12, ten of those suspected of disorderly conduct and held in protective custody, including William A. Saportas of the *Daily Alaskan*, were escorted from the city hall to the wharf, where the steamer *Tartar* was tied up. A large crowd had assembled to see them off. It was surprising that in view of the deep feeling engendered, there was little jeering. To guard against escape, none but the prisoners, their guards, and the committee, were permitted on the wharf. After the men were photographed, they were escorted to the gangplank where Commissioner Sehlbrede stood. He asked each his name, and if he were "leaving on his own consent and free will." Nearly all expressed "a disinclination to go but preferred to do so rather than return and face the music!"³³ Soon after they had boarded, *Tartar* cast off and headed down the inlet, en route to Victoria, British Columbia.

Stewart's gold, with about \$600 dollars missing, was found in the bartender's trunk, and Judge Sehlbrede held court in the city hall to hear charges against ten of the prisoners, including Deputy Marshal Taylor, Triplett, Foster, and Bowers. The ex-lawman stood accused of wilful neglect of duty, while the others were charged

³² *Daily Alaskan*, July 10 & 11, 1898.

³³ *Ibid.*, July 12, 1898. The group banished from Skagway on the 12th included in addition to Saportas: J. Allen Hornsby, Nate Pollock, C. S. Hussey, Bradley O'Brien, Charles Bromberg, J. Swain, J. Leary, Frank Brown, and Henry Smith.

with crimes ranging from extortion and grand larceny to the possession of firearms. Sehlbrede ordered the accused taken to Sitka to stand trial. There they received prison sentences ranging from one to ten years.³⁴

The Committee appointed at the mass meeting on July 11 completed its investigation and published its report in the *Daily Alaskan* on the 15th. As they were unable "to find sufficient evidence to convict in all cases, the persons held in custody of the committee," they recommended that the prisoners be banished, "and all due precautions taken to protect them from personal violence." No evidence having been secured against two of the prisoners, they were released.

The Reverend Mr. Sinclair conducted the services over Soapy Smith's body. At *Peoples Undertaking Parlor*, he made a few remarks, taking as his text, "the way of the transgressor is hard," while the deceased's ex-mistress, and only mourner, stood in the doorway. Then with John Clancy, the executor of Smith's estate, Sinclair took the body out to the cemetery overlooking the Brackett Road and laid the remains to rest. Smith's assets at the time of his death totaled about \$500 in cash. All the rest of his ill-gotten gains he had squandered.³⁶

Although Reid underwent emergency surgery at 5 a.m. on the 12th, peritonitis had set in and he died on the 20th. His was the best attended funeral in the history of Skagway. An imposing monument was erected over his remains, a few yards from Smith's grave. Since July 1898, thousands of visitors have viewed and photographed the gravestones that, in the words of Pierre Berton, are the "twin symbols of Skagway's shame and Skagway's honor."³⁷

³⁴ Ibid., July 15, 1898; Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 364; Hartman to Brackett, July 27, 1898, Brackett Papers, 1855-1932, Minnesota Historical Society. The six others sent to Sitka for trial were: Harry Bronson, George Wilder, John Clear, Al White, J. D. Jackson, and Charles Butler.

³⁵ *Daily Alaskan*, July 15, 1898. The members of the Committee of Public Safety were: Battin, Burns, Butler, Brackett, Cornelius, Clark, Freeman, Graves, Remick, Sperry, Sylvester, Whitten, and Whiting.

³⁶ Berton, *Klondike Fever*, p. 364.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 365.

D. Comments and Recommendations

There are two sites in Skagway intimately associated with the Soapy Smith story. They are *Soapy Smith's Parlor*, and the Cemetery. *Soapy Smith's Parlor* has been moved from its historic site at 308 Sixth Avenue, and relocated to front on 2d Street. It is operated as a museum by Mr. and Mrs. George Rapuzzi, and it contains many interesting objects and documents associated with the Klondike Gold Rush and local history.

Among those buried in the Skagway Cemetery are Soapy Smith, and Frank Reid. Although they have been dead for 72 years, their monuments and their graves continue to receive heavy visitation.



XI. THE BRACKETT WAGON ROADA. Organization of the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co.1. George Brackett Meets Judge Acklen

George A. Brackett had lived a full and eventful life before being drawn to Alaska. In 1861 he had been in the Washington D. C. area and had escorted the body of President Abraham Lincoln's close personal friend, Col. Edward Baker, to the capital city in October, following his death at the battle of Ball's Bluff. In the early 1870s Brackett had served one term as mayor of Minneapolis, where he had lived since 1857. He had been employed by the Northern Pacific Railroad as an engineer, as it drove its rails across North Dakota.

The late summer of 1897 found Brackett visiting friends in Seattle. At the urging of Charles E. Peabody, whose Washington & Alaskan Steamship Co. owned *City of Seattle* and other ships on the Alaskan run, Brackett determined to visit Dyea and Skagway. While on Taiya Inlet, Brackett planned to see his son, James, who was in charge of *Shirley*, an old tub outfitted by Peabody to bring up supplies for the Klondikers.¹

Aboard *City of Seattle*, Brackett in mid-September met J. H. Acklen, a Nashville, Tennessee, lawyer and former congressman. As the ship sailed up the Inland Passage, the two men discussed the transportation problems faced by the stampeders. On their arrival in Alaska, they visited Dyea and Skagway, and Brackett, deciding that the Chilkoot Trail had more potential, entered on several lots in Dyea. Meanwhile, Acklen had satisfied himself that the White Pass Trail could be improved. Acklen, on learning that Norman Smith had made a survey, sought him out and told him that he contemplated organizing a company to open a wagon road from Skagway to Lake Bennett. Smith proposed they join forces.²

¹ George Brackett, unpublished "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, 1855-1932, MS Collection, Minnesota Historical Society. When he reached Skagway, Brackett found that his son had entered the slaughtering business. He had purchased a herd of cattle, landed them at Skagway, butchered them, and was selling meat to the adventurers.

² Acklen to Brackett, Jan. 28, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Acklen had represented a Louisiana district in Congress.

2. The Meeting in Kelly's Store

A meeting was held in Charles Kelly's store, and Acklen told of his plans. In the ensuing discussion, it was determined to organize a company to build a wagon road to be followed, if possible, by a railroad. A promoter's agreement was drafted and signed by the 14 in attendance. They agreed to participate in the organization of a company with capital stock of \$300,000, of which \$150,000 was to go to the promoters as charter members for their outlay of time and money. Acklen and Smith were authorized by their fellow promoters to proceed to Seattle and incorporate the company. In addition, Judge Acklen was to represent the group in Washington, where he claimed to have important contacts, to see that no legislation "inimical to the interest of the promoters was passed."³

Acklen, accompanied by Smith, left Skagway aboard *Rosalie* on October 2. They were to proceed to Seattle, organize a company, and purchase a bridge. Brackett was a passenger on the ship. When first informed by Acklen of their plans, Brackett expressed little interest. A number of hours were spent urging him to become one of the incorporators. They assured him that the company was backed by the most influential Skagway merchants. Finally, Brackett weakened and agreed to permit Acklen and Smith to use his name, but he refused to take any stock until he had an opportunity to return to Skagway and gauge the enterprise. Then, if he did not like what he found, they could replace him on the directorate.⁴

3. The Articles of Incorporation are Filed

In Seattle, the trio contacted John P. Hartman, a prominent lawyer, and on October 13, 1897, they filed articles of incorporation for the "Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Company," in accordance with the laws of the State of Washington. The objects for which the corporation was chartered were

³ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 15, 1898; Acklen to Brackett, Jan. 28, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. The promoters were: David Samson, F. H. Word, H. B. Runnells, F. H. Clayson, Charles E. Kelly, George E. Bradley, D. McL. Brown. J. H. Acklen, N. B. Smith, V. E. Schwab, John C. Greener, L. K. Hart, George Bullen, and Ben Williams.

⁴ Acklen to Brackett, Jan. 28, 1898; Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

to erect, construct, establish or acquire by purchase, hire, or otherwise, and carry out, maintain, improve, develop, manage, repair, work, control, and superintend any wagon roads, railroads, tram-ways, toll roads, toll-bridges, bridges, harbors, reservoirs, waterworks, quays, wharves, ware-houses, steamers, tugs, barges, machinery, locomotives, wagons, pack-trains.⁵

The corporation was empowered to enter into contracts or agreements to carry out these objects in any part of Alaska or the Canadian Northwestern Territories. It was authorized to issue \$500,000 in capital stock, consisting of 25,000 shares of preferred stock with a par value of ten dollars per share and a similar amount of common stock. The life of the corporation was to be 50 years, and it was to be managed by a five-man board of trustees.⁶

An agent for the incorporators, Joseph Muncaster, on October 14 subscribed to take 24,995 shares of preferred stock and 25,000 shares of common stock. Because of the anticipated heavy demands for stock, it was stipulated that no stock certificates were to be issued by Muncaster, unless paid for in cash. Any share subscribed by Muncaster and not paid for was to be disposed of by the Board of Trustees on such terms as they might direct.⁷

The Washington Secretary of State on October 19, after examining the documents filed by Hartman, granted a charter of incorporation to the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co.

B. Brackett Becomes General Superintendent

1. Acklen Bargains for a Bridge

Before sailing from Skagway on October 2, Judge Acklen had been assured by his fellow promoters that if he could secure a steel bridge to span the East Fork, they would subscribe between \$8,000

⁵ "Articles of Incorporation, Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co.," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁶ Ibid. A set of by-laws consisting of 17 articles was drafted, and a copy filed with the charter of incorporation. "By Laws of Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co.," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷ Muncaster to Board of Trustees, Oct. 14, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Hartman, Brackett, and Smith each purchased one share of preferred stock.

and \$10,000. Prior to returning to his home in Nashville to begin raising money for the venture, Judge Acklen traveled to Portland, Oregon, to discuss this problem with C. A. Bullen of the Bullen Bridge Co. Bullen told Acklen that he had recently erected a 250-foot steel bridge at Nampa, Idaho, which could be dismantled and shipped to Alaska.⁸

After his visit with Bullen and a discussion with shipping interests, Acklen estimated that it would cost \$18,000 to secure the bridge and get it to Alaska. This was a problem because the trustees had no money. To secure the bridge Bullen was allowed to become one of the promoters. In approving this action and the expenditure of funds for transportation, the trustees were in accord that it was vital "to complete the road . . . from Skaguay to the Box canon, a distance of six and one half miles, and build the first bridge as soon as possible." Moreover, the bridge must be substantial to permit its subsequent use by the projected narrow gauge railroad.⁹

Bullen, satisfied that he had made a bargain, dispatched a crew to Idaho to dismantle the bridge and ship it to the west coast. It would be mid-November, at the earliest, before the bridge reached Portland and was loaded aboard the steamer *Elder*. In the meantime, he placed his best foreman and several men on standby for duty in Alaska.¹⁰ Before returning to Alaska to take charge of operations, Brackett made arrangements with Bullen to ship the bridge from Seattle aboard the steamer *Shirley*.¹¹

2. Brackett Has a Rude Awakening

In accordance with their understanding, Brackett traveled back to Skagway to take charge of construction of the wagon road across White Pass, while Judge Acklen entrained for Nashville to raise

⁸ Acklen to Brackett, Oct. 17, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁹ Acklen to Brackett, Oct. 26, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁰ Bullen to Brackett, Oct. 27, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹¹ Bullen to Brackett, Nov. 4, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. *Shirley* was owned by Charles Peabody's Washington & Alaska Steamship Co.

money and to secure congressional support for the project. Brackett disembarked at Skagway on November 6 and, much to his disappointment, found matters at a standstill. The only work accomplished during the previous month was the construction of a 50-man bunkhouse at the East Fork crossing, and a start on a second at the crossing of the Skagway, where White Pass City was to spring up. A meeting was held that evening with the promoters, and plans made to push construction of the road. Engineer Smith with a ten-man crew moved out to locate the right-of-way, while Superintendent D. McL. Brown prepared to follow with 20 men and begin erecting trestles.¹²

The failure to push the work did not plague Brackett as much as other aspects of the project. At the meeting, he had found "a great deal of boom enterprise--all stock and no money." He explained to the promoters that he did not have much money and could not "assent to take hold of the enterprise and issue stocks and bonds," until he could demonstrate to prospective investors that the wagon road was an asset. Their spokesman assured Brackett that they could sell \$100,000 in stock at once. David Samson, the Treasurer, waxed enthusiastic and said his brother-in-law in San Francisco would buy the entire subscription. Brackett wanted to see money, not listen to talk. To get the project started, he proposed that each of the promoters ante up an equal amount. He would make a similar contribution, and become one of the promoters with a sixteenth interest in the corporation. The promoters, seeing that Brackett would not take charge of the enterprise on their terms, concluded at a meeting the next evening to accept his alternative. Brackett agreed, and it was voted to assess each of the 16 promoters \$100 to enable work to begin immediately, and to raise \$125,000 in operating capital through the sale of stock. Before the meeting adjourned, Brackett was named general superintendent and general manager of the company at a salary of \$500 per month.¹³

¹² Brackett to Acklen, Nov. 7, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. David Samson, the Treasurer, proposed to build an office for the company for \$500; he to advance the money for the structure, and to give the company a "perpetual lease of the same for" one dollar.

¹³ Brackett to Acklen, Nov. 12, 1897; "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society; W. A. Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, p. 648. Chief Engineer Smith was to be paid \$300 a month; Superintendent Brown \$250; and Secretary-Treasurer Samson \$150.

3. Construction Begins

Work was started under Brackett's supervision on November 8, 1897. At this time, as only four or five of the promoters had paid their assessment, the only capital available to Brackett was \$3,500 in his personal account. The next day, the 9th, he sent a crew to the summit of White Pass to reconnoiter the route Smith had surveyed. It was now ascertained that Smith's survey was a fraud. When confronted by Brackett, Smith explained that he and two associates had run a line to Lake Bennett, with a pocket compass. It had taken them five days. The sources for Smith's map were what they saw on their trip, a Canadian map, and "some good guessing as to the character of the country."¹⁴

Undaunted, Brackett made a personal reconnaissance and staked out an alignment. By November 12 he was satisfied that a road was feasible, and he had 75 men on the payroll. The rock work proved easier than anticipated, and Brackett had the men begin at several points, opening up several hundred feet of roadway at each to enable him to estimate costs. Brown made necessary measurements for the East Fork bridge that Bullen was shipping.¹⁵

When the first pay day arrived, Brackett forwarded the payroll to Treasurer Samson. When the men returned to work in the morning, he found that Samson had paid them with checks and each man was required to cash his voucher at Samson's Hotel. Samson had correctly anticipated that when the checks were cashed most of the money would be spent at his place of business for whiskey and entertainment. Brackett was shocked. He notified Samson that he did not do business in this manner, and announced that at "the next pay day the men must be paid in cash and paid on the work" or he would resign.

The second payroll was met. But before another pay was due, President T. M. Word came to Brackett and explained that there was no money in the treasury. Word had accordingly decided to send Treasurer Samson to Seattle and San Francisco with \$125,000

¹⁴ Brackett to Hartman, Dec. 11, 1897; "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society; Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, pp. 648-649. Smith, when pressed, was unable to show Brackett a single stake or give him a single elevation.

¹⁵ Brackett to Acklen, Nov. 12, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

of "blank stock to be filled out as he saw fit and to whom, agreeing to return \$50,000 in gold in the next two or three weeks." When he sailed for Seattle, Samson took with him the small amount in the treasury to pay his expenses. Brackett was opposed to this action and sent Brown to check on Samson's activities.¹⁶

C. Financial Troubles Plague the Company

1. Judge Acklen Reports Failure

While Brackett was laying out a road, turning construction crews to, struggling with finances, and battling with the promoters, Judge Acklen was having little success in interesting his friends and associates in investing in the enterprise. When he met with his associates back in Nashville, Acklen explained to them that the wagon road, unlike the projected aerial tramways across Chilkoot Pass, would be a financial success and a good investment. His efforts to raise money in Middle Tennessee were unsuccessful, because: (a) the recent Nashville Exposition had absorbed too much of their time, money, and attention; (b) some rascal had spread the word that Smith's survey was not to be relied upon; (c) the grade was too steep for a railroad; and (d) the habitual conservatism of Tennessee investors.¹⁷

C. H. Hagen, whom Acklen had sent to contact New York City financial interests, found scant enthusiasm for the proposal to build a wagon road to be followed by a narrow gauge railroad across White Pass. Acklen, when he relayed this news to Brackett, confessed that his confidence had been shaken, and that he had little hope of raising money for a railroad. He continued to believe, however, that the wagon road could be built, and if successful they could plow the profits back into the enterprise and enter the railroad business.

Before Congress convened in December, he planned to visit Washington

to impress upon the Federal authorities the importance of encouraging our enterprise by securing us in our right of way, from the standpoint of affording the readiest access to Dawson City so as to relieve the wants to Americans who may suffer there during the coming spring from the scarcity of provisions.¹⁸

¹⁶ Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁷ Acklen to Brackett, Nov. 23, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

¹⁸ Acklen to Brackett, Nov. 10, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota His-

When Acklen traveled to Washington, he would give first priority to the wagon road franchise, as the ground occupied by its right-of-way would block any railroad, unless its promoters negotiated with the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co.¹⁹

2. Brown's Telegram Sparks a Crisis

By the fourth week of November, several members of the New York financial community had contacted Hagen. They indicated they were prepared to advance money for a narrow gauge railroad, provided a responsible contractor would agree to build the road "for a definite sum of money, whatever it may cost within reason, and to agree to have it completed within a definite time."²⁰

Just as his hopes were being buoyed up by this news, Judge Acklen received word that the salaries voted by the promoters for management totaled \$1,200 a month. Prospective investors considered this sum extravagant. Acklen believed it useless for him to approach investors and ask them to take stock in a \$500,000 corporation to build a railroad, when \$150,000 of stock had been absorbed by the promoters, and the company was carrying a salary account of \$14,400 per annum.²¹

Superintendent Brown reached Seattle ahead of Treasurer Samson, and on November 28 he telegraphed Judge Acklen, "SMITH MADE NO SURVEY STOP ADMITS THAT NOW STOP DOES NOT EVEN KNOW THE ROUTE."²² Acklen was dumbfounded by this information, because one of the conditions precedent to the construction of a railroad was a detailed survey with profiles and gradients. Acklen accordingly forwarded this information to Hagen to pass on to the capitalists who had expressed interest in the venture.²³

torical Society. Stories that there would be food shortages and possible starvation in the Klondike, during the winter of 1897-1898, were being spread by the newspapers. In December, Congress authorized the Yukon Relief Expedition.

¹⁹ Brackett to Acklen, Nov. 12, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁰ Acklen to Brackett, Nov. 24, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Acklen to Brackett, Nov. 29, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²³ Ibid.

3. Samson's Perfidy

When Treasurer Samson landed at Seattle on Sunday, November 29, he was enraged to learn of Brown's actions. After bawling him out, he compelled Brown to telegraph Acklen that Samson had brought with him to Seattle assurances of the railroad's feasibility. On the night of the 29th, Samson met with Charles Peabody, D. McL. Brown, and Joseph T. Conforth. The latter was a freighter with 42 years experience in the Colorado Rockies, formidable political connections, and interested in establishing a company to haul between Skagway and Lake Bennett. When they adjourned, Samson wired Acklen:

ENTIRE ROUTE FEASIBLE FOR RAILWAY IF DESIRED STOP MAIL
YOU BLUEPRINT TOMORROW STOP AM HERE TO RAISE MONEY STOP
URGENTLY NEEDED STOP BRACKETT WORD AND MYSELF FURNISHED
FUNDS TO DATE STOP WIRE ME HERE BUTLER HOTEL AS MUCH MONEY
AS POSSIBLE STOP PAYROLL AVERAGES \$500 DAILY NOW STOP.²⁴

After waiting 36 hours and receiving no reply from Acklen, Samson determined to purge the Judge and his faction. He was critical of Acklen for not pocketing the Brown telegram. Late on December 2 Samson received a message from Nashville, informing him that Judge Acklen "was very sick. Overwork and worry from present state of your company the cause."²⁵

Samson, who was an unmitigated rascal, during the day had called on President Samuel H. Graves of the Washington National Bank. When he met with the other members of the Board of Trustees that night, Samson reported that Graves had told him, "You get rid of the Acklen combination and I will help you out to complete your road." He considered this "the best news yet."²⁶

The Board of Trustees of the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co. accordingly met on December 4, 1897, in the Burke Building, and rescinded the resolution of October 30 ordering the

²⁴ Samson to Brackett, Nov. 30, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁵ Samson to Brackett, Dec. 2, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁶ Ibid.

president and secretary to deliver to Judge Acklen the common stock of the corporation.²⁷ The corporation could now go "with clean hands and get all the money we want," boasted Samson.²⁸

Following this triumph, Samson telegraphed Acklen that he considered the forwarding of the blueprints and profiles, as promised in his telegram of the 30th, inconsequential. Acklen and his friends, however, did not consider his dereliction "inconsequential." They considered that a "pretty good word to use on those, on whom he was calling for thousands of dollars on the faith of his statements of a perfect survey." Judge Acklen also questioned Brackett's failure to forward data as to whether the Smith survey was bogus. All that he wanted was facts, nothing more.²⁹

When Samson reported the actions of the Board of Trustees to Brackett, in a letter dated December 9, he described Acklen "as a wrecker of whatever he undertakes, and an all around fraud; a man without means, and a man with a very scaley reputation."³⁰

Samson, having executed his coup, now returned to the Washington National Bank, certain that he could secure the necessary backing for the road from President Graves. With a "great flourish of trumpets," he deposited the \$125,000 in stock, and told Graves that it would be cashed immediately by his brother-in-law. Meanwhile, Brown had seen Graves and had explained to him that the stock was to be "cashed only in \$10,000 blocks and to be done through the bank, the bank to forward the money" to Brackett in Skagway.

This made Graves suspicious, and he turned Samson down, explaining to him:

Your case is very weak . . . I know positively that no survey was made of the entire route; that your engineer

²⁷ Meeting of the Board of Trustees, Dec. 4, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. On November 8 Muncaster had transferred to John Hartman the stock he held in the corporation.

²⁸ Samson to Brackett, Dec. 4, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

²⁹ Acklen to Brackett, Dec. 9, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³⁰ Samson to Brackett, Dec. 9, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

don't even know the route; that your engineer Smith is a man who cannot be relied upon, nor would I accept a survey from him, as everything depends upon a proper magnetic survey, and you cannot furnish it. I know perfectly well that none of you have ever been over the route any further than Porcupine Hill.³¹

Samson blamed Brown for leaking this information to the banker, because he knew nothing about profiles, surveys, Smith, and Porcupine Hill.³² Seeing that his game was up, Samson, taking with him the \$800 in the treasury, left for the Philippines by way of San Francisco. This was the last Brackett heard of the scoundrel.³³

D. Brackett Pushes Construction

1. Brackett Takes Over the Corporation

Brackett, prior to receipt of news of Samson's perfidy, had approved the action the Trustees had taken against the Acklen interests, because it would "put us on a better financial basis," and rid them of those that wanted something for nothing. When no money had been forthcoming from Judge Acklen, Brackett had become disenchanted with his associate. His disillusionment was complete, when he learned that Acklen, on receiving his notice of the special assessment, had forwarded the "nominal sum of \$400 by draft." But, on learning of the fraudulent Smith survey, he had forwarded a special delivery letter to the postmaster ordering him to return his letter and draft.³⁴

Writing Attorney Hartman on December 11, Brackett complained that he was unable to understand the actions of Judge Acklen or Samson's failure to forward funds. Since his return to Skagway, it had become apparent that there was "some dead timber in our

³¹ Ibid.; Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³² Samson to Brackett, Dec. 9, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³³ Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Samson had raised the \$800 from the Seattle investors.

³⁴ Brackett, "Autobiography"; Brackett to Hartman, Dec. 11, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

organization that must be removed." These men were unwilling to risk any money, "or give to us something in place that shall" strengthen the organization. While the directors were good men, several of the promoters seemed "anxious to get a very large amount of stock for a nominal contribution."

At the moment, he had 200 men to feed, and no money. Just as the situation looked hopeless, a windfall was received when a Juneau merchant extended him \$1,200 credit.

An eternal optimist, Brackett had assured his creditors that if the "Lord spared him" another 30 days the wagon road would be open to the Summit. This would involve the construction of 14 miles of road to cost \$125,000.³⁵

When he discussed the situation with the Skagway promoters, they gave him little encouragement and no assistance. Their only assets, they protested, were Smith's map and profile and five miners' claims which they had valued at \$150,000. President T. M. Word now demanded that Brackett refund the money he had invested in the corporation or he would secure a court order and stop work. To get rid of Word, Brackett refunded his money from his own pocket and accepted his resignation.³⁶ Brackett now headed the corporation in name as well as fact.

2. Brackett Begins to Make Headway

In the meantime, Brackett had increased his labor force. He felt better about the project when the experienced freighter Joseph T. Conforth reconnoitered the White Pass Trail to the Summit, and reported that he had never, in 42 years in the Colorado Rockies, seen a worse trail. He, however, agreed that Engineer Smith had selected a feasible route for a wagon road and that Brackett would encounter no insurmountable construction problems.

Four miles of roadway up the alluvial Skagway Valley had been opened for traffic by November 23, and Brackett had driven a heavily-loaded wagon over it. Four more 18 x 24-foot bunkhouses, one of them at the Summit, had been finished. Fifty more construction hands had been added to the payroll.³⁷

³⁵ Brackett to Hartman, Dec. 11, 1897, and Brackett to Davis, Nov. 23, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³⁶ Brackett to Acklen, Dec. 29, 1897; Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³⁷ Brackett to Davis, Nov. 23, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

By mid-December the first eight miles of roadway were nearly completed. With seven camps and more than 200 employees, hopes were high that the road would be completed to the Summit by February 1, 1898. So far the weather had been favorable, with no zero days and little snow.³⁸

When Bullen's bridge to be placed across East Fork was landed at Skagway from *Shirley*, Brackett was horrified to discover that it would not serve its intended purpose. He did not panic and placed an order for another bridge. One of his crews, in the meantime, had spanned Skagway River below the Cut-off with a truss bridge built of timber purchased from Captain Moore's sawmill.

As to be expected, all professions and trades were represented in Brackett's work camps. "There was a 'tech' boy from Boston and Worcester, and the Harvard and Yale men, the lawyer, the druggist, men whose ambition it was to reach the gold fields--but who could not until the road was opened up--and who were willing to dig." Unskilled labor was paid \$2.50 a day; the skilled rock blasters \$3; and carpenters \$3.50. Some of the men were more interested in opening up the country than in their wages; but others were "anxious of the dollars, demanding big wages, and as money became stringent the higher the wages demanded." Costs skyrocketed. To get supplies from Skagway to the advance camps, near the Summit, cost Brackett 20 cents a pound. Tents, tools, and provisions were hauled up the trail to White Pass City, because it had been determined to push construction there and work back toward tidewater. Four hundred tons of dynamite were needed to blast a route.³⁹

3. Good Salesmanship Pays Off

By December 20, 1897, Brackett was broke, and wages for his work force, which had been increased to 250, were a week in arrears. Brackett took passage on *Rosalie* for Seattle. He hoped that he would be able to secure financial backing in that city from Peabody and his friends.⁴⁰

³⁸ Brackett to Davis, Dec. 17, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

³⁹ Brackett, "Autobiography"; Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, p. 652.

⁴⁰ Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*,

When he landed at Seattle on the day after Christmas, Brackett called on Peabody and the Seattle business community. He told them, undoubtedly with tongue in cheek, that nine miles of road had been opened from tidewater, and the "other eight miles is so thoroughly in hand that 225 men with the necessary teams, working in four sections will have it completed by January 15, 1898." When finished, the road would be of such "a character that a double horse team under ordinary conditions would be able to pull one ton of freight from Skagway to Lake Bennett and return in four days."⁴¹

Continuing, he explained that at every watercourse his people had erected substantial bridges, "using the most substantial rock for abutments and covering every foot of marsh . . . with corduroy of heavy timbers which will require a century of wear and tear to destroy."

In the lower box canyon his men had encountered "a solid rock foundation" along which boulders 20 feet high and 20 feet in diameter were not uncommon. This had been blasted out of the way with powder. The boulders had been reduced to crushed rock to macadamize his wagon road.⁴²

Despite the glowing picture sketched by Brackett, no money, except a small sum advanced by his friend Peabody, was forthcoming from the Seattle business community. Changing his tactics, Brackett chided them for employing advertisements encouraging people to go to the Klondike and then doing nothing to make the trip easier for them, once they had landed at the head of Taiya Inlet. "It was cruel," he argued, "to take man's money, put him aboard a steamer, and not be willing to contribute a dollar to make successful his trip." He was disgusted by people who patted him on the back and said, "You're a good fellow with wonderful enterprise," and were afraid to risk a dollar.⁴³

April 1900, p. 644; Brackett, "Autobiography"; Brackett to Acklen, Dec. 29, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Severe storms were encountered by *Rosalie* as she steamed down the Inland Passage. South of Wrangell, Brackett hoped to effect a transfer to *City of Seattle*, a larger and faster ship, but because of heavy seas this was impossible. On the night before *Rosalie* put into Simpson to take on coal, she came close to foundering. The trip which usually required three days took six.

⁴¹ *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Dec. 27, 1897.

⁴² *Ibid.* Nine toll stations, 20 by 24-foot, to be used as depots and hotels for the convenience of the traveler had been erected.

⁴³ Brackett, "Autobiography," Bracket Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

The situation looked terribly bleak, when his friends, Mr. and Mrs. Macauley of Victoria, mortgaged their home and loaned him \$5,000 without security. This buoyed up his morale. As he was forwarding this money to his son in Skagway to enable him to meet the payroll, Mr. Blethen of the *Times* came to him with a telegram signed by James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railroad. Hill had wired Brackett to come see him in St. Paul.

Brackett boarded the next through train for the Twin Cities. After visiting several friends in Minneapolis, which he still called home, and failing to receive any encouragement, he called on Mr. Hill. Prior to his meeting with Hill, he had contacted Capt. John Martin, a representative of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Martin had told Brackett that he believed his corporation might be of some financial assistance. In his discussion with Hill, Brackett pointed out that the construction of his road across the Coast Mountains would be of benefit to the three great railroads over which the adventurers reached the Puget Sound cities. Hill offered to accompany Brackett to see the Northern Pacific officials. As they walked over to see La Mont of the Northern Pacific, Brackett remarked that the three railroads should subscribe \$60,000 toward the construction of his road.

After Hill had explained the purpose of the visit, La Mont answered:

You are the Great Northern; I am a mere representative of this end of the Northern Pacific and must report everything to the Finance Board in New York. They give me certain sums of money for specific purposes. I cannot divert that money. I wish I could; I would be glad to aid the enterprise; but I cannot.⁴⁴

As they returned to Hill's office, Brackett was glum. Replacing his papers in his briefcase, he thanked Hill for his kindness, and remarked that now he "must go back and meet my men without money and drop the enterprise." Hill then invited him to stop by and chat after lunch. When Brackett returned, Hill handed him a check for \$15,000.

"I have no security," Brackett replied.

"I want none," Hill answered, "Leave your note with Mr. Sawyer and go back and let this go as far as it will towards paying your help."⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Back in Minneapolis that afternoon, Brackett called on his attorney, Col. William S. King, and sent him to Montreal, Canada, to see Sir William C. Van Horne, a member of the Board of Directors of the Canadian Pacific Railway and Vice-President of the Pacific Postal Telegraph-Cable Co. King's mission was successful. Sir William and two of his friends agreed to invest \$5,000 each in the wagon road.⁴⁶

His trip a success, Brackett returned to Seattle in the second week of January. Passage was booked aboard *City of Seattle*, and when he hurried to the dock, he encountered a mob of adventurers clamoring for tickets. Only one-third of those struggling for space could be accommodated, and when she sailed the steamer was heavily laden with freight and carried 650 passengers, a number considerably in excess of safety standards. Aboard the *City* was Soapy Smith and a number of his confederates.⁴⁷

E. The Opening of the Road to White Pass City

1. Soapy Smith Gives Brackett an Assist

On his return to Skagway in mid-January, Brackett increased his labor force. Trouble developed as a trio of "outlaws took possession" of a section of the road, claiming they had located a mineral claim. When he called on the authorities, they said they could do nothing. Brackett toyed with the idea of turning out a crew and employing force to remove the trespassers and their cabin. But before he could take precipitant action, Soapy Smith came to his aid. Smith rode out the road with his "Indians," as he called them, and called on the "outlaws." He told them "they ought to be ashamed of themselves; that the opening up of that highway was being done at a great expense and that without it none of them could have any money or get through the country."

⁴⁶ Van Horne to Brackett, Jan. 7, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁴⁷ Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. In passing through Queen Charlotte Sound heavy gales were encountered. A man who had stowed away in Soapy Smith's cabin came on deck and was killed when struck in the head by a lamp torn loose from the masthead. A lawyer friend of the deceased made a great deal of parade about a lawsuit against the Washington & Alaskan Steamship Co. Soapy Smith, who knew of Brackett's friendship with Peabody, intervened and announced that the deceased was a stowaway, had paid no fare, and had met death through his own fault. The talk of a suit was dropped.

"Will you get off the highway?" Smith asked.

"No!" they replied.

"I will give you so many hours to get off the road or I will come up with my Indians and throw your whole gang into Skagway River."

The trespassers, not wanting to test Smith, were gone the next morning.⁴⁸

Several days later was pay day on the Brackett Road. A number of men cashed and squandered their checks in Soapy Smith's *Parlor* on Sixth Avenue. Brackett felt sorry for those with families, who, through their weakness for games of chance, had lost their money. He therefore determined to confront Smith. When he walked into Smith's *Parlor* on Sixth Avenue, Brackett told him:

You have done me a favor in opening the road, for which I thank you; but for your robbing honest men and doing as you do I condemn you. So far as the outside public is concerned, I can say nothing; so far as my men are concerned, you must refund their money or I shall take means to get it. I have some 400 men and if I can't get it by fair means I shall take it by force. You let my men alone and I will leave the officers to deal with you.

Smith refunded the money. Subsequently, Brackett's employees were not molested unless they voluntarily entered the gambling dens and lost their pay. If this were the case, the men had no complaint.⁴⁹

2. Brackett Secures a Franchise from the City

Brackett, in the meantime, had pressured the Skagway Town Council into granting his company a franchise to occupy Main [Runnells] Street with a narrow gauge steam road. A gang was put to work getting "ready for the ironwork and engines" to be delivered by mid-February. To gain this concession, Brackett promised to have his wagon road open to the Summit by February 10. From there to Lake Bennett, the snow road would be serviceable until May 1, by which time he boasted a wagon road would be opened to that point. Supplies could then be hauled by double-teamed wagons from the terminus of the narrow gauge railroad to Lake Bennett, "at a cost so low that the transporta-

⁴⁸ Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

tion of goods" from tidewater to the head of navigation "will be an ordinary commercial proposition."⁵⁰

A shortage of funds and the construction of the White Pass & Yukon Route kept Brackett from following up on his plan to open and operate a railway along Main Street. A failure to secure a franchise from the Canadian government to collect tolls on a road between the Summit and Lake Bennett compelled Brackett to likewise forego that project. And despite Brackett's confident predictions no double-teamed wagon ever passed beyond White Pass City.

3. Traffic Picks Up on the White Pass Trail

With the coming of winter, Skagway River froze over and became an ideal highway. A trail which was "last summer a mockery" became popular. Brackett and his people watched as freighters, packers, and stampeders passed. Many cheechakos pulled their own sleds; some employed horses; and others had developed into full fledged bull-punchers. Men pulling their own Yukon sleds were capable of handling from 200 to 400 pounds. Those using animals hitched several sleds in tandem. Whenever a bad place was reached, the sleds were uncoupled and one taken across at a time.

Except on several occasions, when a wild storm raged, White Pass had remained open. The only fatality had been Daniel Lopez, and he foolishly started out alone, with little food and wearing clothing better suited for a summer's afternoon walk.⁵¹

Traffic on the trail had important repercussions on Brackett's operations. To capitalize on this situation, he determined not to open a wagon road from White Pass City to the Summit. His men would widen and improve the trail up the box canyon for use by packtrains. Although Congress had not given him authority to collect a toll over his road, he would begin doing so as soon as the trail up the upper box canyon had been improved. Orders were given to push the construction of the bridge across East Fork.

In discussing plans with his friends on February 7, Brackett was confident that his road would be open to traffic no later than the 15th. He would then begin collecting tolls, although legislation granting him a franchise was bogged down in Congress. Completed

⁵⁰ *The Morning Alaskan*, Feb. 1, 1898. The Main Street tramway would also provide Brackett with an access to the wharves.

⁵¹ *Dyea Trail*, Jan. 19, 1898; *The Morning Alaskan*, Feb. 1, 1898.

sections of the road were already in use, and "a continuous line of teams passing over." A packer could leave Skagway with 2,500 pounds and travel the ice-covered Skagway River to the East Fork. One horse could pull five Yukon sleds through the lower box canyon to White City, where they entered Brackett's Trail to the Summit.⁵²

4. Sergeant Yunera's Reconnaissance

In the first week of March, although the East Fork bridge had not been completed, Brackett began collecting tolls. This caused a storm of protest by freighters and packers. One who traveled the Brackett Road at this time was Sergt. William Yunera of the 8th U. S. Cavalry. He had been sent by Major Rucker of the Yukon Relief Expedition to reconnoiter the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails. After hiking and mapping the Chilkoot Trail to Lake Bennett, Yunera on March 5, 1898, retraced his route to the foot of Lake Lindeman, where he turned into the White Pass Trail. For the first eight miles the trail was very rough, leading across ledges of ice and rocks, with steep descents and ascents. It was a blazed trail passing through pine-clad hills. Yunera spent the night of the 5th at Log Cabin. Nearby were a number of cabins erected by loggers getting out timber for the construction of boats on Lakes Bennett and Lindeman.⁵³

On the 6th the sergeant pushed on, the trail crossing an ice-covered chain of narrow lakes. The trail, except when passing through the gorge between Summit and Bernard lakes, was excellent. After camping at the Summit, Yunera started for Skagway. Near the Summit the trail "was fairly good being smothered by a thick layer of snow." The closer to tidewater he got, the worse it became. There were several steep descents near the head of the canyon, the drop in the first two miles being 800 feet. As the ground was frozen no bogs were encountered, but thousands of boulders were strewn about. Dead horses were numerous. He counted 11, but he was told that about 2,000 were buried by the snow. Large numbers of travelers were encountered on the trail. The majority of the outfits and supplies, unlike on the Chilkoot Trail, were transported on sleds pulled by horses, mules, oxen, dogs, and goats. The animals seemed "overworked and greatly abused," as the freighters and packers sought to take advantage of the good hauling provided by the ice and snow.⁵⁴

⁵² King to Hartman, Feb. 4, 1898, and Brackett to Van Horne, Feb. 7, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵³ Yunera to Rucker, March 21, 1898, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

On March 13 Sergeant Yunera, having reported to Major Rucker, headed back up the White Pass Trail to reconnoiter the Too-Chi Trail and another recently opened from Log Cabin to the head of Lake Lindeman. As he walked northward, pulling his sled, he found that in the past seven days travel conditions had deteriorated. The snow in the lower box canyon had melted, and except near the pass, sleds could not be used.

Packers and freighters were up in arms, because of a toll of two cents a pound being demanded by Brackett. They told Yunera that the company had no right to collect a toll, because it lacked congressional authority. The sergeant had observed that the wagon road, on leaving Skagway, paralleled the east bank of Skagway River as far as the East Fork. A steep grade carried it up Rocky Point, and after gaining the high ground--on the mountain side 450 feet above the river--it descended 200 feet "and then, alternately rising and falling gains the higher levels along the mountain side." Much blasting and trestling had been done by Brackett's people, and fears were voiced by those traveling the trail that at any moment they would be buried beneath a rock slide. While en route to the Summit, Yunera had passed five wagons en route up the canyon. At White Pass City, where the road ended, the canyon narrowed, and it was assumed that if the road was extended to the Summit, it would have to be built over the pack trail.⁵⁵

Sergeant Yunera saw that the recently opened trail from Log Cabin to the head of Lake Lindeman was merely a footpath over which no packing was done. The Too-Chi trail, however, was good. Many people were using this trail to reach Lake Tagish, by way of Windy Arm. Timber was plentiful along the trail, and a sawmill was about to begin operating at the lower end of Lake Too-Chi.⁵⁶

When he submitted his report to Major Rucker, Sergeant Yunera pointed out that if Brackett completed his road, existing conditions of travel would be "changed and the question of transportation . . . much simplified." The projects still needing attention by Brackett were the completion of the East Fork bridge and the extension of the wagon road from White Pass City to the Summit. To accomplish the latter would require much labor and money.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

5. The Toll Gate War

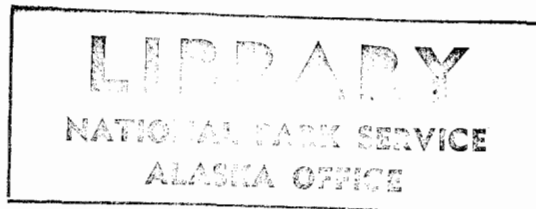
The hard-boiled freighters and packers, along with many adventurers, were not about to be intimidated by Brackett. Word was broadcast that Congress had not given him any authority to collect a toll. Toll gates were broken down and several collectors and guards roughed up. Brackett called on Colonel Anderson--whose battalion of the 14th U. S. Infantry had recently arrived on Taiya Inlet to show the flag and keep order--to protect his property. Colonel Anderson, knowing that Congress had not given Brackett a franchise and that the road had not been completed to the Summit, refused to intervene. Undaunted, Brackett boarded the next ship en route to Seattle. On his arrival he telegraphed Colonel King, an old friend and comrade of Secretary of War Alger. King, as Brackett's Washington lobbyist, called at the War Department, and explained that a rowdy element had seized the wagon road and had "placed the country in a state of terror."

After listening to Colonel King, Secretary Alger telegraphed his commander of the Department of the Columbia, Brig. Gen. Henry C. Merriam, to have Colonel Anderson "take proper steps for the protection of persons and property." Having secured a copy of the Secretary's telegram, Brackett prepared to return to Skagway. Prior to boarding *City of Seattle*, he told the press that he "intended to erect a toll gate, and backed by government troops, he thought he would have no difficulty collecting tolls from everybody who passed over his road."⁵⁸

Backed by the War Department order, Brackett called on Colonel Anderson for assistance, and resumed collecting tolls. News that the army had been placed on stand-by to assist Brackett was a sufficient deterrent to prevent a mass confrontation. A company agent, reinforced by 30 hard-fisted workmen, was positioned at the toll gate at the entrance to the box canyon above White Pass City. When the packers opened a cut-off bypassing the agent, the agent turned his men out and extended the gate to close the narrows. Two packers who ignored the toll gates were arrested, brought before Commissioner Ostrander in Juneau, and fined for trespassing.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Undated Clipping, "Alaska Scrapbook," Vol. 7, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁵⁹ Brackett to Van Horne, April 15, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society; Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, pp. 652-653; *The Dyea Trail*, April 16, 1898; Emerson, "The Engineer and the Road to the Gold Fields," *The Engineering Magazine*, 17, pp. 764-765.



By mid-April the bridge spanning East Fork had been completed. The long delay in opening the bridge to traffic was attributed by Brackett to the loss of vital parts in the foundering of the ship *Canada* in February. To celebrate the opening of the bridge, 30 four-horse teams, each pulling a ton to 2,500 pounds of freight, left Skagway for White Pass City. On the same day from 200 to 300 packhorses passed the toll gate, south of the bridge.⁶⁰

The road at this time was yielding a modest return, with collections averaging \$1,000 to \$1,500 per day. This was less than Brackett had hoped, and he attributed it to resistance to paying the toll. Many packers refused to concede that Brackett had made sufficient improvements to the trail between White Pass City and the Summit to warrant any payment for its use. Brackett, on his part, attributed the difficulties to a mistake on his part in permitting the public "free use of this trail for so long that they believed they owned it."

To quiet his critics, Brackett promised that as soon as the snow melted, he would turn the trail into a road. But in private, he confided that the packers might prefer to handle all freight above White Pass City. If this were the case, he could renege on his promise to extend his wagon road to the Summit.⁶¹

6. Brackett Wars with Backers of the Chilkoot Trail

To advertise his road and boost revenue, Brackett secured statements from two well-known freighters and a businessman endorsing his road and questioning the claims made by backers of the Chilkoot Trail. Joseph Conforth on February 26 reported that supplies were hauled from Dyea to Sheep Camp in wagons; then packed or drawn on sleds to The Scales; and either packed over Chilkoot or drawn up by Burns' windlass. Men could pack from 50 to 60 pounds per trip and make four in a day. On the north side of Chilkoot, after each storm, a new route had to be broken.

The Chilkoot Railway and Transportation Co. had done some work on a wooden tramway linking Dyea and Canyon City; but, in Conforth's opinion, it would see little use this season, as ties and stringers would be washed out when the snow melted and the Taiya flooded. Towers for the aerial tramway from Canyon City to Crater Lake had been

⁶⁰ Brackett to Van Horne, April 15, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society; *The Dyea Trail*, April 16, 1898.

⁶¹ Brackett to Van Horne, April 15, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

way was in operation from Canyon City to Crater Lake; and (f) there were currently from 3,000 to 4,000 tons of freight waiting at Sheep Camp for transportation across Chilkoot Pass.

In a covering letter, Brackett charged Hugh Wallace of the Chilkoot Railway & Transportation Co. with intentionally slighting Skagway and the White Pass route in his advertisements.⁶⁵

President Wallace countered on March 15, 1898, with blistering advertisements in newspapers published in the Puget Sound cities. Attention was called to Brackett's initial interest in the development of the Chilkoot Trail, and his efforts to get Wallace to invest in his wagon road. Wallace at that time had told Brackett the wagon road was impractical and to save his money. In his announcements, Brackett had failed to point up that the freight at Sheep Camp belonged principally to those endeavoring to transport their own outfits across the pass and awaiting a break in the weather.

As for Brackett's Road, it was known that it had not been completed beyond White Pass City and that material for the bridge across East Fork had been lost in the sinking of *Canada*. Wallace characterized the statements made in Brackett's broadside as

in full keeping with the character given you by your associates in the Skagway and Yukon Transportation and Improvement Company; and if one tithe of the charges contained in the suit brought against you by your associates are true, you should be consigned to the undying contempt of every honorable man.

Your shafts of abuse are pointless--your assumption of truth a farce--your letter a tirade of misrepresentations, which are, in fact, but the senile wailings of a desperate and disappointed old man.⁶⁶

The suit referred to by Wallace had been filed against Brackett and his Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co. by Judge Acklen and his Nashville associates. They had asked the Federal District Court for Alaska to put the corporation into receivership, charging bad faith and misrepresentation.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Broadside, "The Skagway Wagon Road," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁶⁶ Undated Clipping, "Alaska Scrapbook," Vol. 7, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Hugh Wallace of Tacoma was spearheading the construction of the aerial tramway from Canyon City to Crater Lake.

⁶⁷ Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*,

positioned and the powerhouse erected, but no wires strung. Although the powerhouse boiler had not been "set," Conforth forecast it would be mid-May before the big tramway opened.⁶²

Pierre Humbert, a freighter on the White Pass route, testified that in February he had sent sleds and packhorses across the Summit. The route was good, and "over 2,000 people" were moving their outfits over White Pass, as rapidly as the means at their disposal permitted.

The Brackett Road was "so nearly completed that it was only a question of days before goods can be handled to the head of the pass by wagon and bob sled." Humbert had reconnoitered the road. The grades were moderate, and he was "preparing to haul over . . . [it] within ten days with teams." As soon as the road was open, he was certain that "all travel to Bennett will find its way over the road, as the cheapest, best and surest way of getting through."⁶³

A. S. Kerry, a Skagway lumberman, had made a trip in the fourth week of February over the Brackett Road. He found it "a good mountain road, having been constructed in a most substantial manner." The bridges and timberwork were superior, tons of drift bolts had been used for safety; the foundations of the bridge abutments had "been constructed by drilling the rock and drift bolting the abutment timbers directly to bedrock." Except for the bridges and trestles, the roadway was largely granite, pulverized with dynamite and hammers, "thereby making it a perfect macadam road."⁶⁴

Brackett had the statements of Kerry, Conforth, and Humbert printed as a broadside and circulated, along with a statement by A. B. Lewis pointing out that: (a) the facilities for discharging cargoes at Dyea were of "the poorest kind"; (b) there was no permanent wagon road from Dyea to Canyon City, while the wooden tramway would never be completed; (c) the winter road from Canyon City to Sheep Camp would be destroyed by the first warm weather; (d) the cost of transporting freight from Dyea to Lake Lindeman was 15 cents a pound; (e) it would be another 90 days before the aerial tram-

⁶² Conforth to Brackett, Feb. 26, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁶³ Humbert to Brackett, Feb. 27, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. According to Humbert, there were only 100 tons of supplies cached at the summit of Chilkoot, above Burns' windlass.

⁶⁴ Kerry to Brackett, Feb. 28, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

suggested that Brackett have Judge Acklen contact him. It would also be vital to enlist the support of the senators from Washington.⁷⁰

By November 23 Brackett, taking cognizance of his difficulties with Judge Acklen and Treasurer Samson, had second thoughts on the granting of the franchise to the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co. He wished Senator Davis to proceed cautiously, as there were too many promoters and not enough capital involved to insure success of the undertaking. Unless his associates were willing to make sacrifices, he was unwilling for them to reap the rewards.

As he wrote this letter, there were several gentlemen in his own room prominent in Canadian railroad circles. They had traveled to Skagway to meet with him and to inspect his route.⁷¹

2. Congress Acts

With the resignation of President Word, the flight of Treasurer Samson, and the expulsion of Judge Acklen and his associates, Brackett now controlled the corporation. He now wrote Senator Davis urging him to keep the Senate from "passing bills in favor of any one who has not been on the ground or built an inch of road when a company has had the courage to come here and complete the road without asking" for authority to collect a toll. Brackett, in advising Davis of the action taken by the trustees, observed that Judge Acklen was "entitled to no consideration whatever until he has at least come here and rendered some assistance in this great work."⁷²

Senator Davis replied, pointing out that the bill for the franchise should be introduced by members of Congress from the State of Washington. He would be glad to assist, and would draw the bill himself, but he was unfamiliar with local conditions.⁷³

Brackett's attorney, Colonel King, in late December visited the nation's capital to discuss with Senator Davis legislation granting a franchise to Brackett for a toll road. As prompt action was vital,

⁷⁰ Davis to Brackett, Nov. 1, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷¹ Brackett to Davis, Nov. 23, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷² Brackett to Davis, Dec. 17, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

⁷³ Davis to Brackett, Dec. 27, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

F. The Toll Road Becomes Legal
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1. Brackett Contacts Senator Davis

In the division of responsibilities envisioned by Judge Acklen and Brackett, the former was to utilize the political connections he had made as a member of the United States House of Representatives to secure a franchise to permit the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co. to charge a toll. On learning that the levying of a toll required congressional legislation, Brackett wrote his friend the powerful senator from Minnesota, Cushman K. Davis. He reported that their corporation had already surveyed and commenced construction of a wagon road across White Pass. When authority to collect tolls was requested, Brackett trusted Senator Davis would employ his influence in their behalf.

No one, he pointed out, would deny there was need for the road, as the route by way of the Yukon from St. Michael was closed to navigation seven months of the year. If the estimated 100,000 people were to reach the Klondike in 1898, their attention would be focused on the Chilkoot and White Pass trails. Brackett believed the aerial tramways projected for the Chilkoot Trail would not be able to handle more than 50,000 pounds of freight per day, a quantity insufficient to subsist the stamperders. With Canadian interests actively promoting the British Yukon Company, Brackett felt Congress must take action.<sup>68</sup>

Another man with important political connections interested in the wagon road was Joseph T. Conforth of Denver, Colorado. Besides being on a first name basis with his two senators, Henry M. Teller and Edward O. Wolcott, he planned to organize a transportation company to freight supplies over the Coast Mountains to the lakes. As he was willing to pay a toll for the privilege of using a wagon road, Conforth contacted his senators in Brackett's behalf.<sup>69</sup>

Senator Davis was impressed with the "importance" of Brackett's enterprise and promised all possible assistance. As Senator William Bate of Tennessee was a member of the Committee on Territories, he

April 1900, pp. 654-655.

<sup>68</sup> Brackett to Davis, Oct. 28, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>69</sup> Brackett to Acklen, Oct. 28, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

he wondered whether there would be any opposition.<sup>74</sup> Davis, after advising King of the contents of his last letter to Brackett, cautioned that there was "no chance of getting any immediate legislation."<sup>75</sup>

When Colonel King checked into the subject, he found that Senator Thomas H. Carter of Montana in 1896 had introduced a joint resolution providing for the construction of wagon roads, trails, etc. in Alaska. It had not been acted upon, however. In the House, Representative John F. Lacey of Iowa had introduced legislation extending the provisions of the Homestead Act to Alaska and to provide for the construction of railroads. It was agreed by Senator Davis and Colonel King that the correct procedure was to get action in the House on Lacey's bill, and amend it in the Senate by adding Carter's joint resolution.<sup>76</sup>

At the committee hearings in the third week of January, it became apparent that the rate suggested by Brackett, two cents per pound, would be considered too high by members of Congress from the east. It was therefore agreed, and written into the bill, that the Secretary of the Interior would be empowered to establish rates on Alaskan toll roads.<sup>77</sup>

With Colonel King and George Peabody pulling out all stops, the Lacey bill passed the House on January 21, and was referred to the appropriate Senate subcommittee. It was four months before the Senate acted, and on May 14, 1898, President William McKinley signed into law the act, "Extending the Homestead Laws and Providing for Right-of-Way for Railroads in the District of Alaska."

### 3. Secretary Bliss Authorizes Brackett to Collect Tolls

Within 24 hours of the President's action five companies, including Brackett's Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co., had filed applications for charters to build either a toll road or a railroad across White Pass. Close Brothers of London, England, who were destined to construct the White Pass & Yukon Route, were a jump ahead of Colonel King. Their attorney was a friend of Secre-

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<sup>74</sup> King to Davis, Dec. 31, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>75</sup> Davis to King, Dec. 31, 1897, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>76</sup> King to Hartman, Jan. 17, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

tary of the Treasury Lyman Gage. Alerted to the President's signature of the act, he had his clients application in front of Secretary of the Interior Bliss before Colonel King could act.<sup>78</sup>

An embittered Colonel King submitted Brackett's application for a permit granting an easement for a right-of-way for his wagon road, from Skagway to White Pass along with "terminal and station facilities," and the right to fix and collect tolls. In support of Brackett's application, it was pointed out that construction of the road had started in October 1897; that at present a wagon road had been opened "with easy grade so that one common team can haul or draw a load of at least 2,000 pounds on a sled in winter or a wagon in summer from tidewater . . . to the summit of . . . White Pass, and from there onward to Lake Bennett"; that the road had been in heavy use for some months; that the business was conducted in a manner satisfactory to freighters and packers; and that the War Department had permitted the collection of tolls to reimburse Brackett for his construction costs.<sup>79</sup>

Unknown to Secretary Bliss, Brackett's application was fraudulent, because at no time was it possible to drive a team and wagon loaded with a ton of supplies beyond White Pass City. Although Brackett had improved the trail up White Pass Fork, between Toll Gate 9 and the Summit, except during the sledding season, it was a route passable only by packers.

On May 16 Secretary Bliss, after reviewing the documents and map submitted by Colonel King, authorized Brackett to "charge temporarily the rate of tolls that have been heretofore permitted by the War Department." Receipt of applications for easements from other interested parties caused the Secretary to defer action on Brackett's request for a right-of-way.<sup>80</sup>

Brackett, on learning that Secretary Bliss was holding in abeyance his application for a right-of-way, made a lightning-like-trip to the nation's capital. Accompanied by Senator Davis, Brackett called on the Secretary. He told him that he had invested more than \$180,000 in his road, while the Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Co. had not spent a dollar. He accused his rivals of stealing his rights.

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<sup>78</sup> Brackett to Brown, Jan. 26, 1911, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Charles E. Brown was an official of the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co.

<sup>79</sup> Bliss to King, May 16, 1898, Ltrs. Sent Secretary of the Interior, NA. The tolls sanctioned by the War Department were: 2¢ for each pound of freight; \$1 for each pedestrian; \$1 for each horse, mule, oxen, etc.; 25¢ for each sheep or dog; and \$10 for each wagon.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

After listening to Brackett's case, Secretary Bliss agreed to give the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co. first claim on the desired right-of-way.<sup>81</sup>

### G. Brackett Bargains with the White Pass & Yukon Route

#### 1. Plans to Extend the Road from the Summit to Lake Bennett, Foiled

Brackett's January 1898 success in raising \$35,000 and establishing contact with Sir William Van Horne of the Canadian Pacific Railway caused him to broaden his perspective. On returning to Seattle in the second week of January and while awaiting passage aboard *City of Seattle*, Brackett telegraphed Van Horne. He requested the Canadian capitalist to employ his influence to secure a franchise from the Ottawa government for a wagon road and railroad from the Summit to Lake Bennett. If possible, the wagon road should be opened in time to take advantage of the spring stampede.<sup>82</sup> Sir William, on discussing the situation with Canadian members of Parliament, concluded that if the wagon road could be pushed through to Lake Bennett before spring, he could get the franchise.<sup>83</sup>

Brackett believed it could be done, but it would be expensive. He proposed to keep his men on the line to undertake the project, provided Sir William thought it advisable and could assure him money was available. While awaiting further information, teams would be employed to skid timber up from the lakes to provide lumber for bridging and corduroying.<sup>84</sup>

Sir William, on January 13, met with Clifford Sifton, the Canadian Minister of the Interior. After listening to what Van Horne had to say, Sifton stated that Brackett could extend his road across the border and the North West Mounted Police would not interfere with him or his employees.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Brackett to Brown, Jan. 26, 1911, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>82</sup> Brackett to Van Horne, Jan. 10, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>83</sup> Van Horne to Brackett, Jan. 11, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>84</sup> Brackett to Van Horne, Jan. 11, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>85</sup> Van Horne to Brackett, Jan. 13, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

Brackett had met with several army officers responsible for routing supplies into Canada for Yukon relief. The military had been in contact with several parties recently arrived at Seattle from the Klondike by way of Skagway. According to these men, Brackett's people, during his absence, had made rapid progress and the road to White Pass City was "practically completed." Several of the travelers, however, expressed reservations as to the feasibility of moving freight from the Summit to Lake Bennett, "unless some work is done to knock off the rough places." They were in agreement that less work and less money will be required in opening a road north of the Summit.<sup>86</sup>

On his return to Skagway in mid-January, Brackett called for Engineer Smith. In view of his previous experiences with Smith, it is difficult to see why Brackett was willing to entrust him with another important assignment. Smith was told to reconnoiter routes from the Summit to Lake Lindeman and Windy Arm.

Smith, on his return, reported that slight difficulty would be experienced in opening a sled road from White Pass to Windy Arm. When he relayed this information to Sir William, Brackett wrote that his wagon road from Skagway to the Summit would be opened by February 10. A shortage of powder had slowed construction as they blasted and cleared the trail in the box canyon, north of White Pass City.<sup>87</sup>

Attorney Hartman, who handled Brackett's affairs when he was at Skagway, had suggested to Van Horne that they secure a charter for the extension of the road from the Summit to Lake Bennett from the Canadian or British Columbia governments. Van Horne, he reasoned, could employ his influence and prestige in their behalf.

Sir William, however, disagreed, because it was too late in the session to have Parliament enact the required special legislation. Moreover, in view of his conversation with Minister Sifton, he did not believe such action necessary. As Van Horne had read that the United States Congress was about to grant Brackett authority to levy a toll between Skagway and the Summit, he believed the corporation could have the toll on that section of the road apply to the entire route to Lake Bennett.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Brackett to Van Horne, Jan. 12, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>87</sup> Brackett to Van Horne, Jan. 21, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>88</sup> Van Horne to Brackett, Jan. 28, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.



Brackett was not satisfied with this suggestion. He could not afford to open a wagon road from the Summit to Lake Bennett or Windy Arm unless the Canadian government was ready to give him authority to levy a toll. He foresaw trouble if he boosted the toll collected at his stations on the Alaskan side of the border to cover travel on the projected Canadian extension of his road. Already his lobby in Congress had encountered opposition, when they sought to get the legislators to agree to allow him to collect a toll of two cents a pound between Skagway and the Summit. He would be agreeable, however, to opening a sled road. But Sir William must understand that when the snow melted, "there must of necessity be a blockade" at the Summit.<sup>89</sup>

## 2. Brackett Meets a Challenge

With no franchise forthcoming from the Canadian government and legislation authorizing the collection of a toll bogged down in Congress, Brackett was compelled to forego his plans to extend his road to the lakes. Moreover, most of the money raised during his end-of-the-year trip to the States was quickly obligated. Brackett was soon forced to think about sources of additional funds as construction costs soared. While in the States he had sought to tap the Northern Pacific and the War Department for \$30,000. This sum was to constitute an advance on the toll to be charged the Yukon Relief Expedition for use of his wagon road. Major Rucker's decision to send his men and supplies over the Chilkoot Trail doomed this hope, and Brackett prepared to call on Van Horne and his associates for another \$15,000. Sir William and his friends, Brackett wrote, could rest assured that any money advanced would be repaid, because --having settled with the promoters--he now controlled the corporation.<sup>90</sup>

Brackett returned to Seattle in the first week of February to spearhead an effort to raise additional capital. When he boarded the southbound ship, his books showed that he owed \$10,000 in wages. At the office of his Seattle attorney, Brackett found a draft from Sir William for \$7,500, while another \$8,500 was raised from interested investors. This money enabled Brackett to meet his payroll and to satisfy his creditors.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Brackett to Van Horne, Feb. 7, and March 8, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>90</sup> Brackett to Van Horne and Brackett to Hartman, Jan. 21, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Hartman now served as Brackett's lawyer.

<sup>91</sup> King to Hartman, Feb 4, 1898, and Brackett to Van Horne, Feb. 7, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society; Croffut, "Railroad

In April, Chief Engineer C. E. Hawkins and several others, representing Close Brothers spent several weeks in Skagway Valley investigating the feasibility of building a railroad across White Pass. Brackett, although he dreamed of constructing a similar enterprise, treated Hawkins courteously, and provided him and his party toll-free passage over the wagon road. He was therefore miffed, when Hawkins --having determined the project was possible--called on him and offered to buy him out for \$25,000. Brackett refused Hawkins' "generous" proposal.

The next day the deputy marshal, Attorney Brogan, and a young tough entered Brackett's office in downtown Skagway. Brogan boldly announced that he was taking possession of the property, because the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co. had been placed into receivership. The lawyer, his voice rising, told the deputy marshal that he had a claim against the wagon road company.

Brackett retorted, "There is no wagon road company. I am building this road as an individual."

A request was made to see the books.

"You can take the books but not my property," Brackett snapped. Whereupon, the tough laid his hands on the rolltop desk. Brackett slammed it shut, exclaiming, "You do it over my dead body!" And he shouted for help. A passer-by brought Jennings, another lawyer. Jennings, after listening to what Brackett had to say, told him, "Stand your ground."

The trio then withdrew, claiming Brackett was under arrest for resisting an officer. An inquiry satisfied Brackett that Hawkins, having failed to secure his right by purchase, had established contact with Skagway banker Moody, and several of the ex-promoters. Moody had "trumped up a claim" against Brackett and had got a court order, through misrepresentation, appointing him receiver for the Skagway & Yukon Transportation & Improvement Co.<sup>92</sup>

Fortunately for Brackett his friend Peabody was in town. Peabody came to his assistance and he was able to raise \$10,000. Brackett then submitted to arrest and was taken to Sitka, a prisoner charged

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to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, p. 652.

<sup>92</sup> Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. Moody was a shady character, because following the death of Soapy Smith he was expelled from Skagway by the vigilantes.

with contempt of court. He was accompanied by his lawyers. Brackett, prior to his departure, was cheered to learn that several hundred of his employees had signed a petition backing him.

In the hearing before U. S. District Judge C. S. Johnson, Attorney Brogan spoke first. Brackett, in a low tone, told his lawyer that as "the receiver of the road has been permitted to speak in his behalf, I claim the right as owner of the road to make a statement in my behalf." He then told the court that the claim had never been presented to him; that it had been fabricated by Charles Bullen who had not invested a dollar in the road; that Bullen, while Brackett was on his year-end fund-raising mission, had gone to Moody's bank; that Bullen had "received money from the bank for some black-mail purpose . . . for some party whom he had never reported to me"; and that the claim was a fraud. Moreover, Brackett continued, Bullen had sought to ruin his credit and had bought up his workmen's time-checks, which had never been presented.

" I am here in court, your honor," Brackett told Judge Johnson,

to pay these claims and any claims against the wagon road, and I want to state to your Honor, further, that the White Pass Wagon Road Co. does not exist. I as an individual own that road, not a company, and I claim that I have a right in this court to protection until such time as judgement is obtained against me for any claim.

Judge Johnson liked Brackett's spunk. "Your ground is well taken," he told the court in dissolving the order placing the company in receivership.<sup>93</sup>

### 3. Brackett Sells Out

Brackett's courtroom victory did not solve his financial dilemma. He was soon broke again and owed \$30,000 to his employees and creditors. Once again, he sailed for Seattle. There he met with several Boston capitalists who had learned of his undertaking. They loaned him \$25,000, their only security his promise to repay. When he returned to Skagway, many of his creditors were surprised to be paid in full, as rumors had circulated that Brackett planned to settle their claims for fifty cents on the dollar.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.; Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, pp. 654-655.

<sup>94</sup> Croffut, "A Railroad to the Yukon," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, April 1900, pp. 652-653; Brackett, "Autobiography," Brackett Papers, Minne-

In May 1898 construction of a railroad across White Pass was started by the Close Brothers' subsidiary, the Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Co. Brackett still hoped to raise enough money from J. J. Hill and Sir William Van Horne to challenge the newcomers. In June he boarded a ship for Seattle, on the first leg of a trip to St. Paul to see Hill. At Seattle he encountered President Samuel H. Graves of the railroad company. Graves offered \$25,000 for the Brackett Road. Brackett demanded \$250,000. On June 25 a compromise satisfactory to both was reached by which the Pacific and Arctic Railway was to pay Brackett \$50,000 as compensation for any damages or losses suffered because of construction of the railroad. In addition, the railroad was given an option, which it exercised, to purchase the toll road at any time before July 1, 1899, for another \$50,000.<sup>95</sup>

#### H. The Toll Gate War of 1899

##### 1. The War Resumes

The Brackett Road was heavily traveled in the summer and autumn of 1898. The road was popular with freighters and packers, while it provided the railroaders a convenient route to move supplies out to the grade in advance of the tracks. In August the Atlin stampede added to the receipts. At first, the road was hailed by the packers and freighters, but as the railroad extended its tracks toward the Summit, their profit margins narrowed as they were compelled to cut rates to compete with the railroad. By the time the track reached Heney, the packers' income had declined to the point where they could only continue in business if they stopped paying toll.

With the coming of winter, Skagway River had frozen over and the packers could now reach White Pass City over the ice. Above White Pass City, however, was the upper box canyon and Brackett's Toll Gate 9. Although Brackett had improved the trail above the toll gate, it had been built by the packers, and they determined to challenge his authority to collect a toll there. The Toll Gate War of 1899 was precipitated on January 23, when Gus Davidson reached Gate 9 with 16 head of cattle he had driven over the river ice from Skagway. Agent Gus Holmquist asked Davidson to pay the toll before he would open the gate.

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sota Historical Society.

<sup>95</sup> Memo of Agreement between Brackett & Graves, June 24, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

"Not 1 cent of toll do you get from me," Davidson retorted.

"But I am the agent of this wagon road and I am here to collect toll and I will have it," replied Holmquist.

Whereupon, Davidson pulled out an axe and warned the agent that he was going through the gate, whether Holmquist liked it or not. With several well-aimed blows he wrecked the gate and drove his cattle through.

As Davidson started up the trail with his stock, Holmquist telephoned Al Brackett, who managed the road for his father. Brackett immediately filed a complaint against Davidson, and a warrant was issued for his arrest. Deputy Marshal Elmer Kane boarded the afternoon train for Heney. There he secured a fresh horse and overtook Davidson at the ford, one-half mile below the Summit. Davidson was taken into custody.

That night Commissioner C. A. Sehlbrede held a hearing in the Union Church. Because of the importance of the case, the church was jammed with freighters and packers. Davidson's attorneys argued and produced evidence that a trail had existed up the canyon to the Summit before Brackett came on the scene. The prosecution pegged its case on the Act of May 14, 1898, by which Congress had empowered the Secretary of the Interior to authorize the owner of a toll road to collect toll, and Secretary Bliss' subsequent action.

Commissioner Sehlbrede avoided the issue. Testimony having shown that no printed copies of the Bliss letter authorizing collection of a toll were posted at Gate 9, as required by law, Sehlbrede dismissed the charges against Davidson. His decision was popular with the packers and freighters, who, although the hour was 3 a.m., let go a round of applause. Judge Sehlbrede reprimanded the offenders, but it had scant effect as they walked out of church "crowing over their victory" over King George Brackett.<sup>96</sup>

## 2. "Old Man" Brooks Takes the Offensive

On Friday, February 3, the packers led by J. H. Brooks determined to again challenge Brackett's authority to collect a toll at Gate 9. On Tuesday, the 31st, Brooks had received a call from one of his men at White Pass City that 20 deputy marshals were at the toll gate and had refused to permit one of his trains to pass through to the Summit. Brooks checked with Judge Sehlbrede and Deputy Marshal J. M.

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<sup>96</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 24, 1899.

Tanner, and they told him that "if any one at White Pass represented himself to be a United States deputy marshal he did so falsely."

When Brooks left Skagway on the morning of the 3d, with his train, he was accompanied by 16 other packers. When the packers stopped at White Pass City at 1 o'clock, Toll Collector Holmquist was also in the Hotel *Seattle*. Brooks was overheard to boast that he would take his train up frozen White Pass Fork, pass Camp 9 Toll Gate, and go up to Summit Lake. If he could not get up the creek, he would break down the gate rather than pay toll. Holmquist, seeing that trouble was brewing, left the hotel and took station at the gate. There he was joined by Elmer Kane, a former deputy marshal, who had been hired by Al Brackett as assistant toll collector. Other Brackett employees were standing about, some armed with revolvers and clubs.

It was 2 p.m. when Brooks' train halted in front of the toll station. Holmquist inquired of Brooks, "Do you have a toll receipt?"

"No!"

"Do you want to pay toll?"

After this exchange, Brooks asked Holmquist, "Are there any deputy marshals here?" When he learned that there were none, Brooks demanded that the gate be opened, and he be allowed to pass without paying toll. Several of the Brackett workmen were seen to back off, and Jack Farley, one of the packers, stepped forward with axe in hand. Raising his axe, he growled, "Don't interfere with me--get out of my road!" He was intercepted by Kane, who was armed with a club, and a fight ensued. The brawl ended when Farley wrenched his right arm free from Kane's grasp, and struck him a glancing blow on the forehead. Meanwhile, another packer had chopped down the gate, while a third pulled a revolver on Holmquist.

As soon as the gate was down and while the Brackett people were doctoring Kane, the packers with their 30 horses passed through and headed for the Summit. An examination of Kane's wound showed that while he would be scarred for life, he had not been seriously injured.<sup>97</sup>

Two days later, on the 5th, the packers returned to the attack. About 1 p.m. 30 men led by Brooks and Burt Johnson appeared at Gate 9. The gate had been repaired, and they demanded that it be opened. Holmquist refused to do so, unless they paid toll, where-

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., Feb. 4-7, 1899.

upon three of the packers (James F. Emmett, Jake Mutchler, and David Mutchler) chopped the gate down. As soon as it was down, Brooks pulled out a bottle of whiskey and told the packers it was his treat. The packers then drank "to the ill health of the wagon road and gave three cheers for Brooks."

A number of them now rushed forward and picked up pieces of the broken gate and lugged them a short distance up the trail. Brooks, "like the immortal Sampson of biblical story," carried the pillars. When he reached the top of a rise, a short distance above the gateway, he pushed the pillars into an open pool in White Pass Fork. The other packers followed his example. Having destroyed the hated gate, they returned to Skagway, where they were arrested. Judge Sehlbrede released them on their own recognizance.<sup>98</sup>

### 3. Judge Sehlbrede Rules Against the Packers

Meanwhile, Burt Johnson had sworn out a warrant charging Al Brackett "with obstructing a highway by erecting a toll gate" at Camp 9. When Commissioner Sehlbrede held a hearing on February 6, Johnson's lawyers pointed out that the toll gate was on a trail used by packers and the public before the Brackett road was built. The Brackett attorneys agreed, but countered with the information that Congress had provided for toll roads in Alaska, and had given the Secretary of the Interior, "exclusive rights to authorize the route of the toll road, fix rates and otherwise regulate such roads." The letter of Secretary Bliss to Colonel King of May 16, 1898, granting Brackett authority to locate his road over White Pass was introduced by the defense attorneys.<sup>99</sup>

Judge Sehlbrede, after listening to all the testimony, questioned why the Bracketts had failed to post copies of Secretary Bliss' authority at the toll houses, as required by law, until the "Toll Gate War" had resumed ten days before. He was also surprised to learn that a "wagon road with easy grades so that one common team can haul or draw a load of at least 2,000 pounds on a sled in the winter, or a wagon in the summer" existed up the upper box canyon. It was apparent to Sehlbrede that fraudulent representations had been made to the Secretary by Brackett or his agents.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., Feb. 6, 1899.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., Feb. 7, 1899. The Brackett lawyers introduced evidence to show that the roadway extended beyond Gate 9 about 100 feet, and that in some instances loaded wagons had gone that far, but in no case had any proceeded up the box canyon to the Summit, three miles beyond.

Judge Sehlbrede, however, ruled that the action of Secretary Bliss in granting the franchise

was based upon some kind of showing, either by Mr. Brackett or some one in his behalf; that the sufficiency of this showing was wholly in the discretion of the said secretary, and the fact that such a showing was fraudulently made, no matter how reprehensible . . . on the part of the applicant or his agents, cannot justify this court in declaring void an executive contract which is shown upon its face to have been regularly issued.<sup>100</sup>

Sehlbrede accordingly dismissed the case. The Bracketts had won an earlier victory, when Farley was brought to trial for felonious assault. After listening to extensive testimony, more of it bearing on the authority to collect a toll at Gate 9 than on the Farley-Kane brawl, Sehlbrede placed the defendant under bond and ordered the case before a grand jury.<sup>101</sup>

#### 4. Judge Johnson Holds the Packers in Contempt

Stung by Brooks' second foray against the toll gate, the Brackett attorneys on February 20 secured from United States District Judge C. S. Johnson an order directing J. H. Brooks, John Maloney, Bert W. Johnson, and J. L. Troy to "refrain from tearing down or destroying any of the property connected with the Brackett Wagon Road from Skagway, Alaska, to the Summit of White Pass . . . or from going thereon without paying" toll.<sup>102</sup>

The packers ignored the court order, and on March 8 the Brackett attorneys applied to Judge Johnson to have the packers show cause why they should not be punished for contempt of court. The application was granted. On March 21 the Brackett lawyers traveled to Sitka, but the defendants failed to appear. The case was transferred to Juneau, where bench warrants were issued for the defendants. They were arrested by Deputy Marshal Tanner and taken to Juneau on March 26. At a hearing on the 27th, Judge Johnson found that Troy was not a partner in the Packers' Association, and he was purged of the charge of contempt. The judge, after listening to the arguments of the attorneys for the government and defense, found Brooks and Mahoney guilty of contempt. Brooks was fined \$500 and Mahoney \$250. The defendants would also have to pay the costs of prosecuting the case.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.      <sup>101</sup> Ibid., Feb. 5 & 6, 1899.      <sup>102</sup> Ibid., March 31, 1899.



Judge Johnson, after passing sentence, informed the court that Secretary of the Interior Bliss had granted Brackett authority to collect tolls on his wagon road. Whether the information on which the Secretary made his decision was fraudulent was not the point before the court, and he was compelled to conclude that it was "sufficient to satisfy the Secretary." If the packers had been wronged by Brackett's misrepresentations, they had a remedy by which these "wrongs may be righted." But, he warned

no matter how grievous these wrongs might be, no person is justified in attempting to right them by demolishing and destroying the property along the road or travel the same without paying the compensation demanded, so long as the authority conferred by the Secretary of the Interior to collect tolls, remains in force.<sup>103</sup>

Eight days later, Judge Johnson found Bert Johnson guilty of contempt and fined him \$500 and costs. The editor of the *Daily Alaskan*, although he sympathized with the packers, hailed the victory of law and order. In an editorial on March 31, he pointed out that he had warned the packers that "their riotous conduct would bear bitter fruit." They had been told to take their grievance to court, but instead they indulged "in riotous conduct at the toll gate, destroyed property and rode up and down the trail in defiance of law and order to the detriment of the good name of Skagway."<sup>104</sup>

The decision by Judge Johnson, along with the opening of the railroad to the Summit on February 21, spelled the doom of the packers and freighters. The packers had already moved their base of operations to the Summit, but they were unable to successfully compete with Red Line Transportation Co., which was organized by the railroad to temporarily handle traffic between the railhead at the Summit, and Lake Bennett. Thus, even before the railroad

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., March 31, 1899. When the Toll Gate War threatened to get out of hand, a call for assistance had been made to Capt. R. T. Yeatman, who commanded a company of soldiers posted south of Dyea. By the time he reached Skagway, Deputy Marshal Tanner had taken nine of the packers in custody and was holding them for trial. When he reported this to his superiors, Yeatman observed that the civil authorities by their prompt action had put a damper on a tense situation. Yeatman to Adj. Gen., U. S. Army, March 26, 1899, NA, RG 393, Ltrs. Recd., Dept. of the Columbia.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

was opened to Lake Bennett on July 6, 1899, the packers, who had monopolized business over the White Pass since August 1897, had been ruined and had passed from the scene. The Brackett Road, although for the next several years it saw limited use during the winter when heavy snows blocked the railroad, was likewise doomed. No longer maintained, it deteriorated rapidly and was soon forgotten.

## I. Travel Over the White Pass in 1898

### 1. An Overview

The Brackett Road and White Pass Trail in 1898 were the routes of the freighter and packer rather than the cheechako. Consequently, where there are hundreds of accounts describing a trip over the Chilkoot Trail in 1898 to the Klondike, there are very few detailing the crossing of White Pass. Undoubtedly, the prime reason for the paucity of published accounts telling of a trip across White Pass in 1898 is that editors and readers were impressed with photographs of the human chain climbing the "golden stairs." Stories of high adventure on the Chilkoot Trail made better copy and sold, while with the passing of the "Dead Horse Trail" there was little to spark reader interest in the route across White Pass.

The few accounts of travel over the White Pass in 1898 have a common denominator--brevity. To provide the reader and interpretive planner with the flavor of this route in the final months of the great Klondike Gold Rush, we will accompany three parties across White Pass at different seasons of the year.

### 2. A Klondiker's Diary

The Klondike story, as to be expected, was popular with the Frank Leslie publications. In May 1900, even after interest in the gold rush story had waned, *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly* published the diary of an unidentified Klondiker. This man, who crossed the White Pass in the last week of March, sailed from Seattle aboard the steam *Queen* on March 21. A large vessel, she was capable of carrying 600 passengers. At Victoria on the 22d he picked up a free miners' certificate. The office where they were issued was about a mile from the dock.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> "Seattle to Dawson--A Klondiker's Diary," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, May 1900, pp. 3-4.

Stops were made at Wrangell on the 25th and Juneau the next day. The ship left Juneau at 11:05 a.m. and docked at Skagway at 6:45. Although there was no snow at Skagway, the ground was frozen. The diarist and his friends walked around town until midnight, taking in the gambling houses and dance halls.<sup>106</sup>

On March 27th they breakfasted at the *Rosalie*, and after landing their outfits, had them transported to "P's" cabin about one mile from the dock. Arrangements were made to accompany one of "P's" brothers up the White Pass Trail to the Canadian Custom House at the Summit. There they hoped to make arrangements so they would not have to unload their sleds and packhorses.

The afternoon was spent getting their gear ready for packing. Our diarist pronounced "Skag" as "not such a very wicked town," although it was a rough frontier settlement. Apparently, our diarist had not run afoul of Soapy Smith or any of his henchmen.<sup>107</sup>

March 28 was a fine clear morning. After breakfast the diarist chased downtown to get a pair of ice-creepers, but he had to wait on the blacksmith to finish them. They started up the trail at 6:30, and overtook the sled and packtrain within 45 minutes. Pushing ahead, they were at the third bridge by 10:05. Here they had tea and bread, and at 10:25 resumed the trek. They crossed Skagway River at 11, passed through White Pass City, and were at the Summit at noon. There our diarist checked with the North West Mounted Police and made arrangements for paying the duty and getting his sleds through customs without having to unload. They were back at White Pass City at 1 o'clock, where they had lunch, "or a lot of garbage, after having walked twenty-two or twenty-three miles over some of the very roughest trail and country I have ever seen or imagined."

While awaiting the sleds and packtrain, they made arrangements for their party to sleep in a bunk tent and changed footgear. Supper, or "slops," was eaten at 6 o'clock and by 8 p.m. all had turned in. Twenty-three men slept in the small tent.

The party was on the road at 5:30 a.m. on March 29, and at 7:05 they were at the Custom House. It was snowing very hard as they passed through customs. Lunch was eaten at Camp Rescue at the head of Bernard Lake. From there they pushed on and reached *Paradise Valley Hotel* at 7 p.m. There they had supper and bunked in a log cabin, "the best place we had struck so far on the trail, although eleven

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

men slept in a small room 12 x 16 feet." On the trail, the diarist wrote, "a man is a man, one is as good as another, and all are treated alike." The food was uniformly bad, and "would have made a billy goat turn away in disgust; but you get so hungry, and it is what is served or nothing, so that you can fill up on trash you would be ashamed to have seen in your garbage can at home!"

After a "fair breakfast" at the *Paradise Valley Hotel*, the company was on the trail at 5:30. Our diarist pushed on ahead alone to select a camp site on Lake Bennett. He reached the lake before noon and chose a site on a hillside. Here they would camp, build a boat, and wait for the ice to break up. It would then be "Ho! for the Klondike!"<sup>108</sup>

### 3. Angelo Heilprin Crosses White Pass

Angelo Heilprin, unlike our diarist, rode a horse across White Pass. He left Skagway at midday on July 30, 1898, rode out the Brackett Road, through White Pass City, crossed the Summit, and was at Lake Bennett by 7:30 p.m. on the 31st. The ride across White Pass had been made without serious hindrance or delay. No mud was encountered, and had his horse not been lame it would have been a delightful ride.<sup>109</sup>

The most disagreeable incident of the trip was a dense and shifting fog, "which so blocked out the landscape of early evening as to necessitate 'feeling' the brokenness of a glaciated country in order to ascertain wherein lay the trail."

The stench of decaying horseflesh was in strong evidence. "The Desert of Sahara, with its lines of skeletons, can boast of no such exhibition of carcasses," Heilprin wrote. Before reaching Lake Bennett, he had counted more than 1,000 carcasses. Frequently, they had to pass "directly over these ghastly figures of hide, and sometimes, indeed, broke into them." Persons told Heilprin that in April and May the number of carcasses to be seen was more than double.

The animals had succumbed not so much to the hardship of the trail, as to lack of care, and inhuman treatment which they received at the hands of their owners.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>109</sup> Angelo Heilprin, *Alaska and the Klondike: A Journey to the New El Dorado with Hints to the Traveller* (New York, 1899), p. 8.

Once out of the line of the mad rush, perhaps unable to extricate themselves from the holding meshes of soft snow and quagmires, they were allowed to remain where they were, a food offering to the army of carrion eaters which were hovering about . . . Often times pack saddles, and sometimes even the packs, were allowed to remain with the struggling or sunken animal--such was the mad race which the greed of gold inspired.<sup>110</sup>

Heilprin, after spending six weeks in the Klondike, was back at Lake Bennett on October 9. During his two months' absence, there had occurred a shift in sentiment regarding the two trails to tide-water. Whereas in July most people favored the Chilkoot, this was no longer true. With the White Pass & Yukon Route operating trains to Heney, 12 miles out from Skagway, the Chilkoot Trail had suffered a loss in popularity. Heilprin, as he had entered the Yukon via White Pass, determined to challenge Chilkoot.

Snow had fallen on the mountains and had whitened all the higher points, when he left Bennett on October 9. A crude steam ferry took him to the head of Lake Lindeman. He spent the night in a comfortable tent on Long Lake. Up to this point very little snow had been encountered, and "the condition of the trail was such as to allow of rapid travel." A scow took them to the head of Long Lake. The two-mile portage to Crater Lake was easy but across snow. It now began to snow heavily, and a low fog hung over the water, "but not so low or so dense as to prevent us from occasionally catching glimpses of the rocks which projected with disagreeable frequency from an assumed bottomless pit or 'crater.'" It took 30 minutes to climb from the lake to the summit.

On the descent, the Chilkoot Trail zigzagged "in wild and rapid courses over an almost illimitable mass of rock debris, at times within sheltered or confined hollows, but more generally on the open face of the declivity."<sup>111</sup> Passing through Sheep Camp and Dyea, Heilprin continued on to Skagway, where he boarded a steamer for the States.

#### 4. Mary Hitchcock Returns from the Klondike

Mrs. Mary Hitchcock and Miss Edith Van Buren had reached the Klondike in the summer of 1898 by steamboat from St. Michael. Not wanting to spend the winter at Dawson, they booked mid-September passage for Lake Bennett.

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 8, 10-11.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 12-14.

In the summer of 1898 steamboats had begun operating on the upper Yukon, with *Kilbourne* making runs from Lake Bennett to Whitehorse every other day, *Goddard* operating along the reaches of the river between Whitehorse and Thirty-mile River, and *Clossett* making trips between the latter point and Dawson. Travelers, such as the two ladies, were thus provided with a connecting service from Dawson to Bennett, with a through time of five days. In addition, the Bennett Lake and Klondike Navigation Co. had built at its yard at the lower end of Lake Bennett and put into service three steamers--*Ora*, *Flora*, and *Nora*.<sup>112</sup> Thus, during the months when the waterway was navigable, a trip to the Klondike, except for crossing the Coast Mountains, had become routine.

It was snowing when the two ladies landed at Bennett on the last day of September. While they breakfasted at the *Hotel Dawson*, they discussed whether to take the Chilkoot or White Pass Trail. Most of the men preferred the former, but taking cognizance of the snow it was determined to attempt the latter. The Dyea runners, learning of this, did all they could to dissuade them, claiming that Summit Lake was "frozen, navigation stopped, the railway not running, etc." The ladies and their friends, however, held firm in their resolve.

An agent for the Red Line Transportation Co. approached the travelers and promised to get their baggage to Skagway for ten cents a pound. They accordingly checked everything through except blankets and toilet bags, which were to be dropped off at Log Cabin, where they planned to spend the night.<sup>113</sup>

At 10:30 a.m., on October 2, they started up the trail. As they walked along, they passed the steamer they would have taken up Lake Lindeman had they chosen the Chilkoot Trail. The trail wound "up-hill, over rocks, across swamps, and over log bridges, which threatened to turn as we stepped off them." Half a mile north of Log Cabin, they stopped and purchased some oranges.<sup>114</sup>

The *Log Cabin Hotel* was full, so they booked quarters at the new *American Hotel and Restaurant*, a canvas-covered room, containing 32 bunks, 16 lower and 16 upper. The bunks were of log over which

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<sup>112</sup> Mary E. Hitchcock, *Two Women in the Klondike: The Story of a Journey to the Gold-Fields of Alaska* (New York, 1899), pp. 438-439; *Daily Alaskan*, July 23, 1898. *Crossett* had been launched at Lake Bennett on July 23.

<sup>113</sup> Hitchcock, *Two Women in the Klondike*, p. 439.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 442-443.

canvas was lightly stretched. The part to be occupied by each was clearly defined, as a pole was lashed down the centre, although the same blanket covered both sleepers.<sup>115</sup>

After a hearty breakfast of beefsteak, potatoes, coffee, bread, butter, and apple sauce, they again moved out. A two and one-half mile walk, along the marge of Shallow Lake, brought them to Bernard Lake, where they found a sailboat and Peterborough canoe. Their tickets enabled them to board these craft for the trip to the head of the lake. It was a one-and-one-half mile portage over a rocky hill to Summit Lake, and the ladies lagged and reached the landing after the ferry had cast off. A rugged two-mile walk brought them to a ford, where they had lunch.

Resuming the hike, Mrs. Hitchcock and Miss Van Buren climbed a steep hill and came out on "a long stretch which was being graded for the railroad." They walked along the grade until it terminated at the brink of a precipice. Looking down, they could see the trail on the opposite side of Dead Horse Gulch. They had come too far, and the ladies were confronted with the choice of backtracking a mile or attempting the descent. It was decided to descend. Slipping, sliding, and at times sitting down, they reached the bottom of the gulch and scrambled up the other side to the trail.<sup>116</sup>

While the ladies were walking down the trail, they were startled by a roar, and as they stopped another blast, followed by a third, shook the area. Down came huge rocks, down, down, almost at their feet and into the chasm below. A white flag had been seen on the mountain, but the hikers did not realize that it was the signal that a blast was about to be shot. A "sort of a yodel" had also been heard, and answered, they thinking that it came from other members of the party.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 444.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., pp. 448-451. The Brackett people in July had repaired the trail from the Cut-Off to Summit Lake. A hotel and trading post was established at Summit Lake for the convenience of the public. On Summit, Bernard, and Shallow lakes, a number of boats were operating, while men and animals were available to transport adventurers and their freight across the portages. *Daily Alaskan*, July 13, 1898.

<sup>117</sup> Hitchcock, *Two Women in the Klondike*, p. 452.

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The women now pressed down the trail as rapidly as possible, and passing through Toll Gate 9, entered White Pass City. After crossing the bridge spanning Skagway River, the ladies walked up to the station. The railroad grade was about 500 feet above. Addressing the agent, Mrs. Hitchcock inquired, "Do you mean to say we must climb that to reach the cars? Why that is steeper than anything we have done on the entire Skagway Pass!"

"You might go up in the car with the luggage," he answered.

"I don't advise you to try it, lady," said a bystander, "coz sometimes it slips back."

When she went out to inspect, she found the powerhouse was above, the car below, and a stout cable-line connecting them. It looked safe, while the climb seemed a dizzy and a dangerous one. Three persons took passage on the car with the baggage. When the car reached the steepest part of the ascent, the cable suddenly slackened, allowing it to slip backwards. The passengers leaped for their lives. This discouraged Mrs. Hitchcock and the others from taking the car, and they climbed up to the right-of-way at Heney.<sup>118</sup>

Mrs. Hitchcock, Miss Van Buren, and their traveling companions boarded the next southbound train. When the locomotive chuffed into Skagway, they were impressed with what they saw. Although the city had been in existence only 14 months, it boasted many blocks of stores and houses, miles of streets and boardwalks, two newspapers, a number of hotels, several churches, sawmills, four wharves, a water system, and an electric light plant. The buildings were tastefully painted, and the city had a "very business-like appearance." Mrs. Hitchcock, however, was more impressed to see signs, "Beer, ten cents," instead of one dollar, and "Peaches, three for a quarter."<sup>119</sup>

#### J. Comments and Recommendations

The Brackett Road was the precursor of the railroad, and as such, a vital element in the struggle for supremacy between Skagway and Dyea. As Alaska's first improved road, it was important to the history of transportation in the Alaskan Panhandle. The

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., pp. 454-457.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. p. 457; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, "Special Klondike Issue," July 21, 1898; Kirk, *Twelve Months in the Klondike*, p. 35.



transportation story is vital and should be the keystone to the Service's interpretation of the Klondike Gold Rush.

First there was the "grease trail" across Chilkoot Pass, which had been used by the Indians for communication between the tidewater and the Yukon Basin, long before the coming of the white man. The discovery of gold in the Klondike in August 1896 was followed by the gold rush of '97.

Then a better and cheaper mode of transportation was demanded to meet the needs of the stamperders, and a pack trail across White Pass was opened and Skagway was founded and boomed. The White Pass Trail soon became the "Dead Horse Trail." Tramways now became the Dyeans' answer to providing cheaper and better transportation into the Yukon Basin for the thousands who hungered for gold, and the supplies needed to insure their survival in a hostile environment.

Skagway promoters pegged their hopes in the struggle with Dyea to dominate the route across the Coast Mountains on a wagon road.

George M. Brackett, a Minnesota engineer, was the man fated to build the Brackett Road. Brackett, without waiting to secure a franchise to collect toll, plunged into the enterprise. He was soon deserted by most of the promoters. Money was difficult to raise, but, despite tremendous obstacles, Brackett and his men opened a wagon road from Skagway to White Pass City, and improved the trail from White Pass City to the Summit. Employing his political influence, Brackett was able to get legislation passed delegating to the Secretary of the Interior authority to grant permission to levy a toll. When he attempted to collect toll for passage over the trail above White Pass City, it led to the "Toll Gate War." Governor Brady of Alaska, on visiting Skagway in the first week of July 1898, was driven out the Brackett Road to White Pass City. He was impressed with what he saw. The road was described as a "tremendous undertaking," and he voiced the opinion that few men would have undertaken and carried through this project "with the means he [Brackett] had & the . . . opposition."<sup>120</sup>

Between Rocky Point and White Pass City, remains of the Brackett Road, except where blocked by slides, are in a good state of preservation. The road could be reopened to hikers without too much work. If and when the highway to Canada is completed, up the west side of Skagway Valley, the remains of Alaska's first improved road will be visible to motorists. Above White Pass City, the

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<sup>120</sup> Brady to Secretary of the Interior, July 7, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

trail up White Pass Fork is in a good state of preservation, and must be protected. Scattered about are bones of dead horses and objects abandoned by the men of '97 and '98. All that remains of White Pass City are a number of tumbled-down log cabins. To interpret the area, protect the fragile remains, and control access to the White Pass Trail above White Pass City, the Service should reconstruct Toll Gate 9 and its dependencies. The remains of the Brackett Road, White Pass Trail, and White Pass City should be included within the proposed Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park.

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## XII. THE WHITE PASS & YUKON ROUTE

### A. A Railroad Is Organized and a Route Surveyed

#### 1. The Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Co. Gets a Charter

Capt. William Moore in 1887 had reconnoitered White Pass. He had reported to Surveyor William Ogilvie that White Pass was 1,000 feet lower than Chilkoot Pass, and that it would be "feasible, though difficult and costly, to build a railroad through it." In 1897 three Victoria business men became interested in the project, and approached several Canadian politicians. A charter for building the railroad across Canadian territory was obtained from the Dominion Government. When the men found they could not raise the necessary capital, they sold their franchise to Close Brothers of London, England, in March 1898.<sup>1</sup>

Close Brothers, although the management had never visited the Alaskan Panhandle, prepared to build the railroad, which many knowledgeable people said could not be constructed. First, they would have to secure a right-of-way across territory claimed by the United States. To do so, five men on March 29 secured a charter of incorporation for the Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Company from the State of West Virginia. The corporation was authorized

to locate, construct, furnish, equip and operate a railroad, telephone, and telegraph line in the Territory of Alaska, commencing at a point at the head of the Lynn Canal, at Shkagway [sic] Bay . . . from thence by the most practicable and convenient route . . . to Summitt [sic] Lake . . . being a distance of about twenty miles, more or less; and also to locate, build, furnish, and equip extensions and branches of said proposed railroad and telegraph line from such point or points east or west of said main line as may hereafter be determined upon by this corporation; and to maintain and operate the said railroad and telegraph line . . . and to convey freight and passengers, and transmit and receive telegraphic messages and receive tolls therefor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaska Magazine and Canadian Yukoner*, 1, March 1900, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Charter of Incorporation, Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Co. March 29, 1898, NA, RG 76, Series 127, Map 6. The incorporators were:

The new corporation lobbied and waited for Congress to enact legislation "Extending the Homestead Laws and Providing for Right of Way for Railroads in the District of Alaska." As soon as the Act became law on May 14, 1898, Edwin Midgley of the corporation addressed a letter to Secretary of the Interior Bliss, making application "for a right of priority in filing surveys and plans to obtain a right of way for a railway from Skaguay in Alaska to the summit of White Pass." In support of this application, Midgley pointed out that the company had already expended a considerable sum on the construction of a substantial wharf at Skagway and had a crew at work clearing a right-of-way between the wharf and East Fork.

While the company was organized as a United States corporation, it also possessed a charter granted by the Dominion of Canada for construction of a railroad from White Pass to Fort Selkirk. An application was before the current session of Parliament in Ottawa to extend this route from Fort Selkirk past Dawson City to the 141st meridian, near Fort Cudahy.<sup>3</sup>

Secretary Bliss, after studying the fire applications he had received for right-of-ways between Skagway and White Pass, granted a charter to the Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Co.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. President Graves Bargains with Brackett

Close Brothers in the meantime had contacted Samuel H. Graves of their Chicago office and had named him president of the Pacific & Arctic Railway & Transportation Co. Graves at this time was building a reservoir in Colorado. Graves ordered his chief engineer C. E. Hawkins and his assistant John Hislop to be prepared to build a railroad from the head of Lynn Canal across the Coast Mountains to Lake Bennett.<sup>5</sup>

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D. Noble Rowan, George W. Rowan, Thomas W. Moore, Webster Gillette, and Edwin Midgley.

<sup>3</sup> Midgley to Secretary of the Interior, May 14, 1898, NA, RG 76, Series 127.

<sup>4</sup> Commissioner of the General Land Office to Brookshire, Sept. 3, 1899, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society. The applicants were: Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Co., George A. Brackett, American & Canadian Transportation Co., Skagway & Lake Bennett Tramway Co., and Yukon Railway Co.

<sup>5</sup> Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 419.

Hawkins, accompanied by Sir Thomas S. Tancrede of Close Brothers, left for the Alaskan Panhandle in early April. They spent several days with George Brackett and sought to bargain with him for the purchase of his road, which would hinder their plans. While their surveyors made profiles and elevations, Brackett debated what to do. Writing his friend Sir William Van Horne of the Canadian Pacific Railway Co., Brackett suggested that he rush an engineer to Skagway to report on the feasibility of building a railroad over White Pass. At the same time, Sir William should push the subject of the road franchise with Minister of the Interior Sifton. If they could reach some agreement, it would enable Brackett to demand more money for his road from Close Brothers.<sup>6</sup>

Sir William doubted whether it would be possible for Brackett to secure a charter from the Canadian government for a railroad from White Pass to Lake Bennett, because such a franchise had already been granted the British Yukon Company, a subsidiary of Close Brothers. The early passage of the Alaskan Homestead Act would pave the way for the construction of the railroad, by Brackett's competitors. As there was nothing Brackett or he could do to get Parliament to abrogate the franchise of the British Yukon Company, Sir William advised Brackett to sell his road to Close Brothers.<sup>7</sup>

Brackett was impressed with what Sir William wrote. After some preliminary negotiations, he signed an agreement with President Graves of the Pacific & Arctic Railway to accept \$50,000 as compensation for any damages or losses suffered because of the construction of the railroad from Skagway through White Pass; and to transfer "all filings, claims, franchises, & right of way" belonging to him or the toll road. He agreed to give the railroad an option to purchase "his toll road and all its franchises, appurtenances and rights," as well as those of the American & Canadian Transportation Co., at any time before July 1, 1899, upon the payment of an additional \$50,000.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Brackett to Van Horne, April 15, 1898, Brackett papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>7</sup> Van Horne to Brackett, May 10, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

<sup>8</sup> Memo of Agreement between Brackett and Graves, June 24, 1898, Brackett Papers, Minnesota Historical Society.

### 3. The Surveys

A preliminary survey of the route between Skagway and White Pass had been made by E. C. Christy, beginning in July 1897.<sup>9</sup> But Chief Engineer Hawkins, on his arrival in Alaska, called for more information. Five surveying parties were organized and sent out, and management secured that number of additional surveys covering both sides of Skagway River and of the pass as far as the summit. The right-of-way as finally laid out was "made up of bits from every one" of the surveys. John Hislop was in charge of the surveys, and besides checking on the parties, he had "to satisfy himself that the White Pass was . . . the true 'Gateway to the Golden North.'" He determined to investigate the Warm Pass Legend. Warm Pass was said to be 1,000 feet lower than White Pass, but opinions as to its location differed. A reconnaissance disclosed that at the head of East Fork there was Denver Glacier. Hislop then beat his way up Skagway River from White Pass City, through today's Warm Valley, and in 48 hours reached the mouth of Windy Arm, his clothing in tatters and almost barefoot. His first words on making contact with the patrol anxiously awaiting his arrival was, "Well, boys, I didn't find Warm Pass!"<sup>10</sup>

Rumors that railroaders were reconnoitering Skagway Valley, preparatory to building a railroad across White Pass, caused some headshaking in Dyea. The Dyeans were relieved when H. L. Stokes, a leading merchant, returned from Skagway in the second week of May. He told the editor of the *Dyea Press* that the railroaders had shown him little more than 1,500 ties "to lay a railroad through a canyon, where a pack-horse could not safely walk through." He accordingly would not advise any of his friends to invest in Skagway's future. Chief Engineer Hawkins and his associates were to prove Stokes wrong.<sup>11</sup>

## B. Construction Begins

### 1. Shortages and Problems

It is unlikely that there was ever a railroad built with so little advance planning. When Chief Engineer Hawkins disembarked in Skagway

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<sup>9</sup> Graves to Bliss, Aug. 4, 1898, NA, RG 76, Series 127.

<sup>10</sup> S. H. Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll* (Chicago, 1908), pp. 42-47

<sup>11</sup> *Dyea Press*, May 14, 1898.

in April, "there was simply the White Pass, rising terrible and adamant, buried in deep snow drifts, defying entrance to civilization, and its ally, transportation." There had been only sketchy preliminary surveys, no rolling stock or construction materials had been assembled. It was hundreds of miles to the nearest base of supplies. There was no heavy construction equipment.

No contractors could be found to feed the employees in the work camps that were to be established. Hawkins therefore had to organize a commissary department to feed his people. Foodstuffs, like everything else, had to be shipped in from the Puget Sound cities. Hawkins hired cooks and contracted for and brought up cooking utensils and blankets. Close Brothers invested almost \$200,000 in commissary and quartermaster stores.<sup>12</sup>

The rails to be used were 56-pound, and there was not a shovelful of earth embankment on the line. The grade for much of the route would have to be rock supported and rock ballasted. It was soon learned that local timber was useless as it splintered. Consequently, although much of the country south of the Coast Mountains was heavily wooded, every tie, every bridge timber, and every stringer had to be imported. Every stick of timber used in the bridge- and trestlework cost one dollar a running foot to position, a 40-foot supporting timber \$40.

Large quantities of dynamite and black powder were required, as almost every mile of roadbed had to be blasted. The solid masses of granite and quartzite required charges varying from 1,000 to 1,200 pounds to shatter. All told, over 450 tons of explosives were used in opening the right-of-way between Skagway and Lake Bennett. At one point, a cliff 120 feet in height, 70 feet in depth, and 20 feet thick had to be blasted away.

Much of the work was dangerous. A visitor recalled:

It was a strange sight to see the workmen, each hanging from a stout life-line half way up the precipitous mountain side, where there was a secure footing for an eagle. It required half a day for a man to carry a box of powder along the precarious road.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaska Magazine and Canadian Yukoner*, 1, March 1900, pp. 11-12.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13; *Tacoma News*, July 13, 1899. The explosives were shipped in from San Francisco and Vancouver.

At Mile 11 two men were drilling a huge granite rock, weighing an estimated 100 tons. Suddenly, the rock tumbled forward and the men were crushed beneath. Contractor Mike Heney checked and found the boulder immovable.

"Leave it be," Mike called, "it's as fitting a monument as any driller would want to have." The rock was marked with a black cross, and there it rests today, a towering monument to two of the 35 men who lost their lives in the building of the White Pass and Yukon Route.<sup>14</sup>

Probably no tunnel in the world was built under more difficult circumstances than the one which penetrates a perpendicular rock barrier at Mile 15. Machinery and equipment to drive this 250-foot tunnel were manhandled up the sides of a cliff.

Nearby at the gorge, high on the mountain side overlooking White Pass City, a blast "which would put to shame the eruption of Mount Vesuvius was successfully touched off," on Saturday, January 14, 1899. Twenty-seven hundred pounds of dynamite sent tons of rock crashing down the side of the mountain. An eyewitness declared in Skagway that the rock was "blown away from the side of the mountain for half a mile high." Although the editor of the *Daily Alaskan* allowed this was undoubtedly an exaggeration, he agreed that it was "a blast that will never be forgotten by those who saw it or equalled again in Alaska."<sup>15</sup>

Near the Summit a deep canyon was spanned by a cantilever bridge, 215 feet above the stream's bed.

## 2. Mike Heney and the Construction Crews in Action

Ground was broken on May 27, 1898, on the first railroad in Alaska. Michael J. Heney, a Canadian, was in charge of construction. His crews at no time numbered less than 1,000, and at times there were as many as 1,900 on the payroll. During the summer months, there were only a few hours of darkness, and so Chief Engineer Hawkins had Heney organize shifts and the work was prosecuted round-the-clock.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Edward A. Herron, *Alaska's Railroad Builder: Mike Heney* (New York, 1960), p. 100.

<sup>15</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 16, 1899.

<sup>16</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaska Magazine and Canadian Yukoner*, 1, March 1900, p. 12.



When construction commenced, it was easy to recruit laborers at Skagway for 30 cents an hour. These were not "the ordinary railroad laborers, and spent very little money for drink." Most of them were men "temporarily detained, waiting the arrival of friends or money." They were glad to have an opportunity to get free board and lodging in the construction camps and to earn spending money. Many were college graduates. Upon one occasion, the company surgeon, having an operation to perform, sent out on the grade for assistance. A skilled physician was found among the graders. He came, assisted the surgeon, and then took up his pick.

Mid-summer found a thousand men working on the railroad. They would blow down the side of a mountain, covering the Brackett Road with debris, then climb down, clear the road, and return to the right-of-way. It was slow and expensive work, because the Brackett Road had to be kept open to facilitate travel of those en route to Lake Bennett and the Klondike.

Whenever the laborers heard of a rich strike, a number would desert to try their luck at prospecting. On August 5, 1898, Hislop and Heney went up to Lake Bennett. At Log Cabin, on their return, they met hundreds of their graders, many of them carrying with them company shovels. When the men called, "Where is the new diggings?" Hislop and Heney replied that they had been out "reconnoitering; that they had seen no new diggings, nor even heard of any." The men hooted, yelled, and rushed on.

At Lake Bennett, the graders found men with boats and scows to rent or sell, and bursting with details of the rich strike in the Atlin District. On they rushed. Hundreds were already there, and watched the newcomers as they crossed the beautiful lake. They laughed and said, "See the poor fools come."

When Heney checked with his foremen he found that 560 men had quit the payroll to join the stampede to Lake Atlin. Most of these failed to strike it rich, and many were soon back at work on the White Pass grade.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 422; Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, p. 58. The men recruited in Skagway were good workers once they became hardened to the job. But there was one great drawback. By the time many began to earn their way, their friends, their money, or news of a strike sent them to the paymaster. After claiming their wages, they disappeared for the Klondike or Lake Atlin.

To prevent trouble in the camps, Mike Heney had one strict and simple rule--"No liquor allowed in Camp." When Camp No. 3 (at Rocky Point) was organized, one of "Soapy" Smith's confederates pitched a gambling and drinking tent nearby. Heney ordered him off. The man refused to go, saying, he "guessed it had as good a right to be there as Heney's." This was true. Heney did not quibble. He sent for Hugh Foy, the camp foreman, and pointing to a huge rock, just above the den of iniquity, he said, within hearing of the owner, "that rock has got to be out of there by 5 to-morrow morning--not one minute later, mind." He then walked off.

Next morning Foy sent a rock gang to place a few sticks of dynamite under the boulder. At 4:55 he detailed a man to awaken the bartender. He swore, and refused to get up so early. Foy then went himself, and said, "In one minute by this watch I will give the order to touch off the time fuse. It will burn for one minute and then that rock will arrive here or hereabouts." The man on the cot told Foy to go to hell.

Foy replied, "I'm too busy to go this morning but you will unless you jump lively--Fire!" He used the 60 seconds left to take cover behind a rock, where he was joined by the tent owner in his underwear, and together they watched the blast and destruction of the tent and its stock of whiskey.

Foy then walked to Heney's tent and reported, "That rock is down, sir."

"Where's the man?"

"The last I saw of him," Foy answered, "he was going down the trail in his underclothes, cursing."

"That's all right," said Heney, and that was his last trouble of this sort.<sup>18</sup>

### 3. The Railroad Comes to Broadway

The vigorous trio (Graves, Heney, and Hawkins) which spearheaded construction of the White Pass & Yukon Route was capable of coping with any emergency. After some difficult and tedious negotiations a right-of-way was secured from the town of Skagway, along the bluff and east of Spring Street. The town dragged its feet and no effort was made to clear the area. After some delay, representatives of the corporation asked for a right-of-way down Broadway.

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<sup>18</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 61-63.

A stormy mass-meeting was held on the evening of June 14, where it was determined to grant the railroad temporary use of Broadway until the route along the bluff could be cleared by the city and turned over to the railroad. A noisy minority objected, and declared that they would prevent the railroad by force, if necessary, from building on Broadway. It was 3 a.m. before the end of the meeting.

Most of the participants overslept, and when they awoke on the 15th, they found "a railway along Broadway, a little locomotive chu-chuing forward and back, and men with firearms hanging on their hips tramping ties." The town failed to make good on its promise to provide a right-of-way along the bluff, so the company purchased the land there and laid track, so that it had two lines through Skagway. Passenger trains were routed down Broadway, while freight trains en route to the company wharf operated on the bluff spur.<sup>19</sup>

#### 4. Governor Brady Visits the Grade

President Graves of the White Pass & Yukon Route reached Skagway to check construction on July 2, 1898. One of the first men he met was Soapy Smith, from whom he received an invitation to ride with him at the head of the Fourth of July parade. Having been apprised of Soapy's reputation, Graves politely but firmly declined.<sup>20</sup>

Governor Brady was also in Skagway at this time. When he accompanied President Graves out along the grade, Brady was surprised to see how much work the railroaders had accomplished. They were putting down a solid roadbed, "heavy rails on Oregon fir sawed ties." Three miles of track had been laid, and two additional miles of grade had been constructed. This would be tracked as soon as the expected ship arrived with a cargo of rails.

On July 3 Mike Heney had 1,050 men at work, and he hoped to increase his construction crew to 2,000 within two to three weeks. Pay was 30 cents per hour, with an 11-hour work day. Laborers were charged one dollar a day for board and room, which enabled them to clear \$2.30 a day.

Brackett and the railroaders were cooperating, but Graves told Brady that his company was confronted with difficulties in Skagway.

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<sup>19</sup> Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, pp. 420-421.

<sup>20</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, p. 18.

Obstacles had been raised, and the company was experiencing difficulty in getting water frontage for wharves and yards. Brady trusted the railroad could obtain all the law allowed "without trouble and blackmail," as the success of the "enterprise is a matter of great value to the public."<sup>21</sup>

##### 5. Bringing up Heavy Equipment from the Puget Sound Cities

One problem that had not been anticipated by President Graves and his associates was a shortage of shipping. Most steamers in the Alaskan trade were small and slow and unsuited for the transportation of equipment and supplies, such as were required in railroad construction. In addition, the Spanish-American War resulted in the sale or charter of every vessel on the Pacific that would float to the United States government. To solve this problem the railroaders used wrecks (large ocean-going sailing vessels that had been wrecked) sold cheap by underwriters to local owners who had refloated and partially repaired them. Some of these had no masts and spars, and none of them were in condition for ocean travel in heavy seas. But they could navigate the Inland Passage. So the railroaders arranged to have these hulks towed up and down the coast between Skagway and Vancouver. Surprising as it may seem, the company was able to insure the cargoes.<sup>22</sup>

With these vessels the railroaders brought up rails, ties, dynamite, and rolling stock. By July 2, 40 tons of dynamite were stored at Skagway, with another 20 tons scheduled to arrive aboard *Shirley*. When *Shirley* left Seattle on July 6 she carried 50 tons of rails and a locomotive. The people of Skagway had asked Chief Engineer Hawkins to have the locomotive there in time for the July 4 celebration but unexpected obstacles had intervened.<sup>23</sup>

In the second week of July the giant barge *Skookum* sailed from Seattle. Aboard was a huge cargo of railroad iron, "three noisy" Brooke's narrow gauge locomotives, and a number of gravel- and flat-cars. The locomotives and flatcars were veterans of hard service on the Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad. The company had purchased them for use on the grade while it was under construction. Several days later, the barges *Ajax* and *Bjax* departed Seattle with two more Columbia & Puget Sound locomotives.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Brady to Secretary of the Interior, July 7, 1898, NA, Microcopy 430, Ltrs. Recd., Secretary of the Interior.

<sup>22</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 56-57.

<sup>23</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, July 2, 1898.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, July 11 & 15, 1898.

## C. The Railroad Reaches the Summit

### 1. The First Excursion Train North

By July 21 the locomotive and rolling stock brought up from Seattle by *Shirley* had been assembled. A run, the first in Alaska, was made by the work train out to the end of the track and back to Skagway. Three days later was Sunday, and *City of Seattle* docked and 60 tourists got off to spend a day in the fabulous town of which they had heard so much. As there were a number of Yukoners in town, Chief Engineer Hawkins announced that he would run an excursion train up the line.

Temporary seats were placed on three flatcars, and on these about 150 people, including 22 tourists, were seated. The train pulled out shortly before noon and proceeded as far up the line as rails had been laid. When the locomotive stopped most of the passengers got off and walked up the roadbed, "where rails had been laid but not ballasted." A school teacher from Boston, Massachusetts, was grieved to find a large number of men working on the Sabbath, and announced he would never buy stock "in a railroad that permitted its men to work on that day."

One lady, as she watched the Brackett Road on the trip down, exclaimed:

All those horrors of the trail we read last year were wicked newspaper talk. We have country roads outside Boston worse than that trail, and men and horses don't lose their lives on them.

Someone answered that the trail of which she had read was hidden "in the woods on the other side of the river and at Liarsville it . . . ."

"Ah, Liarsville," she exclaimed, and declined to listen further.

On the return trip, the tourists were shown nuggets and gold dust by the Yukoners and were much impressed. When the excursionists reboarded *City of Seattle*, the man in charge, G. S. Houghton (a school principal from Boston), said he would return next year with a larger group.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, July 25, 1898.

## 2. The Construction of the Shops and Depot

Meanwhile, a site one and a half miles north of the wharves had been selected for the railroad shops. Contracts for materials were to be let in Seattle. Machinists and skilled craftsmen, numbering 140, were brought in from San Francisco to do the work. By the first week of September, a large seven-stall roundhouse had been completed and ground broken for two 50 by 150-foot car shops. A large two-story section house was being erected at the east end of the railroad bridge; a large water tank was put up on the bluff above the spring; and coal chutes, storehouses, and other necessary buildings were being raised.<sup>26</sup>

Soon afterwards construction was commenced on a handsome depot and office building at the southeast corner of Broadway and Second. The depot, described by a Skagway booster as "one of the finest and most commodious in the Northwest," was completed early in 1899. The two-story building was 100 by 80 feet, with its interior finished in "attractive style." On the first floor were "two large and commodious waiting rooms, between which and connected with both was a ticket office," which for convenience and style cannot be excelled. The waiting rooms were "nicely furnished and supplied with the conveniences of a modern depot, such as a news stand, writing desks, tables, toilets, etc." The upper floor was divided into offices.<sup>27</sup>

## 3. Winter Slows Construction

Contractor Heney made a flying visit to Skagway on the evening of July 14. He had just returned from the Summit, where his men had one-half mile of grade ready for rails. Camp 5 had been established at Heney, and "Big Mike" told Chief Engineer Hawkins that by the end of July the road bed to that point would be completed. On the grade between Rocky Point and Heney, work had been slowed because the railroad right-of-way was parallel to, and above, the Brackett

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., July 2, 1898; *Skagway News*, Sept. 2, 1898. At 11 p.m., on September 1, the tug *Wilowa* steamed into Skagway harbor with the heavily loaded barge *Skookum*. Aboard the barge were 4,000 tons of freight; three locomotives, Nos. 3, 4, and 5; one passenger coach; one combination passenger and baggage coach; one baggage car; several flats; and 3,000 tons of general railroad material. *Skagway News*, Sept. 2, 1898.

<sup>27</sup> *Directory and Guide Skagway: Metropolis of Alaska and Gate to the Golden North* . . . (Skagway, 1899), p. 75. The building was lighted by electricity.

Road. After a charge was shot, a crew had to be turned to clearing the road of fallen stone and debris.<sup>28</sup> Heney was almost as good as his word, and by August 25 work trains were running to Heney Station, 12 miles from Skagway.<sup>29</sup>

Following the Atlin Stampede in August, Chief Engineer Hawkins was notified by the North West Mounted Police that the British Columbia Parliament had not acted on the company's franchise, and for the present the railroad must stop at the provisional boundary. It was October before a charter for construction of the railroad between the Summit and the 60th Parallel was issued to the British Columbia and Yukon Railroad. Thus the railroad, which is known as the White Pass & Yukon Route, was built and operated under three charters. From Skagway to the Summit of White Pass it was chartered as the Pacific & Arctic Railway & Navigation Company; between the Summit and the British Columbia-Yukon border as the British Columbia and Yukon Railway; and as the Y. M. T. and T. Co. to the projected terminus at Fort Selkirk.<sup>30</sup>

In November the lakes at the Summit froze over. With the advent of snow, construction became increasingly difficult. In late November the thermometer plummeted to 30 degrees below zero. The Arctic gales and severe cold made the men torpid, and benumbed both mind and body. For days at a time little work could be done. Ground cleared of snow drifted over during the night. Plans to have work trains operating to the Summit by Christmas were dashed.

Although working on the grade was difficult, bridge builders had it worse. At the bridge below the tunnel, when the winds were howling and the snow drifting, the men experienced great difficulty. After the sills were in place and the posts and caps framed and ready to be raised, workers spent an entire day putting in one bent, and on the day following they succeeded in raising only two bents. The men were so numbed with cold, and the snow blew so badly that visibility was nearly zero. Often they were unable to see across an opening 40 feet in width, and the loudest shout could not be heard.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, July 15, 1898.

<sup>29</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaska Magazine and Canadian Yukoner*, 1, p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14; Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 422.

<sup>31</sup> Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 422; Graves, *On the "White-Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 59-60. On sub-zero days, when the wind was howling, it was necessary to relieve crews after one hour.

President Graves and Chief Engineer Hawkins, despite the opposition of some of the shareholders, insisted that the railroad be built to the highest standards. They argued successfully that the White Pass & Yukon Route would yield good returns, provided the roadbed was well located with the lowest possible gradients over which locomotives could haul heavy loads up hill in the summer, and which would permit the use of heavy rotary snowplows in winter. It was believed that with rotaries and extensive snowsheds the line could be kept open throughout the year. Experience gained after the railroad was opened to traffic proved them correct, although during the worst storms there were times when rotaries had difficulty keeping the right-of-way opened, and traffic had to shut down.

On the other side of the coin, many British bondholders had misgivings, because it was suspected in European financial circles that American railroad construction was "cheap and flimsy." It was known that the key personnel --Graves, Hawkins, Heney, and Hislop--had learned their trade in the United States and Canada. To put the European investors at ease, President Graves hired a photographer, Barley, to document on film construction progress and procedures. The trustees for the bondholders were still not satisfied, so they send an engineer, Brydone Jack, to observe the work and see that it was being done in accordance with contract specifications.

In February 1899 Jack, Heney, and Hislop went out together. When they reached camp that night, Jack was exhausted. It was a bitter night, with the mercury falling far below zero. Morning found Jack enfeebled, unrested, and feverish. He scoffed at the suggestion that he be sent to the Skagway hospital. After several days, he took pneumonia, was carried to Glacier on a litter, and taken down to Skagway by train. He died in the hospital the next day.<sup>33</sup>

By January 16, 1899, work trains were running as far as Glacier. That day, as a public relations gesture, the White Pass & Yukon Route arranged to run a passenger train to the end of the line. Aboard as guests, when the train pulled out of Skagway, were several members of the territorial government and of the local bar. At Heney Station, the guests were joined by Dr. Whiting, company surgeon, and P. B. Flood, division superintendent of the Summit Division.

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<sup>32</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 115-119.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-55. The Barley Photographs provide an invaluable record of the construction of the railroad and for construction details of structures.



At the end of the tracks, the train stopped and the officials and guests walked up the grade. Passing through the tunnel, they were able to command a view of Skagway Valley seen only by a few, except the 1000s of workmen.<sup>34</sup> One of the guests reported:

I count myself fortunate to have been one of a party invited to ascend to this point . . . . We rode upon a flatcar, roped in at the sides and the engine drew us to the very last rail laid. I never was more strongly impressed with what the mind of a puny man can achieve than as we wound our ascending way through the magnificent scenery. The Skagway lay like a silver ribbon below--the busy town burst upon our view as we gazed. From near the Summit one can see through the canyon fourteen miles back to Lynn Canal and salt water.<sup>35</sup>

On its return, the train stopped at Mr. Hollister's, at Camp 3, for lunch.<sup>36</sup>

#### 4. First Through Train to the Summit

The track was laid to the Summit on February 16, 1899, and the first through train left Skagway at 10:05, on the 20th. Crowded into two coaches were officials of the company and 83 invited guests. The thermometer outside registered four below, and a cold north wind was blowing. Many of the group, besides photographer O. E. Hegg, had brought along cameras. The windows soon iced over, so the passengers were unable to appreciate the grandeur of the scenery. At East Fork Bridge, Rocky Point, Clifton, Pitchfork Falls, Glacier, Tunnel Bridge, and Camp 9, stops were made to permit the passengers to detrain and take photographs.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 16, 1899.

<sup>35</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaska Magazine and Canadian Yukoner*, 1, March 1900, p. 12.

<sup>36</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 16, 1899. Those constituting the visiting party were: United States District Judge C. S. Johnson and his wife, Acting Governor and Mrs. Ellrod, Commissioner and Mrs. Sehlbrede, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bullen, General Fredericks, Mrs. Stevens, A. J. Daly, Walter Church, Paymaster Brooks, Miss Joanne Brown, and Mr. and Mrs. Hollister.

<sup>37</sup> *The Morning Alaskan*, Feb. 21, 1898. The construction of the railroad had altered the scene at Pitchfork Falls. Where there had formerly been three streams of water there was now one.

The Summit was reached at 1:30, the last half-mile being made through an excavation of snow, varying in depth from six to 20 feet on each side of the track. To keep the right-of-way open, an army of 300 shovelers were employed. The guests' first view of the Summit was of the flagpoles within 50 feet of each other, one flying the Stars and Stripes, the other the Union Jack. On the American side there was a large railroad construction camp to which the guests were conducted and greeted by Hugh Foy, superintendent of construction. One tent was reserved for the ladies and the other for the men. In the tent of Thomas Vaughn, the walking boss, the men were given cigars and liquid refreshments.<sup>38</sup>

Foy now announced that dinner was being served in the south dining room tent. With the mercury standing at 22 below outside, the guests sat down to two 100-foot tables. Before the program started, Canadian officials from Log Cabin and Lake Bennett, who had been delayed by a storm, arrived. After they had eaten, the speaker, John Hislop, was introduced. Following his address, a number of toasts were proposed and drunk.<sup>39</sup>

The festivities ended at 4 p.m., and the guests walked past the flagpoles to the train where company photographer Barley posed them in front of the train. Skagway was reached at 7:30, and at the depot as they left the cars the guests gave three cheers for the railroad and its officials.

That evening Contractor Heney entertained the railroad and Canadian officials at dinner in Clancy's Hall.<sup>40</sup>

#### D. Opening the Railroad to Whitehorse

##### 1. Construction Beyond the Summit

The White Pass & Yukon Route the next day began operating two passenger trains daily, except Sunday, to the Summit. They departed

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Near the camp was located the *U. S. Hotel* and several other places where stampedeers on the trail could get food, drink, and lodging.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. Hislop, assistant chief engineer, substituted for Chief Engineer Hawkins, who had escorted the remains of Brydone Jack to Vancouver for burial.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Skagway at 7 and 10 a.m., left the Summit at 2:30 and 4 p.m., and reached Skagway at 5 and 6 p.m.<sup>41</sup> Although the railroad fare was one-half the toll on the Brackett Road, it was able to report a profit on this service.<sup>42</sup>

Guests who had attended the celebration at the Summit on February 20 were saddened to learn that their host, Hugh Foy, had taken pneumonia and died on the 28th.<sup>43</sup> But construction, although the men were plagued by the weather, went on. In March a strike stopped work entirely on the grade between the Summit and Lake Bennett. With the collapse of the strike and the coming of spring, work was resumed. Although the construction people no longer had to hang over cliffs to place charges and cease work to clear rubble from the Brackett Road, they had other problems. Not a wheelbarrow load of gravel could be found between the Summit and Fraser, a distance of nine miles. Ballast had to be hauled from the bed of Skagway River at Boulder or from a gravel pit at Fraser. By June 1 a full crew was again put on the White Pass payroll, and on the 20th they began laying rail beyond the Summit. Three miles of rail were laid on a record day. Two shifts, each working a 12-hour day, were employed.<sup>44</sup>

## 2. The Red Line Transportation Co.

The freighters led by Bill Robinson, better known as "Stickeen Bill," organized the Red Line Transportation Company, to bridge the gap between the temporary railhead at the Summit and Lake Bennett. Stickeen Bill and his men employed big, four-horse double bobsleds, with wide runners. Each sled could be loaded with half a ton of freight. Through bills of lading were issued from Skagway to Bennett. A big freighters' camp was established at Log Cabin, and each morning except Sunday (the Canadian blue laws forbidding freighting on that day) teams started in both directions. This gave the horses ten miles of load downgrade, and ten miles empty.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, March 24, 1899.

<sup>42</sup> Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 425.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 423.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424; Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, p. 61.

<sup>45</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 86-87; Emerson, "The Engineer and the Road to the Gold Fields," *Engineering Magazine*, 17, p. 774.

The railroad charged one cent a pound or one-half the toll authorized by Secretary of the Interior Bliss for "the privilege of dragging one's own freight over the toll road." The freighters charged two cents a pound for the haul from the Summit to Bennett. Expenses for the round trip for the freighters were about \$20 and receipts could run as much as \$200. If there were a sufficient quantity of freight there could be a bonanza in the business for a freighter with ten or more four-horse teams. As it was, however, the freighters alternated between excessive earnings and inability to pay their teamsters or other bills, because they lacked capital. The snow trail which the railroad had opened from the Summit to Bennett was not in the best condition for travel until February and by late April it began to soften.<sup>46</sup>

In the fall the first hard frost covered the lakes with a thin crust of ice. On this crust snow fell, which delayed deeper freezing and pressed the thin ice below the water, so that beneath the snow there was, many times, slush two or three feet deep. Teams and drivers would break through the crust, and get wet, which was dangerous with temperatures at 20 below and a wind howling.<sup>47</sup> Stick-eeen Bill, as soon as the ice became rotten in April, blasted out a channel six miles long through Summit Lake. This he navigated with a 20-foot gasoline launch, towing a "home-made dory" loaded with passengers and freight.<sup>48</sup>

### 3. The Railroad Reaches Bennett

The final spike on the grade between Lake Bennett and the Summit was scheduled to be driven on July 6, 1899. An enthusiastic group left Skagway that morning at 8 a. m. by special train for Bennett. At the Summit a stop was made to allow the guests to have lunch and to transfer from coaches to flatcars on which benches had been placed. The railroad beyond this point had not been ballasted sufficiently to handle coaches in safety.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Emerson, "The Engineer and the Road to the Gold Fields," *Engineering Magazine*, 17, pp. 774-775. The snow road was made by sending one team after another through the drifts, packing down the snow until the hard bed rose above the level of the snowfield and was thus swept clear by the wind. It was staked with saplings on both sides and could be followed on the darkest night or in the worst blizzard. *Ibid.*, p. 774.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 774-775.

<sup>48</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 86-87.

<sup>49</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, July 7, 1899. Among the guests were: H. M. McGregor

It was 3 p.m. when the special train rolled into Bennett, the last several hundred yards of rail having just been laid. Early that morning, a river steamer had landed 200 passengers at Bennett. Across the front of a tent they saw a sign, "THE WHITE PASS & YUKON ROUTE R. R. — TICKET OFFICE ." Many rushed in to buy tickets, although there was no track on the grade.

"We'll take care of you," said the agent, "the train leaves at 3 p.m. sharp."

"Whereabouts does it start from?" inquired a man in a broad white hat.

"It will leave this depot at 3 p.m."

With this information he ceased giving data. After purchasing their tickets, the men listened to the ring of the steel spike-driving mauls on the rails, still about two miles south of Bennett. Many walked out to watch the crews at work, as they approached the station.<sup>50</sup>

As soon as the last rail was positioned, the honor of driving the final spike was given to Mrs. Hawkins, wife of the chief engineer. She was assisted by Contractor Heney; Frank Walters, the walking boss; and Captain Jarvis of the North West Mounted Police.

Prior to the arrival of the special train, Mike Heney had lined up all the teams and carts of the Red Line Transportation Co., in four columns. While the maul clanged against the spike, the "entire lake fleet of steamers" in port blew their whistles, and 21 "earth quaking blasts were shot where a mountain side was being removed for a depot site." The editor of the *Morning Alaskan* boasted that this was the "most thrilling and eventful scene ever witnessed north of Puget Sound."<sup>51</sup>

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of the Canadian Pacific Railway; Pillsbury & Cleveland, photographers; Capt. W. Moore and his daughter; C. C. Runner; Peter H. Peele, collector of customs; Arthur James, Canadian customs inspector; Rev. J. A. Sinclair; Dr. & Mrs. L. H. Moore; Dr. M. F. Hall; Dr. Whiting; F. M. Bush; E. A. Seeley; R. C. Smith; Mr. & Mrs. A. L. Berdoe; J. A. Paine, Red Line Transportation Co.; F. Keeler; John Stanley; C. E. Cole; Miss A. L. Burke; C. E. Hawkins and wife; J. T. Hayne; L. H. Grey; F. H. Whiting; G. W. De Succa; W. L. Succa; W. L. Wilson; and Agent Busby.

<sup>50</sup> Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 425.

<sup>51</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, July 7, 1899; Hiram A. Cody, "The Gateway of the North," *The Canadian Magazine*, Feb. 1907, p. 341.

After the rumble had ceased, Capt. H. M. McGregor of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company called for three cheers for the White Pass & Yukon Route. The ensuing roar smote the ears. General Superintendent Hawkins, Contractor Heney, and the other company officials were saluted in similar fashion. The guests then rushed to Heney's messhouse, where a banquet was served. Champagne flowed, and many toasts were proposed and drunk.<sup>52</sup>

When the first through return train rolled out of Bennett at 6 p.m., there were aboard, besides the guests, the Klondikers who had purchased tickets that morning. Among them were a number who had struck it rich. As the train passed down, the passengers saw that the construction camps were "in holiday attire in honor of the occasion." To buoy up the spirits of his men, Mike Heney had seen that 30 kegs of beer were distributed.

At the Summit a stop was made to eat and transfer to four coaches. One of the official party was heard to remark as he climbed aboard, "We ate every two hours . . . and I never enjoyed grub more in my life."

The train, the coaches and their platforms crowded, pulled into Skagway at 11 p.m. As it did, an observer likened it to a party of southern excursionists returning from a moonlight watermelon picnic. As the Klondikers piled off the cars and headed for the saloons and hotels, their shouting and cheering was heard all over the city.<sup>53</sup>

Railroaders, as well as Klondike and Skagway boosters, had good reason to be proud. A railroad had been built and was in operation across terrain presenting problems staggering the imagination. Between Skagway and White Pass, the grade averaged 2.6 percent, with the steepest grade about four percent. Few, if any railroads, not dependent on cogs can boast such a gradient.<sup>54</sup> The cheapest miles of grade to build cost \$10,000, and there were only three such miles across the alluvial flats at Skagway. The most expensive miles were those at Tunnel Mountain and at Rocky Point, each of which cost \$125,000. There was a mile at Lake Bennett which swallowed \$80,000. Strange as it seems, the White Pass & Yukon Route was built without government subsidies.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, July 7, 1899.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*; Warman, "Building a Railroad into the Klondike," *McClure's Magazine*, March 1899, p. 425. The train was pulled by "a smart-looking compound Baldwin locomotive."

<sup>54</sup> W. M. Sheffield, "A Railway to the Klondike," *The Cosmopolitan*, May 1899, p. 78.

<sup>55</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaskan Magazine and*

Despite heartbreaking difficulties, construction crews had, on one occasion, laid 21 miles of track in 16 days, including preliminary clearing of heavy snowdrifts and building three bridges. Their banner day was three and one-half miles of track laid and run over, "where unbroken snow many feet deep had glistened in the morning."

#### 4. On to Whitehorse

With the railroad running to Bennett, construction was started on the 71 miles leading from that point to Whitehorse. General Superintendent Hawkins forecast this section would be open to traffic by June 10, 1900, and "going over the pass will be an ugly dream."<sup>56</sup>

The railroad made the trip to and from the Klondike, when the waterways were open, a lark. Typical were the reactions of Nevill A. D. Armstrong. He with a number of other prospectors had determined to shut down their operations in September 1899. They took passage at Dawson on the little sternwheeler *Ora*, scheduled to sail for Whitehorse on October 4. Whitehorse was reached without difficulty. Affording communication between Whitehorse and the head of Miles Canyon was a hand-powered trolley, running on wooden rails. After pushing the trolley to the head of the canyon, the miners boarded *Flora*, sister ship of *Ora*. She carried them to Bennett.

Armstrong and his companions were "thankful that it would not be necessary for us to tackle the . . . White Pass trail over the mountains, where appalling hardships were endured by the gold seekers of '97 and '98." He found it a pleasant experience to be on "this miniature railway," as the last train he had ridden was the one he had detrained from in San Francisco in June 1898. The miners agreed with the publicists that the construction of the railroad was a wonderful piece of engineering. In places it made them giddy to look out the window and down into space. "There appeared to be nothing between the rails and a drop of 1000 feet."<sup>57</sup>

Superintendent Hawkins missed his prediction that trains would be running between Bennett and Whitehorse by six weeks. Construction crews, one working northward from Bennett and the other south-

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*Canadian Yukoner*, 1, March 1900, p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>57</sup> Nevill A. D. Armstrong, *Yukon Yesterdays: Thirty Years of Adventure in the Klondike* . . . (London, 1936), pp. 107-112.

ward from Whitehorse, met at Carcross (then called Caribou) on July 29, 1900. There a golden spike ceremony attended by President Graves and other dignitaries was held.<sup>58</sup>

#### E. Fighting Snow on the White Pass

##### 1. An Administration Building Is Built

Rolling stock was purchased as rapidly as it could be economically employed. By March 1900 the railroad had in service 13 locomotives, 250 stock-, box-, or flatcars, and eight passenger coaches. Many of the cars, as well as a snowplow, flanger, and derrick car, had been built in the Skagway shops of the railroad.<sup>59</sup>

Besides erecting a number of comfortable "little stations," the railroad in December 1899 began work on an Administration Building on Second Avenue, next to the depot. As the first step, structures standing on the site, the *Rosalie Hotel* and the agency of the steamer *Dirigo*, were moved onto lots at the southwest corner of Broadway and Second, across the street from the depot.<sup>60</sup>

Work progressed rapidly, and by May 16, 1900, the handsome two-story structure was completed. On that day the offices of General Superintendent Hawkins, Assistant Engineer Hislop, and Chief Clerk Young were moved from the second story of the depot into the Administration Building. Space formerly occupied by their offices was turned over to personnel charged with operating the depot and the Skagway Division of the White Pass & Yukon Route.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, July 29-30, 1900.

<sup>59</sup> "Transportation Past and Present in Alaska," *Alaska Magazine and Canadian Yukoner*, 1, March 1900, p. 14; *Morning Alaskan*, May 19, 1899. The boxcars were 33 1/2 feet in length and patterned after the "regulation stock cars of the States."

<sup>60</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, Dec. 19, 1899. The stations contained waiting rooms, offices of the agents, and living quarters.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, May 16, 1900. Hawkins', Hislop's, and Young's offices were located on the east side of the second floor. The general entrance was into the department occupied by the staff of the chief clerk, with doors opening into Hawkins' and Hislop's offices.



## 2. The Rotary Snowplows Prove Themselves

President Graves and his associates had pegged their hopes of keeping the railroad open and operating in the winter on the use of rotary snowplows. A solid roadbed was needed to withstand the strain involved in operating big rotary snowplows pushed into huge drifts by two and occasionally three locomotives. The rotaries would cope with drifts up to 12 feet deep, but in deeper snow they tunneled or choked themselves, and it was found necessary to prepare for their approach by trimming down the snow-bank with shovels.

A rotary, depending on the depth and hardness of the snow, could average from one to five miles per hour. When the snow was drifting it filled the cut made by the rotary in a few minutes. Consequently, it was necessary to have the train for which the rotary was clearing the track follow closely behind, before the right-of-way could become blocked again. Once the train had started, it had to keep going; there was no turning back.

The first big snow fight began on December 18, 1899.<sup>62</sup> Several weeks before, the railroaders had begun erecting snowfences and snowsheds between White Pass and Log Cabin. Superintendent Rogers, who had pushed the project, had learned to appreciate snowfences during his years with the Great Northern Railroad.<sup>63</sup>

The thermometer at Skagway stood at 16 degrees above zero at 8 a.m. on December 18, and by 5 p.m. it had fallen 60 degrees. Twelve inches of snow had accumulated on the ground by midnight, and the Dominion telegraph connecting Skagway with Dawson was down. In the railroad cuts, the snow, despite the snowfences and sheds, had drifted to depth of eight feet. A passenger train preceded by one of the big rotaries chugged out of Skagway at 8:50 a.m. and reached Bennett at 3:15 p.m.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 115-119.

<sup>63</sup> *Morning Alaskan*, Dec. 10, 1899. The snowfence consisted of panels, each 12 feet long and seven feet high. The panel faces were made of longitudinal boards, with alternating spaces through which the wind could whip. Panels were positioned at an angle of 75 degrees, the acute angle opening on the side away from the track, thus affording "a wedge-like space, in which the drifting snow could lodge against the boards of the structure." The panels were placed about 80 feet from the track, and were positioned along stretches of ground above cuts, where trouble from drifting snow was anticipated.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, Dec. 19, 1899.

Snow was still coming down on the 20th, and Captain Moore was heard to declare it was the hardest snow he had seen in his 12 years at Skagway. A strong wind out of the north continued to pile up drifts. The train that had reached Bennett on Monday, the 18th, started for Skagway at 11 a.m. on the 19th, following a rotary pushed by two locomotives. The Summit was reached at 4 o'clock. One mile south of Switchback, the rotary ran into trouble, when it and the locomotives were buried by a slide. The man in charge of the rotary had panicked and signaled the locomotives to cease pushing. They stopped and became stuck. Superintendent Rogers speculated that if they had continued, the rotary would have cut its way through.

The passenger train, being behind, escaped being engulfed. Forty men from the section crew, who had boarded the train at White Pass, were turned to with shovels to dig out the rotary.<sup>65</sup>

A relief train left Skagway at 7 a.m. on December 21 and reached Glacier 13 hours later. From Boulder on, section hands had to shovel out drifts, some as deep as 12 feet. When the train chugged into Glacier, the rotary had worked its way down the mountain to the tunnel. There it had struck a boulder hidden in the snow and broke 10 of the 20 knives used to cut snow. After picking up the passengers who had walked to Glacier, the relief train returned to Skagway.<sup>66</sup>

The blockaded train finally rumbled into Skagway at 9:30 a.m. on the 22d, and the rotary arrived 30 minutes later. The rotary and locomotives were sent to the shops, and plans were announced by Superintendent Rogers to resume service on the 23d, after a five-day suspension because of the storm.<sup>67</sup> A train, preceded by a rotary, pulled away from the depot at noon and reached Bennett at 11:05 p.m. on December 23, the first through train since the 18th. Between the tunnel and White Pass, five- to 20-foot drifts were encountered. Although the rotary worked, it used so much water that it and the locomotives were compelled to drop back several times to fill their tenders.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., Dec. 20, 1899.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., Dec. 22, 1899. Thirteen of the passengers had walked to Skagway via the Brackett Road. They reported that on the level the snow was two feet deep. A second relief train had left Bennett on the 20th, without a rotary, but had been compelled to turn back after proceeding four miles.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., Dec. 23, 1899.

The train left Bennett on its return run at 3 a.m. on the 24th. Aboard were a large number of men who had mushed down from Dawson. The storm having abated, no trouble was encountered on the run down to Skagway.<sup>68</sup>

Another storm roared in on December 30. Huge drifts again choked the cuts. With eight- to 12-foot drifts all the way to Bennett, and temperatures ranging from 30 to 60 below zero, traffic over the White Pass & Yukon Route again ceased. It was still storming on January 3, 1900, when a party left Skagway to reopen the trail to Bennett. They reached White Pass City the next evening, and on the 5th tried to reach the Summit but were turned back by a driving wind and deep snow.

On the 6th the railroad at 4:10 a.m. sent out a rotary. Nineteen hours later it was at the Summit. After the locomotives and rotary had taken on water, they started for Fraser. If they could reach Fraser, there would be no difficulty in making Bennett, because the right-of-way between Log Cabin and Bennett had been cleared by the wind. Heavy drifts, however, stalled the rotary south of Fraser, and it was January 13 before a train reached Bennett. In reopening the railroad, rotary and train crews on several occasions logged 48 hours of continuous duty. These records were surpassed in the storm of March 7-11, 1900. A rotary and train crew left Skagway on March 7 and reached Bennett on the 11th, after 105 hours' service of which 90 were continuous.<sup>69</sup>

Operating the big rotaries was hazardous. On February 12, 1906, Rotary No. 2 was engulfed in a snowslide near Mile Post 18. Bill Simpson (Rotary Bill) was in charge of the rotary, and Locomotives Nos. 61 and 62 were pushing it through a five-foot snowbank at a speed of five miles an hour. Suddenly, the snow on the mountainside above began to slide, and before the locomotives could back the rotary clear she was engulfed in an avalanche and swept off the track and down the mountainside. Her coupling broke, so both locomotives remained on the track. She was turned over, and left with her "feet," as railroaders called wheels, in the air. Simpson was uninjured, but his fireman and pilot were badly bruised.

A wrecking crew was able to get the tender back on the track with a derrick, but the rotary had to be dismantled where she lay. The pieces were taken to the Skagway Shops, where she was rebuilt.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., Dec. 24, 1899.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., Dec. 30-31, 1899, Jan. 1-17, 1900; Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 115-116.

<sup>70</sup> Graves, *On the "White Pass" Pay-Roll*, pp. 125-126; Cody, "The Gateway

## F. Comments and Recommendations

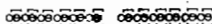
The central theme of the Dyea-Skagway story is the struggle for supremacy between the two towns to be gateway to the Klondike. In this battle transportation was the most important and vital factor. In July 1897 the White Pass Trail was opened as a rival to the Chilkoot Trail and a city sprang into being and boomed on Skagway Bay. The "Dead Horse Trail" resulted, and in November 1897, Skagway interests began work on the Brackett Wagon Road. To cope with this threat, four tramways were put into operation across Chilkoot Pass, and by the spring of 1898 most of the adventurers and their outfits were again passing through Dyea. Unless Skagway could come up with a successful alternative to the tramways, the city was doomed. The alternative was a railroad. In May 1898 construction was commenced on the White Pass & Yukon Route. With its completion to Bennett in July 1899, Skagway triumphed over its rival. The tramways shut down, and Dyea became successively a ghost town and then a memory.

The White Pass & Yukon Route was the determining factor in the transportation story and insured the permanency of Skagway. Although the rush to the Klondike had ebbed before the railroad was completed to Bennett, it was destined to be the lifeline to the Yukon. Since the first excursion train in July 1898, the White Pass & Yukon Route has been popular with tourists. Many visitors to the Golden North Country consider their ride on the White Pass & Yukon Route the high point of their trip. As early as 1904 almost 12,000 passengers were traveling the White Pass & Yukon Route, while over 30,000 tons of freight were being handled annually.

The story of the White Pass & Yukon Route is vital to the interpretation of the Klondike Gold Rush and transportation across the Alaskan Panhandle. The 1899 Depot and 1900 Administration Building should be restored to their appearance, circa 1900. To facilitate the restoration of these buildings, Historic Structures Reports will be required. The railroad track should be relaid along the section of Broadway within the Historic District. The National Park Service, in cooperation with the management of the White Pass & Yukon Route, should in the tourist season display period locomotives and rolling stock on the Broadway track. Many visitors to Skagway will be interested in the railroad shops and roundhouse. Thus, in interpreting the area, it is vital that the Service and the management of the White Pass & Yukon Route cooperate closely for the benefit of all concerned.

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of the North," *The Canadian Magazine*, Feb. 1907, p. 342.



### XIII. THE GOLD RUSH ENDS AND THE TOURISTS COME

#### A. Dyea Becomes a Memory

##### 1. The Tramways Shut Down

The struggle to monopolize the trade of returning Klondikers became important in the summer of 1898. The Dyea Chamber of Commerce boasted at the end of July that of the hundreds who had returned in the past four weeks, only half a dozen had crossed White Pass. The steamship companies were told that the fight for this traffic would be made at Dyea, "and the vessel that does not land here will be at a great disadvantage." Recent experiences had shown that the Pacific Coast Company, which did not land at Dyea, was losing out to the captains of *City of Seattle*, *Discovery*, and *Athenian*.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Dyeans put up a brave front, several factors doomed their town in the struggle for supremacy with Skagway. First there was the rapid progress made by construction crews of the White Pass & Yukon Route as the grade was extended up Skagway Valley toward the Summit; then there was the strike at Lake Atlin in August; and finally in 1899 interest in the Klondike waned as the zealous gold seekers zeroed their attention on the Nome beaches.

In August 1898, upon receipt of news of the Atlin stampede, many Dyea merchants deserted the Taiya Flats and moved to Skagway or Lake Atlin. By the last week of June 1899, a week before the railroad was opened to Bennett, Dyea was all but deserted. Where 13 months before there had been a bustling boomtown of 2,500 people, it was now possible to walk down River Street and the only persons encountered were Thomas Wallace and his gang of teamsters. The tramway was still operating, and its rates to Lake Bennett, five cents a pound, were the same as those charged by the White Pass & Yukon Route. Each bucket continued to carry 400 pounds of freight onward and upward at a speed of four miles per hour. Nearly four-fifths of Yukon-bound freight was still carried by the tramway, but this would cease as soon as the railroad reached Lake Bennett.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Dyea Trail*, July 30, 1898.

<sup>2</sup> *Tacoma Evening News*, July 14, 1899.

Freight reaching Dyea by ship was subjected to a charge of two dollars a ton for wharfage. The long wharf, built at a cost of \$100,000, extended 4,000 feet to deep water. From the wharf to Canyon City freight was hauled in wagons. No machinery or item weighing over 400 pounds, however, could be transported over the tramway.

Already the railroaders were boasting that as soon as their cars were running to Lake Bennett, the tramway would be as dead as Dyea. The tramway people displayed a brave front. They told the public that they could extend their line indefinitely at a cost of \$10,000 a mile, and hold their operating expenses to \$150 per day. Moreover, they boasted, they could operate the tramway a year for what it would cost to keep the railroad grade free from snow during one winter.

The teamsters and tramway employees had signed a petition and favored the concession of Dyea, by the United States, to Canada. This would provide the Canadians with an outlet from the Yukon, wipe out customs regulations, and revive Dyea as a port of entry.<sup>3</sup>

This hope was dashed as the United States would not make such a concession, and within a few weeks after trains started operating between Skagway and Bennett, the tramway shut down.

The White Pass and Yukon Route now bought out the tramway companies for \$150,000. In the last week of January 1900 a crew and supplies were landed at Dyea to commence taking down the tramways. When the men turned to, they began work at the Carter Lake end, employing the line between there and tidewater to bring out equipment salvaged. The huge engines used to provide a motive power for the tramways were brought down over the ice and snow. It was April before the salvage operation was completed, and the cables, cars, and machinery removed. The towers and power stations were soon all that remained of the tramway erected by the Chilkoot Railway & Transportation Co. at a cost of \$175,000.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The Cheechakes Abandon the Chilkoot Trail

Men en route to the Yukon, with the completion of the railroad to the summit of White Pass in February 1899, all but disappeared

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Daily Alaskan*, Jan. 31, 1900. Much of the equipment belonging to the Dyea-Klondike Transportation Co. had been removed the previous autumn, while that of the Alaskan Pacific Railroad Co. had been incorporated into the tramway operated by the Chilkoot Railway & Transportation Co.

from the Chilkoot Trail. J. A. Tarleton, a distinguished botanist, crossed Chilkoot in the last week of April 1899. He reported that he spent a night at Sheep Camp in a bunk in the attic of a primitive hotel. After a night's rest, he started up the trail, which led across snowfields. The grade steepened, and finally he reached the "golden stairs," the final and steepest ascent before the summit. Along this trail the previous year, thousands of men had struggled in the wild rush to the Klondike, but now he was almost alone. He met two men coming down and one overtook him at the summit. At the summit of Chilkoot there were no tents, and the two or three cabins were nearly buried in snow. The air was mild and still and the snow-covered mountain sides reflected the blinding sunlight.

Above Lake Lindeman only a few scrubby balsams lifted "their heads above the snow," the Botanist reported, while "unspeakable Bennett, was a mass of cabins, shanties, and tents draggled along a half graded street," which wound about the foot of a rocky knoll toward the head of Lake Bennett. The mud and melting snow failed to add to the city's charm, although Tarleton found the *Hotel Northern* an improvement over his quarters at Lindeman City.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. Dyea as a Ghost Town

In 1906 Elias Ruud visited Dyea, and published an article describing what he saw in the *Alaskan Monthly Magazine*. On landing in Dyea he found that where eight years before there had been a "hustling, gold-crazed town," only a few structures survived. Hundreds of buildings had been moved away or torn down and the lumber salvaged and used in construction projects at Skagway and Haines.

He hiked up the trail as far as the Canyon. Canyon City was visited. Stoves, ranges, and heavier furniture transported there in '97 and '98 at high costs were seen, and testified to the "strenuous life of those early days, and to walk out to these buildings with their dilapidated signs, their smashed window-panes and their broken and shattered furnishing," provided one of the strangest sights conceivable. The big tram-towers with their great cross-bars could be seen, black, against the white snows of Chilkoot.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> J. A. Tarleton, "A Botanist's Trip on the Upper Yukon," *Alaskan Magazine*, 1, No. 3, June 1900, pp. 123-124.

<sup>6</sup> Elias Ruud, "From Southeastern Alaska," *Alaska Monthly Magazine*, Jan. 1907, pp. 294, 296.

The population of Dyea was down to one--Emil A. Klatt. He was known as the "municipal farmer." In 1907 Robert D. Jones traveled by canoe from Skagway to Dyea to interview Klatt. As his craft approached the head of Taiya Inlet, it nearly foundered against the battered pilings of the great wharf. He beached his canoe in front of the weatherbeaten warehouse of the Pacific Coast Steamship Co. The great sliding doors swayed in the wind, and as he walked up River Street there were signs of hotels and restaurants "which had extended invitations to the thousands who had passed that way."

The sign of the Sunset Telephone Co. announced in mockery of the past, "Communication with Skagway and all Points on the Dyea Trail." The vacant store of the Klondike Trading Co. seemed to echo the memory of the day when hundreds had crossed its threshold to get "outfits while they last." The "Information Bureau" still stood, with a signboard announcing that "Information all about the Trail could be supplied for one dollar."

Across the street was a fence on which was posted a notice threatening trespassers with punishment by the law. This notice was signed "E. A. Klatt." In 1898 Klatt had sold his farm in Wisconsin for a "grubstake" in the Klondike. He had failed to make a strike, and had filed on a homestead of 160 acres, including part of Dyea. He had selected a comfortable building for his residence, and began improving the area by converting the city into a farm. He tore down houses, and with the lumber erected fences. He soon had a lumber yard in connection with his farm, and sashes and doors were for sale cheap. But as the market for agricultural produce was more profitable, he began to remove structures that were in his way by setting them afire.<sup>7</sup>

By 1920 Klatt was gone, and Mrs. Harriet Pullen of Skagway fame, pastured her dairy cattle on the meadows at Dyea. There were still a few structures to mark the site, while Mrs. Pullen's guests were permitted to fish in the Taiya and hunt the flats.<sup>8</sup> Today all that remains to mark the site of the boomtown are two cemeteries (the slide and town), the decayed pilings of the wharf, one log building in fair condition, the remains of several others, house pits, and debris.

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<sup>7</sup> Robert D. Jones, "A Municipal Farmer," *Alaskan-Yukon Magazine*, August 1907, pp. 488-491. The land was fertile, and Klatt was able to raise good crops. Turnips returned a good profit, and he was able to raise nine tons to the acre, while potatoes yielded six tons to the acre. The only difficulty experienced by Klatt was finding a steady market for his products.

<sup>8</sup> Charlotte Cameron, *A Cheechako in Alaska and the Yukon* (London), 1920 pp. 55-56.



## B. The Decline of Skagway

With the ebbing of interest in the Klondike and the rush to Nome in 1899, Skagway, which had boasted a population of 10,000, began to lose people and businesses closed. The railroad, which served as a lifeline to the Yukon, insured that Skagway, unlike Dyea, would survive. By 1910 Skagway, although ten years before it had become the first incorporated city in Alaska, was down to 600 population.

The previous year a critical traveler had reported Skagway to be "a scrap-heap of creation." As the cruise steamer approached the head of Taiya Inlet, a "charred forest" on the left suggested the "devastating hand of man, heretofore so notably absent." The long wharves, ugly cattlepens, and empty warehouses were tokens of past activity. East of the town was a ridge, the stoneface of which had been painted with garish advertisements and cabalistic signs.

The tide was out, and the flats were covered with noisome seaweed. "Four long weather-beaten spindle-legged piers, lightly braced, reach from the town to the warehouses, which are clad in corrugated iron." In uncharitable fashion, he reported that the town itself was "an un-gainly collection of shanties, mostly saloons and gambling houses, now out of business. A few good stores and a cheerful group of offices were occupied by railroad and steamboat personnel."<sup>9</sup>

Another traveler, Charlotte Cameron, described Skagway at the end of World War I in similar terms. She found Broadway "invested with an air of dejection." Many of the houses were deserted, the shops shuttered. The wooden sidewalks were uneven and rotting. She passed a two-story hotel, the *Golden North* which "belied its name." The *Hotel Dewey* was nearby, but neither wore a prosperous air. The only stone building was the courthouse.<sup>10</sup>

These two travelers, who lacked a sense of history, had arrived on the scene too early to appreciate the charm of Skagway. In the 1920s more and more cruise ships steamed up Lynn Canal, and Skagway became a popular port of call for visitors desiring to see the gold rush town about which they had heard and read so much. Among those who came to Skagway in 1923 was President Warren G. Harding. Enterprising businessmen and women held on in Skagway to cater to the tourists. Martin Itjen promoted Skagway, with his "streetcar" and trip to Hollywood to see Mae West.

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<sup>9</sup> T. A. Richard, *Through the Yukon and Alaska* (San Francisco, 1909), p. 131.

<sup>10</sup> Cameron, *A Cheechako in Alaska and the Yukon*, p. 54.

The most popular feature of a visit to Skagway was a ride on the White Pass & Yukon Route across the Coast Mountains to Bennett or Whitehorse. The scenery was spectacular and many historic sites, of which the travelers had read, could be seen from the comfortable parlor cars.

One of the first tourists to write of his trip across White Pass on the railroad was William S. Edwards of Ohio. He reported that although it was the last week in August, 1903, the day was cloudy and cold with an icy wind blowing down Skagway Valley off the glaciers. It was like November in Ohio. Skagway, he reported, was built on a "low sand tongue of detritus carried down from the glaciers by the snow rivers, the river Skagway . . . pouring out a flood of muddy water like the Swiss streams."

The White Pass & Yukon Route was narrow gauge, but the cars were low and roomy. Edwards' train consisted of nine freight cars, a baggage car, two coaches, and three locomotives, one in front and two in the middle. The ride to the Summit was everything the tourist brochures claimed. In many places the roadbed had been blasted out of granite, with sheer precipices above and below. The views from the car were "magnificent and even appalling; sometimes we seemed to hang in mid-air as we crawled upward."

At the Summit red-coated Mounted Police were seen. Here the travelers' bags were examined by customs. The gradual descent to Lake Bennett was commenced. The train rolled across wide, open, flat valleys, over bare granite masses, and through "a stunted fir wilderness toward the Yukon Basin." Flocks of ptarmigan flew up as the locomotives chuffed along, and a few eagles soared high above the snow-covered peaks.<sup>11</sup>

The forest had reclaimed the camps that had sprung up along the trails. By 1908, a tourist reported that all that remained of White Pass City, which had boasted a population of hundreds at the height of the rush, were half a dozen log cabins and frames of a dozen "unsubstantial structures." The largest of these had been a dancehall, and it was now invaded by alder bushes and alongside the doorway were gooseberry bushes. There was a dilapidated building with a sign *Hotel* dangling from a post. Brackett's controversial Gate 9 had tumbled down.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> William S. Edwards, *Into the Yukon* (Cincinnati, 1904), pp. 69-70.

<sup>12</sup> Richard, *Through the Yukon and Alaska*, p. 140; Alice Henson Christoe, "A Sympathetic Journey to the Klondike," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine*, 8, May 1909, p. 86.

## C. Surveying and Marking the International Boundary

### 1. Marking the Boundary Between East Fork and White Pass

Following the settlement of the Alaskan-Canadian Boundary dispute in 1903, survey parties spent a number of rugged summers marking the international boundary. In 1905 a party headed by Dr. O. M. Leland of Cornell University was given the mission of surveying the border "in the vicinity of Skagway River and White Pass." Dr. Leland accordingly organized his team at Seattle in mid-June. The surveyors landed at Skagway on the 19th. Next morning they traveled by train to Denver Station, on the East Fork. A camp was established on the south bank of East Fork, about one-half kilometer east of the railroad on the trail leading to Denver Glacier.<sup>13</sup>

As the terrain was rugged, the work was terribly time-consuming and difficult. After completing their survey of the border between Boundary Peaks 109 and 111, the surveyors moved their base camp to Glacier. From there a good trail led up Warm Pass Valley. Persons familiar with the area told Leland that this trail had been used in 1899 and 1900 by packers en route to Lake Atlin. Where the boundary crossed the head of Warm Pass Valley, it was through timber. This was the only place that this occurred between the Taku and Chilkat. The surveyors, to mark the boundary at this point, cut a lane one kilometer in length through scrub timber.<sup>14</sup>

On reaching White Pass, Leland and his people took cognizance of the line as established by the commissioners in 1900 in implementing the *Modus Vivendi* of 1899. As run by the surveyors, the line coincided with Commissioner's Monument No. 2, "between the American and Canadian flagpoles, about 60 meters south of Summit Lake and west of the snowshed over the railroad tracks."<sup>15</sup>

By mid-September the rainy season had commenced, and Leland determined to call a halt to the season's work and return to Seattle. The party left Skagway on the 14th and disbanded in Seattle on the 18th.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Leland, "Report on Work Executed in 1905 in the Vicinity of Skagway River and White Pass, Alaska, Alaskan Boundary Survey," NA, RG 76.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Marking the Boundary on Chilkoot

Dr. Leland returned to Alaska in June 1906 to survey the boundary at the head of Taiya Valley. Reaching Dyea, by way of Skagway, the surveyors hired a team from Emil Klatt. With the team, they planned to haul their equipment up the valley to Canyon City. Although only seven years had passed since the tramway shut down in July 1899, the road was overgrown and rough, and the bridges of 1898 so dilapidated that Klatt feared injury to his horses, and refused to permit his team to proceed. The surveyors were compelled to pack their gear the rest of the way to the Summit.

To do so, they built a number of footbridges. A ferry was established at the site of the Kinney Bridge, using a skiff for crossing. The advance camp was established at The Scales. As to be expected, the surveyors saw much evidence of the gold rush of '97 and '98 in the valley and near the summit of Chilkoot Pass. Already these sites were "seldom visited and almost inaccessible," because of the absence of bridges. Several structures stood at Canyon City, among them the large log building used as a warehouse by the tramway company. Most of the supports for the tramway cables were still in place, although the cables had been salvaged. The upper powerhouses --the one below The Scales and a second on the Crater Lake side of the summit--were in "fair condition." Most of the buildings were standing at Sheep Camp and two at The Scales. In addition, there was a large structure at the southeast end of Crater Lake.<sup>17</sup>

Once again, work was secured in mid-September. By this time, the country about Chilkoot Pass was covered with snow. The outfit was packed down from The Scales to Dyea, the equipment stored at Fort William H. Seward, and the party then returned to the United States.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Leland, "Report of Work Done in 1906 on Alaskan Border Survey, Near the Head of Lynn Canal, Taiya River, and Chilkoot Pass, Alaska," NA, RG 76. The center span of the Kinney Bridge had been washed away.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Near the powerhouse on the Crater Lake side of the pass, they visited the declivity, where an avalanche on December 9, 1898, had claimed six lives. Heilprin, *Alaska and the Klondike*, p. 21.

<sup>19</sup> Leland, "Report of Work Done in 1906 on Alaska Border Survey, Near the Head of Lynn Canal, Taiya River, and Chilkoot Pass, Alaska," NA, RG 76

The Alaskan-Canadian Boundary Survey added greatly to our knowledge of this rugged and beautiful area. Dr. Leland and his men explored sections of the forbidding Coast Mountains never visited before by man. They erected markers, established triangulation stations, prepared maps, and took hundreds of photographs. In interpreting the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, the Service must not forget the activities of Dr. Leland and his associates.

D. The National Park Service Becomes Interested in the Area

1. The Proposed "Chilkoot" National Park

As early as 1933 the idea of a national park or monument in and around Skagway surfaced. Governor Troy, that autumn, discussed with E. A. Rasmuson of Skagway the economic value to the Alaskan Panhandle of a Park Service area to include the "region around Skagway to the Border north of town," Dyea, and the old Chilkoot Trail.<sup>20</sup> To follow up on this suggestion, the Skagway Chamber of Commerce in July 1934 named a three-man committee to push the projected national monument.

The committee, after a series of meetings, wrote Territorial Delegate Anthony J. Diamond, asking that he bring the subject to the attention of the proper authorities in Washington. Diamond, on December 6, forwarded their communication, along with a request for information on how to establish a National Park, to Director of the National Park Service Arno B. Cammerer.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Rasmuson to Diamond, July 7, 1934, NA, RG 79, Records of the NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot. Anthony J. Diamond was the Alaskan delegate to Congress.

<sup>21</sup> Rasmuson to Diamond, July 7, and Blanchard to Diamond, Nov. 20, 1934 NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot. E. R. Rasmuson, W. C. Blanchard, and Father Gallant constituted the three-man committee. The boundary for the area was to begin south of Skagway, then east to the international boundary, then with the border "north and west and south" to include all territory north of Skagway and Dyea. Skagway and the right-of-way of the White Pass & Yukon Route would be inholdings within the boundary of the park.

Director Cammerer informed Delegate Diamond on December 17 that national parks and monuments were "established to preserve in a natural condition areas of outstanding scenic, historic, or scientific values to the entire American public." In general, National Parks were scenic in character and National Monuments historic or scientific. While he was unfamiliar with the area, he believed its values might be too similar to Glacier Bay National Monument to qualify for inclusion in the system.<sup>22</sup>

Local forces championing the area received a boost on January 7, 1935, when the influential geographer Wallace Atwood, President of Clark University, contacted Cammerer. He informed the Director that at the last meeting of the Advisory Board, he had made an informal proposal that "the mountains about Skagway could compare favorably with many of our great National Parks . . . and that it would be a very appropriate and fortunate place for the establishment of a National Park." Sensing the international potential, Dr. Atwood had broached the subject to the Board as to the possibility of securing the cooperation of Canada to establish an international park. Atwood had been told that the president of the White Pass & Yukon Route, who had considerable influence in Ottawa, was also interested in an international park.<sup>23</sup>

Before contacting Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, Atwood wanted to have Cammerer's reaction. The Chilkoot Park would, in his opinion, be "a wonderfully good project" for Ickes to implement during his administration.<sup>24</sup>

Cammerer replied that there was already one international park-- Glacier-Waterton Lakes. He therefore questioned the wisdom of establishing a second. If, however, such an area were considered for the Alaskan border, he believed it should be established in connection with Glacier Bay National Monument.<sup>25</sup>

Undaunted by this rebuff, Dr. Atwood wrote Secretary Ickes on February 13 pointing out that he knew "of a wonderland within our national domain . . . which should be set aside as a National Park."

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<sup>22</sup> Cammerer to Diamond, Dec. 17, 1934, NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks-- Chilkoot.

<sup>23</sup> Atwood to Cammerer, Jan. 7, 1935, NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Cammerer to Atwood, Jan. 14, 1935, NA, RG 76--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

Ignoring the area's outstanding historic resources, he pointed out that from "the scenic and scientific standpoint this region measures up to the high standards" of the Service. Moreover, the Skagway region was one of the few scenic areas of Alaska accessible to tourists. Secretary Ickes was informed of the international possibilities of the proposed park, which would afford "another bond of interest and sympathy with our friends to the north."<sup>26</sup>

Secretary Ickes was enchanted with the project. Contacting Director Cammerer, he inquired, "if this territory is as described by Dr. Atwood, why shouldn't we make a national park out of it before anyone else gets particularly interested in it for other purposes?" He wished to know if there was anyone in the National Park Service with knowledge of the proposed area.<sup>27</sup>

Cammerer referred the subject to two of his principal subordinates --Associate Director Arthur Demaray and Chief of Park Planning Conrad Wirth. They were directed to review the subject, and "see whether we can't make a monument out of it." As for himself, Cammerer did not believe the proposed area had the necessary prerequisites to be a national park. He suggested that it might be feasible to expand the boundaries of Glacier Bay National Monument to the northeast to include the Chilkoot region.<sup>28</sup>

As the man most familiar with the subject, Chief George M. Wright was detailed to make a study to see if its acquisition was warranted. Wright was not sympathetic to historical and cultural areas, and on the last day of February he informed Demaray that the proposed Chilkoot National Park included two inholdings--Skagway and the right-of-way of the White Pass & Yukon Route--which would constitute undesirable encroachments. In addition, its proximity to Glacier Bay National Monument militated against its incorporation into the Service, while he knew that other areas in southeastern Alaska possessed more spectacular scenery.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Atwood to Ickes, Feb. 13, 1935, NA, RG 76--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

<sup>27</sup> Ickes to Cammerer, Feb. 18, 1935, NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

<sup>28</sup> Cammerer to Demaray and Wirth, Feb. 18, 1935, NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

<sup>29</sup> Wright to Demaray, Feb. 28, 1935, NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

Cammerer, who had never been enthusiastic about the proposal, was undoubtedly delighted with Wright's arguments against the establishment of a "Chilkoot National Park." When the Advisory Board met in March, a committee consisting of Drs. Atwood, Bryant, and Oastler were named to investigate the merits of the project.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. The Proposed Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

There the proposal was pigeonholed until 1961 when, following the admission of Alaska to the Union two years before, National Park Service interest in the area was revived by two visits to Skagway. In July 1961 Charles Snell of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings visited the head of Taiya Inlet. He was impressed with Skagway and considered it the best example he had seen of a town representative of the gold rush theme. He recommended Skagway be considered for listing in the Registry of National Historic Landmarks. Specific structures in Skagway singled out by Historian Snell as possessing special significance were--the old Federal Courthouse, the White Pass & Yukon Route Depot and Administration Building, the Alaska Arctic Brotherhood Building, "Soapy" Smith's *Parlor*, the Pullen House, the former Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, Captain Moore's Cabin, Fire House #1, and the *Golden North Hotel*. Snell was so enthusiastic that he suggested consideration be given to adding the area to the National Park System. He also visited Dyea, traveled the White Pass & Yukon Route to Lake Bennett, and flew over Chilkoot Pass. What he saw satisfied Snell that Chilkoot Pass likewise merited Landmark Status.<sup>31</sup>

The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments at its 46th Meeting, April 30-May 3, 1962, recognized the historical significance of the Skagway Historic District and White Pass, and Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall declared them eligible for inclusion on the National Register. The Board at the same time recommended "that sites in Skagway (Historic District) be considered as possible additions to the National Park System," but for some unexplained reason, refused to accord Chilkoot Pass Landmark Status.

Skagway was reconnoitered during the summer of 1967 by members of the Office of Resource Planning, San Francisco Service Center. In October 1967 a Briefing Book prepared for the then Governor, Walter J. Hickel, identified Skagway as an area the Service wished to study in depth.

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<sup>30</sup> Wright to Cammerer, April 3, 1935, NA, RG 79, Records of NPS--Proposed Parks--Chilkoot.

<sup>31</sup> Personal Interview, Bearss with Snell, June 19, 1970.



An intensive field study of the historic community and its environs for an alternatives study was made in April and May, 1968, by a team from Resource Planning, accompanied by representatives of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. During this study, the team conferred with Mayor Edward Hanousek, the City Council, and various informed citizens of Skagway who evinced keen interest in preservation efforts. The town, particularly the concentration of buildings along Broadway, was reconnoitered and photographed. Neighboring Dyea was explored and the team made an aerial reconnaissance of the Chilkoot and White Pass routes. The team left Skagway via the White Pass & Yukon to Whitehorse, Canada, where they conferred with the Honorable James Smith, Commissioner of Yukon Territory, about international aspects of the gold rush. Alaska State officials at Juneau and Anchorage were also consulted. The alternatives report was completed in early 1969 and approved December 1969.

In August 1969 this writer reconnoitered Dyea and hiked the Chilkoot and White Pass Trails as part of the field work undertaken in connection with the preparation of this report. He then joined Architectural Historian Henry Judd who photographed and studied the surviving buildings in Skagway dating to the turn of the century.

The following week a joint American-Canadian party headed by Director, National Capital Parks & Urban Planning, Theodor Swem and Peter Bennett, of the Canadian Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, hiked the Chilkoot Trail. This indicated official interest in the proposed park on both sides of the border. In discussions Swem and Bennett developed a proposal for joint-action by their respective Services.

To implement the National Park Service's plan of action, Swem held a series of meetings in the first week of October with key personnel involved in the project. A briefing document was prepared for presentation by Swem to Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel, at the time Miss Yvonne Esbensen, the personal secretary to Mr. Hickel and a veteran of the Chilkoot hike, gave her slide talk on the trek. The Secretary was impressed with what he saw and heard, and on December 30, 1969, he announced that the National Park Service was interested in developing a National Historical Park in Skagway and its environs to commemorate the great Gold Rush era. Accordingly, the Office of Environmental Planning and Design, Western Service Center, was asked to prepare a master plan.

If the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park is established, it will incorporate on the United States side of the boundary Dyea, the Chilkoot and White Pass trails, and a his-

toric district in Skagway. As Skagway will be the focal point, the Service should give consideration to centering the visitor facilities there. If it is acquired, the restored Administration Building of the White Pass & Yukon Route would make an ideal Visitor Center.

In interpreting the Gold Rush of '97 and '98, the Service should keep in mind that the transportation story is of transcendent importance. This is a story that lends itself to on-site interpretation, because the principal resources--the trails, Brackett Road, remains of the aerial tramways, and railroad--are there now for the visitor to experience. But these priceless resources of our heritage, with the exception of the railroad, will soon disappear unless preserved and protected.

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ALASKAN FIELD RECONNAISSANCE - Bearss

September 2, 1969

Memorandum

To: Chief Historian  
Through: Chief, Branch of Park History Studies  
From: Historian Bearss  
Subject: Field Trip to Sitka NM and Proposed Skagway NHS

I. Itinerary

I left my home at 1126 17th Street, South, Arlington, Va., at 10:30 p.m., August 17, 1969. Utilizing a taxi and a bus, I reached Friendship International Airport at 11:15 p.m., and boarded United Flight #239 for Chicago. Arriving in Chicago at 12:15 a.m., I boarded United Flight #159 for Seattle. I reached Seattle-Tacoma International Airport at 5:15 a.m. At 7 a.m., August 18, I departed Seattle, via Alaska Airlines, Flight # 1867, for Juneau, via Sitka. An Alaska Airlines "Otter" flew me from Juneau to Skagway, where I landed at 1 p.m., August 13.

The period, August 18-26, was spent in and around Skagway. At 1 p.m., August 26, I left Skagway and traveled, via Alaska Airlines, to Sitka. A day and one-half was spent in Sitka. I left Sitka at 9:30 a.m. August 28, via Alaska Airlines for Juneau, where I spent the 29th. At 6:15 p.m., August 29, I left Juneau, via Western Airlines, en route to Seattle-Tacoma. I reached the Seattle airport at 8:30 p.m. Part of one day was spent in Tacoma at the Washington Historical Society.

At 3:30 p.m., August 30, I left Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on United Flight #154 for Friendship Airport, by way of Chicago. The plane landed at Friendship at 12:45 a.m., August 31. Utilizing a bus and taxi I reached home at 2:10 a.m., August 31.

II. Field Work Accomplished In and Around Skagway

Upon reaching Skagway on August 18, 1969, I made arrangements for hiking the Chilkoot Trail. At 6 a.m., August 19, Norman Fukill picked me up at the "Golden North" Hotel and drove me to Dyea. Mr. Fukill was too helpful. He drove me to the point where a Tramway crosses the Taiya River, and explained that if I used the car it would enable me to avoid a rugged one-half mile walk. Because of the difficult pull, it was impossible for one man to operate the Tramway car, and I was compelled to back track to the Taiya steel bridge.

By 7 a.m., I started up the trail. It was soon apparent that the trail opened by the Alaska Division of Lands did not, in many instances, follow the historic trail. A brisk eight-mile walk brought me to the Canyon City cabin. As it was 11 a.m., and I had eaten no breakfast, I halted to eat.

After finishing a can of sardines, I reconnoitered the Canyon City area. Several badly deteriorated structures were located in the area. Wading Taiya Creek, I ascended the canyon. Here the trail followed the historic route. Telegraph wire, poles, abutments to historic bridges, and corduroy laid down 72 years ago were observed. Above the canyon, the trail follows the east bank of the Taiya, while the historic trail ascends the west bank. Forging the mountain torrent, I was able to pinpoint the historic trail at several points.

At 3:30 p.m. I reached the cabin at Sheep Camp, where I planned to spend the night. While I was eating my can of sardines, it had clouded up and now began to rain. The next several hours were spent reconnoitering at Sheep Camp. A number of badly deteriorated structures were located.

About 5:30 p.m., Mr. and Mrs. Peter Pollard of Davis Lane, Swickley, Pa., came up the trail from Dyea. They were British citizens with considerable experience in hiking. Peter Pollard had climbed several peaks in the Andes of 20,000 ft. elevation, while Daphne Pollard had hiked across Lapland. They had left Skagway at 8 a.m., and had crossed the Taiya, via the Tramway. In doing so, Mrs. Pollard had fallen into the river. Possible tragedy had been averted, as she held onto the rope and pulled herself out of the icy torrent.

As it is wise to hike with others, I determined to proceed with the Pollards. We broke camp at 7 a.m., on August 20. Again my meal had consisted of a delicious can of sardines. It had stopped raining, but a thick fog soon enveloped the area. A short distance beyond Sheep Camp, we were above the timber line. The climbing now became difficult, as we were clamboring over boulders. Scaling Long Hill, we reached Stone House. Between Stone House and The Scales, we pinpointed the remains of several timber towers used to support the Tramway over Chilkoot Pass. At The Scales, we found large numbers of artifacts abandoned in 1897 and 1898, along with the remains of several structures.

The climb from The Scales through Chilkoot Pass was a challenge. The scree made footing treacherous, while the 40 percent grade taxed one's endurance. As I was carrying about 30 pounds, I took my hat off to the men of 1897 and 1898 who crossed the pass with packs of 80 pounds. Before

reaching the summit, we topped two false crests. The route over Chilkoot was littered with gear thrown away by the prospectors. A historical marker had been placed near the summit by the Alaska Historical Society. It was noon, when we crossed into Canada.

On the Canadian side of the pass, there is a steep drop of about 500 feet to Crater Lake. During the spring, many of the prospectors slid down this slope on their sleds. On August 20 there was a large snow bank on the slope, and Mrs. Pollard and myself inadvertently emulated the men of 70 years ago by sliding down the bank on our backsides.

It was apparent that the Canadians had been working to blaze and improve the trail on their side of the border. A halt for our noon meal was made on the marge of Crater Lake. Again my meal consisted of a can of sardines. While we were eating, the fog, which had reduced visibility since leaving Stone House to about 30 yards, began to lift.

During the afternoon, we pushed on, skirting Long and Deep Lakes. The stream flowing between Long and Deep Lakes had been recently bridged by the Canadians. At 7 p.m., after a 17 mile march, we reached the site of Lindeman City, at the head of Lake Lindeman. Here the Canadians have built a cabin. The crew charged with opening and blazing the route was quartered in the cabin.

Although I like sardines, I found that my taste for them had been satisfied, and I decided that a cup of hot tea would be sufficient for the night.

Before retiring, I chatted with the Canadians, John B. Maloney and Gary McLaughlin, who were in charge of inmates from the Yukon Territory, Department of Correction, charged with improving the trail. They told me that next year they would erect cabins, at the Summit and Deep Lake, as well as historical markers. I was especially impressed by McLaughlin. Although not a trained historian, he was familiar with the history of the area, and had located the historic trail on the Canadian side with accuracy.

The next morning, August 21, we moved out. Again, I was forced to forego my meal, as the thought of a can of sardines turned my stomach. A short distance beyond the camp site, we stopped at the Lindeman City Cemetery, which had been restored recently by the Canadians. Three recently constructed footbridges facilitated the hike from Lindeman City to the railroad. I reached the railroad at 10 a.m. and Bennett at 11 a.m. Walking down the railroad, I outdistanced my British friends, as I was looking forward to the homecooked meals served by the White Pass & Yukon

Route at Bennett. Although I was at Bennett at 11, no meals were served until 12:30 p.m. The smell of food, as it was being prepared, proved to be a trying experience.

At 2 p.m. I boarded the southbound train, and returned to Skagway at 6:30 p.m., August 21.

The Pollards were enthusiastic with the trail, considering it one of the most challenging and enjoyable they had hiked. McLoughlin reported that travel over the trail had tripled in one year.

On Friday, August 22, I hired Mr. Hukill to drive me to Dyea. The Dyea area was thoroughly reconnoitered, and the extant remains located, identified, and photographed. As my legs were stiff from my 40-mile hike, I walked back to Skagway from Dyea to limber up.

Historical Architect Henry Judd arrived in Skagway at 12:45 p.m. on August 23. The afternoon of the 23d, as well as the next day, were spent reconnoitering and photographing historic structures and railroad rolling stock in and around Skagway. Special attention was given to the railroad depot, offices, and custom house.

On Monday, August 25, I boarded the White Pass & Yukon Route, taking the Bennett train to the summit of White Pass. At the Summit, detraining, I started to reconnoiter the White Pass Trail. Until the trail dropped below the timberline, it was easy traveling. Once below the timberline, the trail was badly brushed over. In the canyon, rock slides had buried the trail at a number of points. The going was very difficult, and the White Pass Fork had to be forded a number of times. Many bones from the thousands of horses and mules who died along this trail were seen, as well as other objects.

At White Pass City, the ruins of a number of structures were located and photographed. I had hoped to catch the southbound train at Glacier, but the going was so difficult that I heard the train pass while I was at White Pass City. Forging the Skagway, I climbed out of the canyon and walked down the railroad 13 miles to Skagway. It was 9 p.m. when I reached the hotel, and rejoined Henry Judd, who was about to start up the railroad to look for me.

Henry Judd and I, on the morning of August 26, met with George Rapuzzi, the owner of "Soapy Smith's Parlor." Mr. Rapuzzi, who has the best collection of photographs of early Skagway, let us examine his material. If the proposed Skagway NHS is established, the Rapuzzi Collection will prove invaluable in restoring the historic scene.

### III. Field Work Accomplished at Sitka

On the afternoon of August 26, Henry Judd and I visited Sitka NM, and with Supervisory Historian Dan Keuhn examined documents and photographs in the park's research files. That evening, we reconnoitered the area of the Blockhouse Hill Complex, where extensive reconstructions are proposed.

Wednesday, the 27th, was spent examining the Russian Mission and the Merrill Photographic Collection at Sheldon Jackson College. Arrangements were made to have a number of photographs copied.

### IV. Research Accomplished at the Alaska Historical Library

Two days, August 28 and 29, were spent in Juneau at the Alaska Historical Library. Mrs. Phyllis J. Nottingham, the Librarian, was very helpful. While there I made arrangements to have microfilm prints of the Skagway "Daily Alaskan" and "Dyea Trail" prepared for our Office. These newspapers will be invaluable to our Office. Mrs. Nottingham also agreed to have xeroxed for our Office several diaries and a City Directory of Skagway for 1899.

### V. Recommendations--Chilkoot Trail

Between 40 and 50 percent of the Chilkoot Trail, as blazed by the State of Alaska, Division of Lands, fails to follow the historic trace. If the Service asks Congress for legislation for the establishment of the Skagway NPS, we must make certain that the land authorized for acquisition is historic and not the trail as blazed today. At Canyon City and Sheep Camp, the land bounding the trail should be large enough to include all existing remains. Between the Stone House and the summit, the boundaries should be extended to include the land between the trail and the watersheds immediately to the east and west.

### VI. Recommendations--White Pass Trail

The White Pass Trail between White Pass City and the summit possesses a high degree of integrity. Our Office must see to it that this portion of the White Pass Trail is included in the area. As recommended in the Alternative Study, only the portion of the White Pass Trail between Skagway and White Pass City is to be included in the area. The integrity of much of the trail and the Brackett road between Skagway and Clifton has been destroyed by the railroad and the road to Porcupine Creek.

### VII. Recommendations--Dyea

It is urged that at Dyea an area be acquired extending from the wharf to the site of the Kinney Bridge. This strip of land would be about three miles, north and south, and one-fourth mile, east and west. The slide and Dyea cemeteries would be included.

### VIII. Recommendations--White Pass & Yukon Route Buildings

As the White Pass & Yukon Route has commenced construction of its new depot on the lot east of the Custom House, there is an option open to the Service. We would approach the railroad and ascertain if it would be willing to locate the new parking lot on the block north of the new depot. This block is bounded on the south by Second Street and on the north by Third Street. If the railroad would be willing to do this, the Service could approach the National Park Foundation and ask it to purchase the ten lots in question. These lots could then be exchanged for the lots on which the historic depot and railroad offices are located. The Customs House would have to be moved, and it could be located on the lot across Broadway from the historic depot.

The advantage of this exchange to the railroad would be the location of its depot adjacent to the historic depot and office building, either one of which could be used as the Visitor Center for the Skagway NHS.

If the railroad refused to relocate its proposed parking lot, and compels the Service to relocate the three buildings, then consideration should be given to the acquisition of the block west of the depot and south of Second Street. The relocation of the railroad buildings on this block would require the purchase and relocation of the "Soapy Smith Parlor." As the "Soapy Smith Parlor" originally stood on Sixth Street, it is not identified with the Second Street site.

Edwin C. Bearss



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*Tacoma News*

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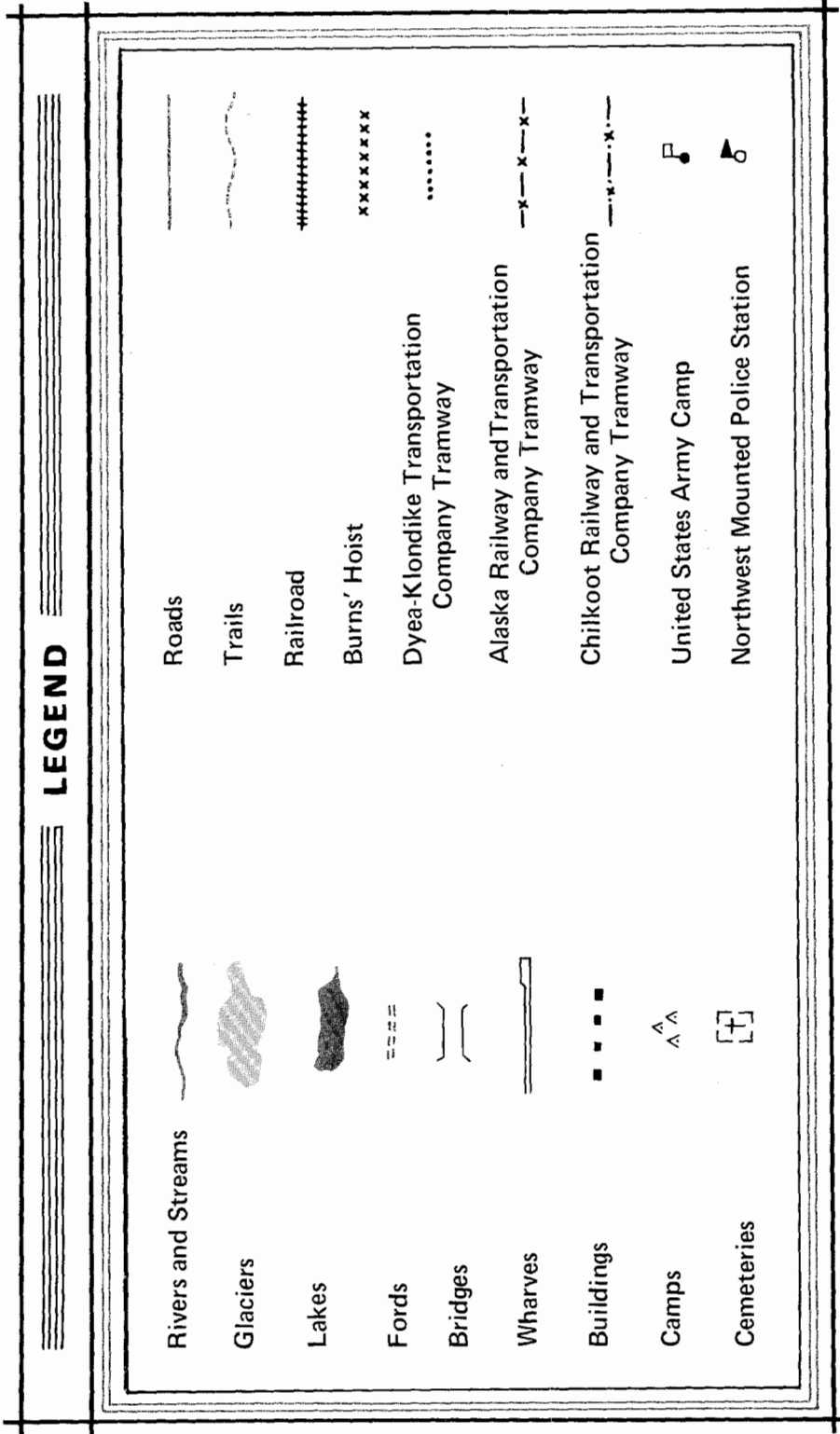
Swem, Theodor R., with Edwin C. Bearss, June 19, 1970.

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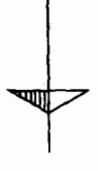
I L L U S T R A T I O N S



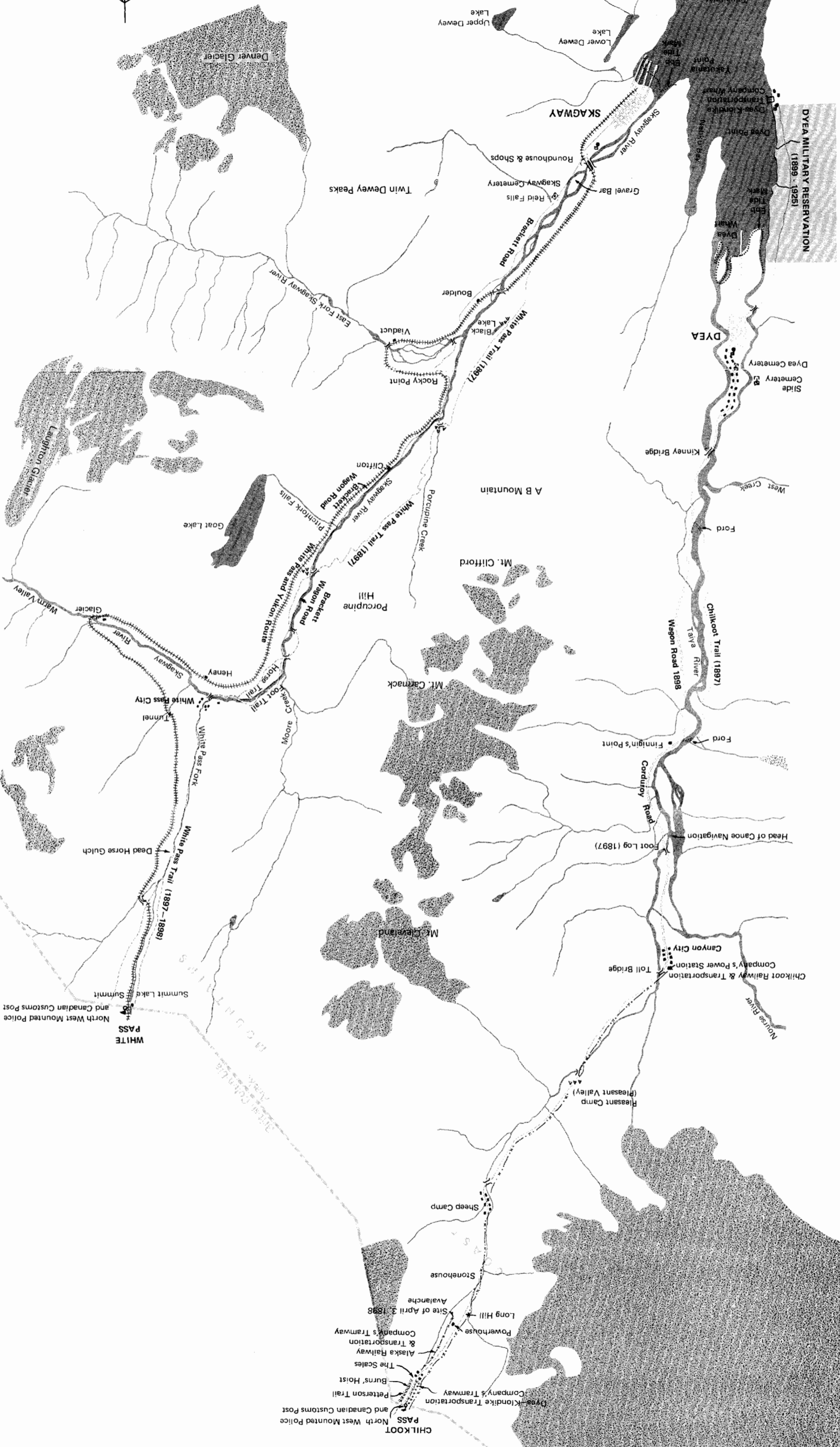
HISTORICAL BASE MAP (1897-1899)







Scale in Miles  
0 1 2



WHITE PASS  
North West Mounted Police  
and Canadian Customs Post  
Summit Lake Summit

CHILKOOT  
North West Mounted Police  
and Canadian Customs Post

DYEA MILITARY RESERVATION  
(1899, 1925)

# KEY TO SKAGWAY BUSINESSES

|                                                                 |        |                         |                                           |                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 White Pass & Yukon Route Depot                                | Extant | 413 Broadway            | 114 Tivoli Saloon                         | 701 Broadway                  |
| 2 White Pass & Yukon Route Admin. Bldg.                         | Extant | 309-311 Fifth Avenue    | 115 E.R. Peoples, Furniture & Undertaker  | 747 Broadway                  |
| 3 U.S. Customs Office                                           | Extant | 317 Fifth Avenue        | 116 Home Bakery                           | 801 Broadway                  |
| 4 The Hot Scotch (Saloon)                                       | Extant | 317 Fifth Avenue        | 117 Louis Bunsow, Painter                 | 805 Broadway                  |
| 5 Thomas Kay, Cigars & Tobacco                                  | Extant | 321-323 Fifth Avenue    | 118 Skagway Transfer Co.                  | 800 Broadway                  |
| 6 E.C. Barhydt, Dry Goods                                       | Extant | 327 Fifth Avenue        | 119 H.E. Batten, Commission Merchant      | 419-421 Fourth Avenue         |
| 7 The Broadway Saloon                                           | Extant | 331 Fifth Avenue        | 120 Butte Hotel                           | 433 Fourth Avenue             |
| 8 D. Lucci, Confectionery                                       | Extant | 335 Fifth Avenue        | 121 The Canadian Bank of Commerce         | Corner State & Fifth          |
| 9 Washington Fruit Store (relocated across the street)          | Extant | 337 Fifth Avenue        | 122 Wheeler & Weiss, Painters             | 412 Third Avenue              |
| 10 F.C. Lawrence, Jeweler                                       | Extant | 345 Fifth Avenue        | 123 Post Office                           | 417 State                     |
| 11 The Mascot (Saloon)                                          | Extant | 430 State               | 124 Alaska Importing Tea Co.              | 421 State                     |
| 12 W.A. Bell, Cigars & Tobacco                                  | Extant | 424-426 State           | 125 Dick's Butter Store                   | 423 State                     |
| 13 The Gilt Edge                                                | Extant | 420 State               | 126 Eureka Cigar Store                    | 425 State                     |
| 14 The White Navy Saloon                                        | Extant | 416 State               | 127 Williford & Foster, Drugs             | 429 State                     |
| 15 Pill Box Drug Co.                                            | Extant | Corner State & Fourth   | 128 Lowell & Jennings, Lawyers            | Corner State & Fifth          |
| 16 Charles Gordon                                               | Extant | 340-342 Fourth Avenue   | 129 Parker & Aggers, Commission Merchants | 438 Fourth Avenue             |
| 17 Ladies Bazaar                                                | Extant | 338 Fourth Avenue       | 130 Bay View Hotel                        | 426 Fourth Avenue             |
| 18 The American Tailors                                         | Extant | 334-336 Fourth Avenue   | 131 Golden North Hotel                    | 418-420 Fourth Avenue         |
| 19 New Rookery Restaurant                                       | Extant | 320-322 Fourth Avenue   | 132 New York Parlors                      | 507 State                     |
| 20 Boss Bakery                                                  | Extant | 501-502 Broadway        | 133 J.B. Wall                             | 511 State                     |
| 21 Peoples' Fruit Store                                         | Extant | 509 Broadway            | 134 The Ruby, Cigars & Tobacco            | 515-517 State                 |
| 22 Dyea Mercantile & Mining Co.                                 | Extant | 511 Broadway            | 135 Haines & Sperry Hardware              | 519-521 State                 |
| 23 Gambrinus Beer Hall                                          | Extant | 515 Broadway            | 136 The Colorado Barber Shop              | 523 State                     |
| 24 First & Last Chance Saloon                                   | Extant | 305 Sixth Avenue        | 137 Mrs. M. Conrad, Millinery             | 527 State                     |
| 25 Brogan's Hotel                                               | Extant | 309 Sixth Avenue        | 138 Harry Lovejoy, Tailor                 | 529 State                     |
| 26 Pioneer Cigar Factory                                        | Extant | 313 Sixth Avenue        | 139 Greenhood & Co., Confectionery        | 531 State                     |
| 27 Seattle Headquarters Saloon                                  | Extant | 323 Sixth Avenue        | 141 F.T. Keeler, Auctioneer               | 407 Sixth Avenue              |
| 28 Occidental Hotel                                             | Extant | 327 Sixth Avenue        | 142 Daily Alaskan Newspaper               | 431 Sixth Avenue              |
| 29 Kelley Drug Co.                                              | Extant | 329 Sixth Avenue        | 143 Skagway News                          | 424-426 Fifth Avenue          |
| 30 Al-Ki Saloon                                                 | Extant | 335 Sixth Avenue        | 144 Pacific Meat Market                   | 406 Fifth Avenue              |
| 31 Draper & Case Photographers                                  | Extant | 341 Sixth Avenue        | 145 Alert Saloon                          | 404 Fifth Avenue              |
| 32 The Astoria Hotel                                            | Extant | 343 Sixth Avenue        | 146 City Brewery                          | Corner State & Sixth          |
| 33 The Mint Saloon                                              | Extant | 345 Sixth Avenue        | 147 The Pacific Baths                     | 612-616 Main                  |
| 34 Philip Zimmerman, Tailor                                     | Extant | 347 Sixth Avenue        | 148 Lobby Music Hall                      | 442 Sixth Avenue              |
| 35 Broadway Shoe Shop                                           | Extant | 516 State               | 149 Peterson & Co., Grocers               | 436 Sixth Avenue              |
| 36 Shoup Avenue House                                           | Extant | 512 State               | 150 W.C. Green, Hardware                  | 432 Sixth Avenue              |
| 37 The Principal Barber Shop                                    | Extant | 336 Fifth Avenue        | 151 New York Kitchen                      | 424 Sixth Avenue              |
| 38 Skagway Coal Co.                                             | Extant | 332 Fifth Avenue        | 152 Arctic Cigar Depot                    | 408 Sixth Avenue              |
| 39 Arctic Brotherhood Lodge, No. 1                              | Extant | 330 Fifth Avenue        | 153 The Dewey Hotel                       | Corner State & Seventh        |
| 40 Klondike Trading Co. (relocated, now the Golden North Hotel) | Extant | 328 Fifth Avenue        | 154 Skagway Hardware                      | 707 State                     |
| 41 The Idaho Saloon                                             | Extant | 320 Fifth Avenue        | 155 Gambrinus Brewery                     | Seventh Avenue                |
| 42 Weed and Co., Fruits & Vegetables                            | Extant | 312 Fifth Avenue        | 156 Frank's Grocery                       | 827-829 State                 |
| 43 E.A. Hegg, Photographer                                      | Extant | 312 Fifth Avenue        | 157 Green Bros., Gunsmiths                | 437 Ninth Avenue              |
| 44 Rainier Hotel                                                | Extant | Corner Broadway & Sixth | 158 St. Nicholas Hotel                    | 826 Main                      |
| 45 C.B. Loch, Dentist                                           | Extant | 609 Broadway            | 159 Miss Johnson, Dressmaker              | 416 Eighth Avenue             |
| 46 Pioneer Paint and Wall Co.                                   | Extant | 621 Broadway            | 160 Manhattan Hotel & Grocery             | 1127-1128 State               |
| 47 D.C. Brownell, Hardware                                      | Extant | 614-616 State           | 161 Alaska Power & Light                  | 533 Fourth Avenue             |
| 48 L.W. Wynkoop, Plumbing                                       | Extant | 612 State               | 162 Miss A. Wallace, Dressmaker           | 517 Fifth Avenue              |
| 49 Sterilized Milk Co.                                          | Extant | 348 Sixth Avenue        | 163 B.B. Bottling Works                   | 531 Fifth Avenue              |
| 50 Joseph Morgan, Tailor                                        | Extant | 346 Sixth Avenue        | 164 Miss D. Bennett, Dressmaker           | 511 Sixth Avenue              |
| 51 Philip Abraham, Real Estate                                  | Extant | 344 Sixth Avenue        | 165 The White Pass Saloon                 | 517 Sixth Avenue              |
| 52 The Puget Sound Restaurant                                   | Extant | 338 Sixth Avenue        | 166 The Board of Trade Saloon             | 529-531 Sixth Avenue          |
| 53 Skagway Light & Water Co.                                    | Extant | 322 Sixth Avenue        | 167 California Wine House                 | 508 Sixth Avenue              |
| 54 C.W. Everest, Dry Goods                                      | Extant | 320 Sixth Avenue        | 168 Hotel Wickstrom                       | 517 Eighth Avenue             |
| 55 Miners' Hotel                                                | Extant | 316-318 Sixth Avenue    | 169 California Pack Train Saloon          | 701 Main                      |
| 56 The Club Saloon                                              | Extant | 308 Sixth Avenue        | 170 Lilly Bros., Hay & Grain              | 316-320 Fourth Avenue         |
|                                                                 |        | 306 Sixth Avenue        | 171 Fifth Avenue Hotel                    | Northwest Corner Main & Fifth |

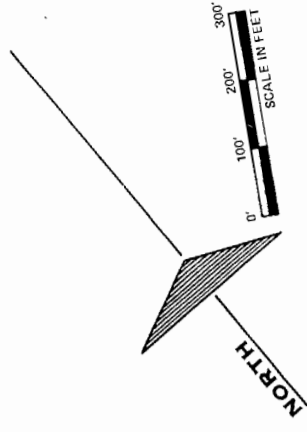
BUILDINGS IN HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTANT IN 1969 ARE MARKED ACCORDINGLY





KLONDIKE  
GOLD RUSH  
NATIONAL  
HISTORICAL  
PARK

# SKAGWAY BUSINESS HOUSES CIRCA 1900 HISTORICAL BASE MAP



BUILDINGS HOUSING BUSINESS  
BUILDINGS IN PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT EXTANT IN 1969  
RAILROAD

NORTH LIMIT OF MOORE'S CLAIM



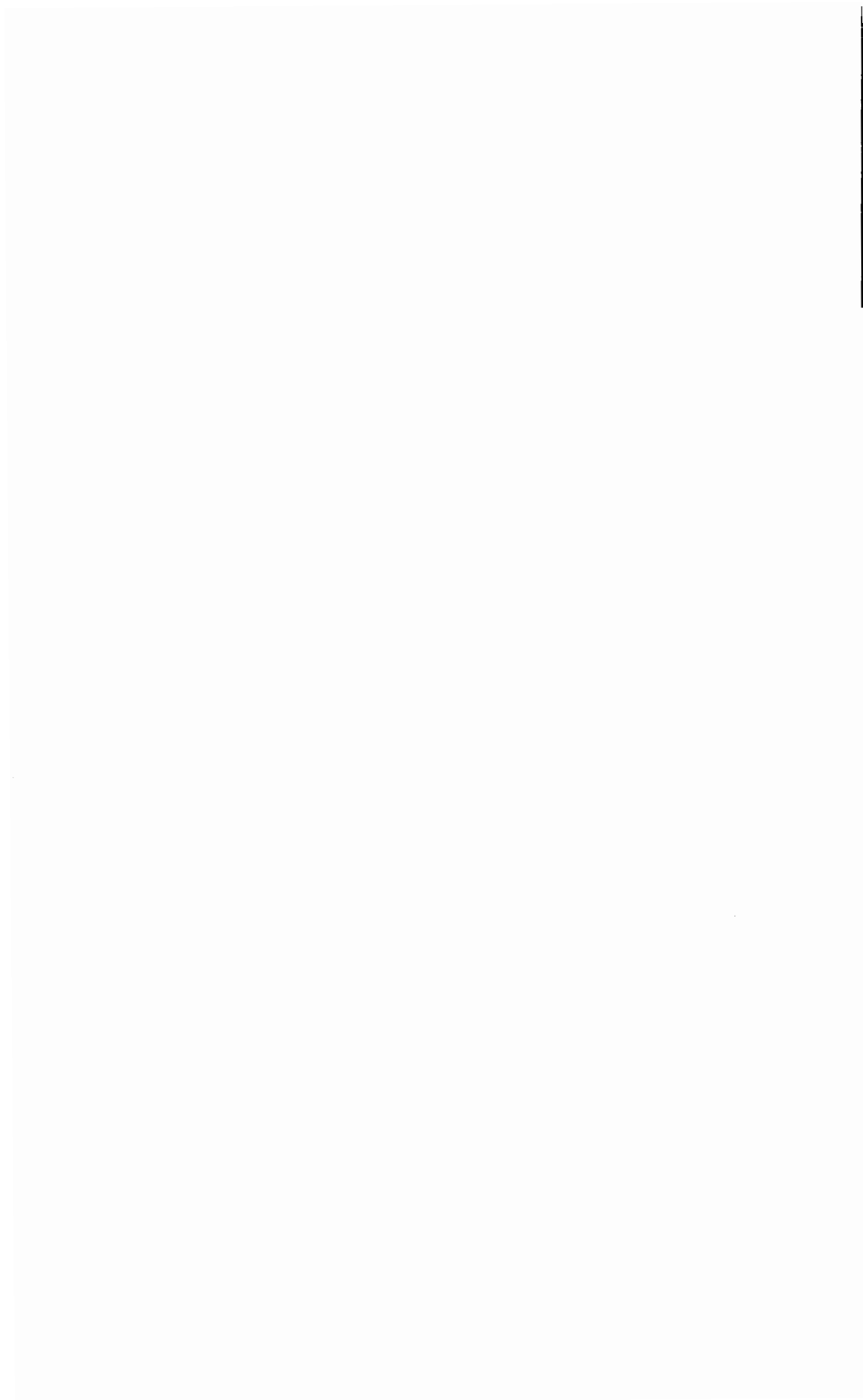
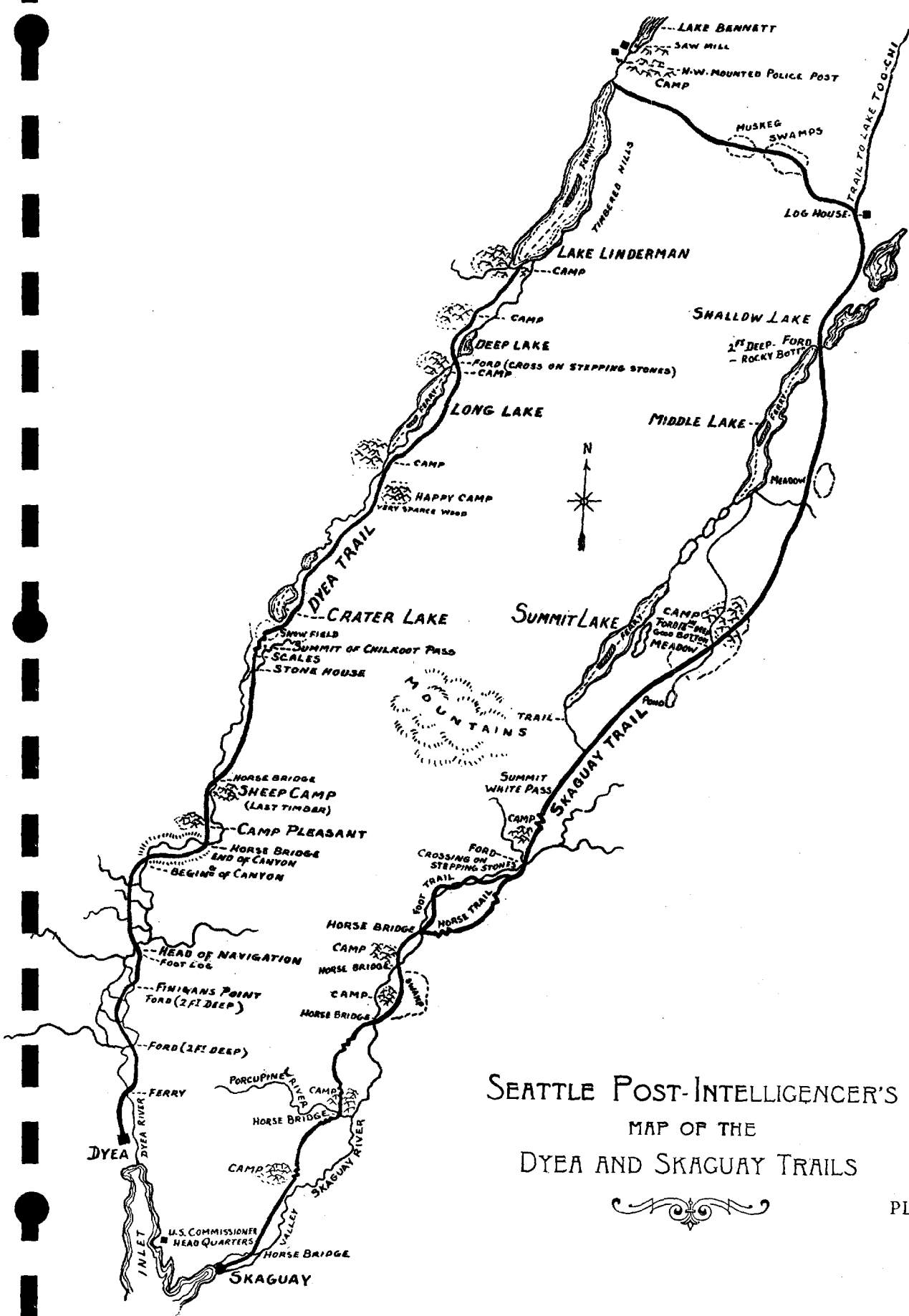


PLATE 3

"Seattle *Post-Intelligencer's* Map of the Dyea and Skagway Trails," 1897.





SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER'S  
 MAP OF THE  
 DYEA AND SKAGUAY TRAILS

PLATE 4

"Capt. William Moore's Cabin, built in 1888." This, the oldest building in Skagway, no longer stands on its original site. Dedman Studio.



*First House built in Skagway*

PLATE 4



PLATE 5

"Stampedeers Landing at Skagway about August 1, 1897." The first adventurers had gone ashore several days before. Winter & Pond Collection, Liberty of Congress.

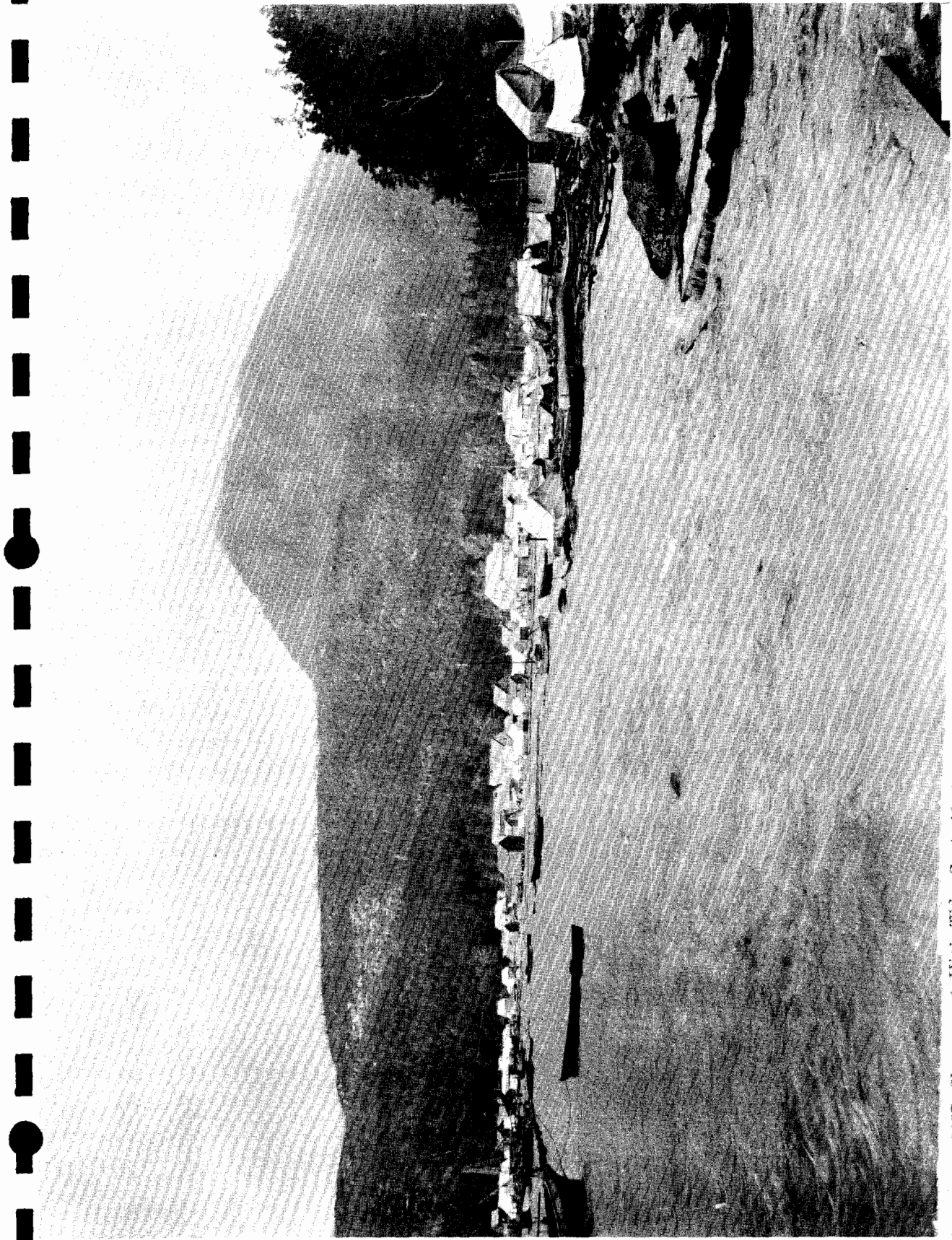


General view of St. George's Bay, Alaska, August 1900



PLATE 6

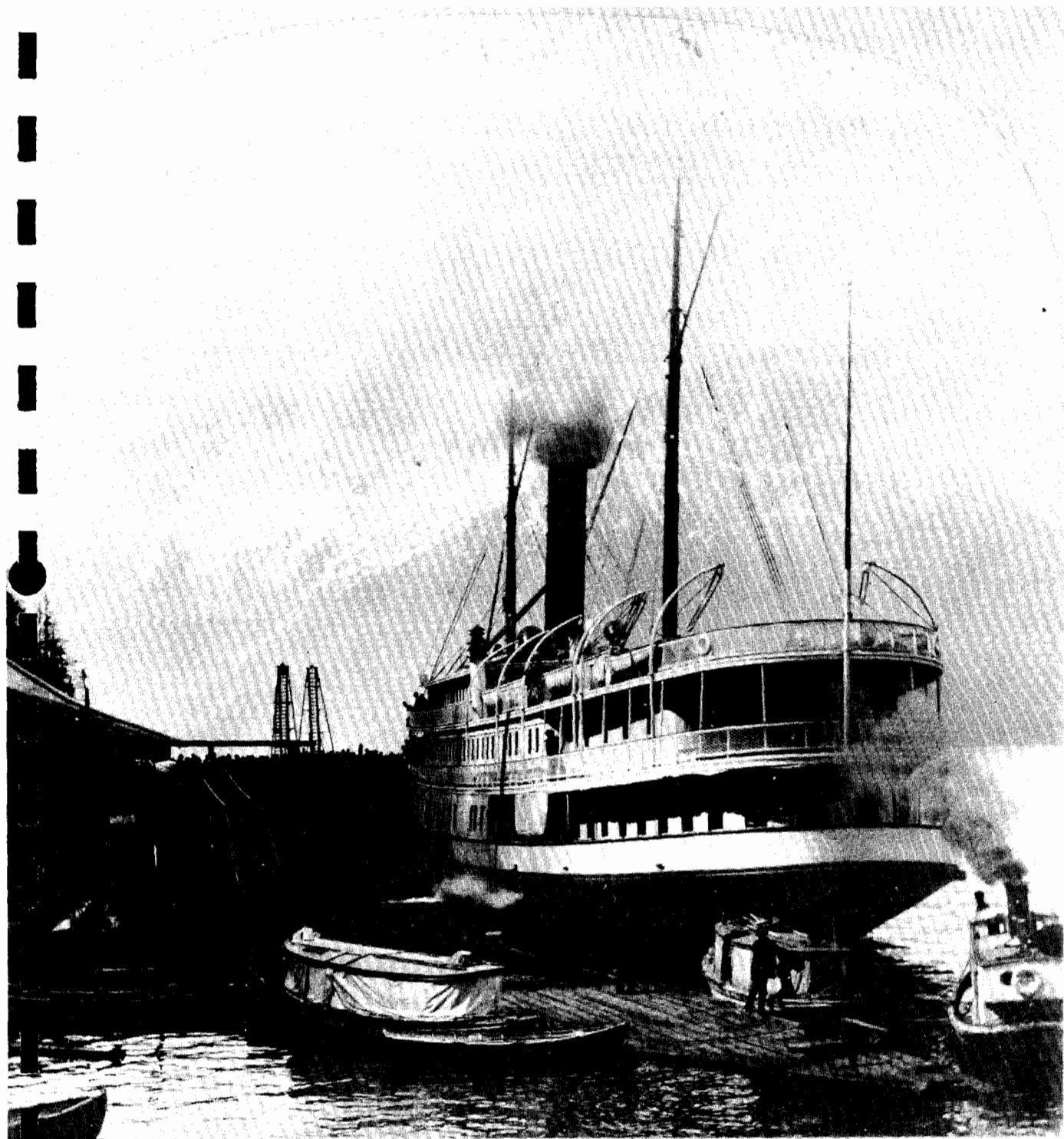
"Skagway at High Tide, September 12, 1897." Within six weeks a boomtown had sprung up on Skagway Bay. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



2087. Skagway at High Tide, Sept. 12, 1897.

Plate 7

"*City of Seattle* at Skagway Wharf, Alaska." By early 1898 there were four wharves at Skagway, extending out across the tidal flats to deep water. Here ships which made the run up from the Puget Sound cities docked. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.

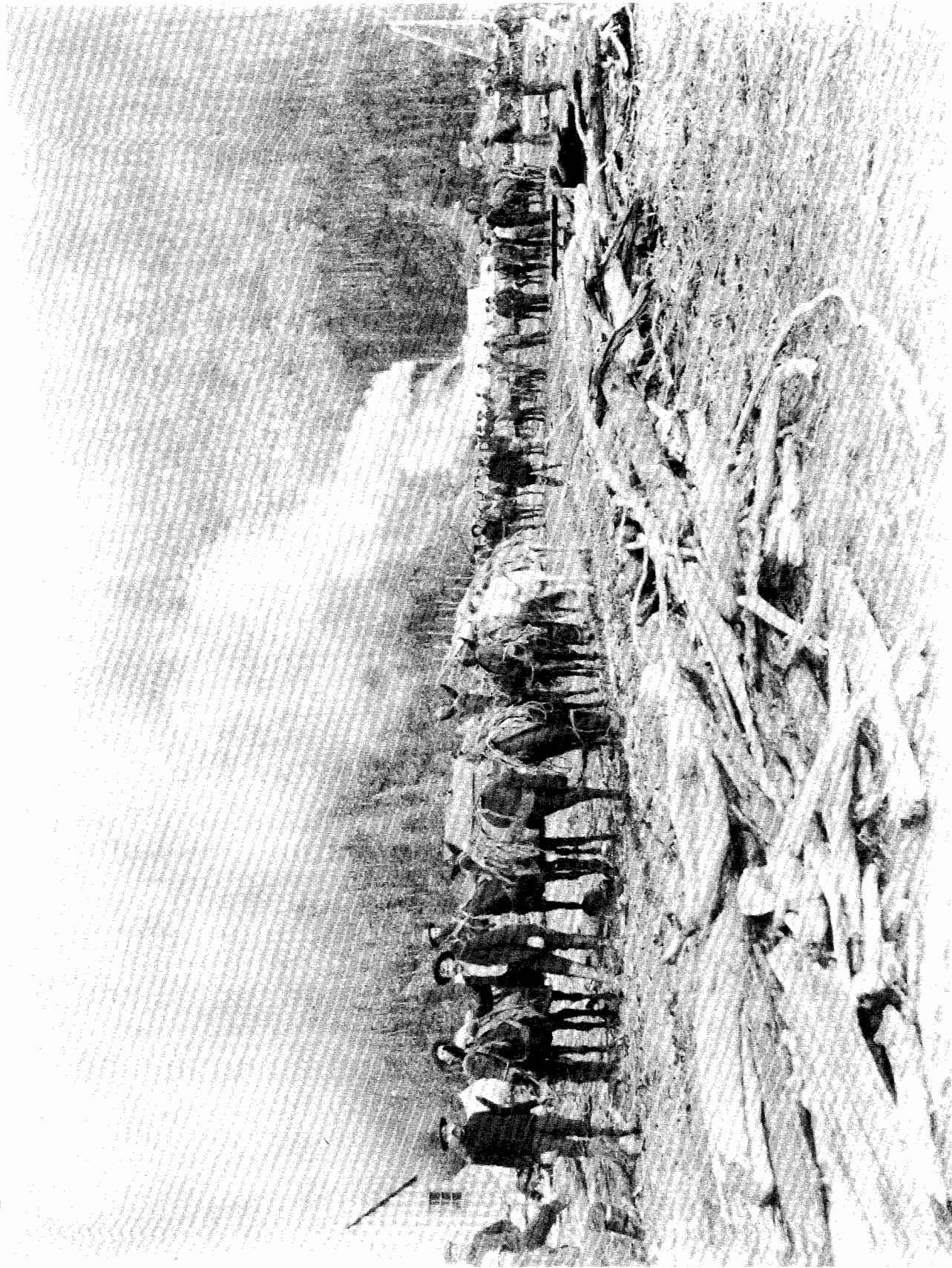


9324--The "City of Seattle" at Skaguay Wharf, Alaska.

PLATE 8

"Pack Train, Skagway." To get their outfits across White Pass to Lake Bennett, most adventurers in 1897 relied on packers. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



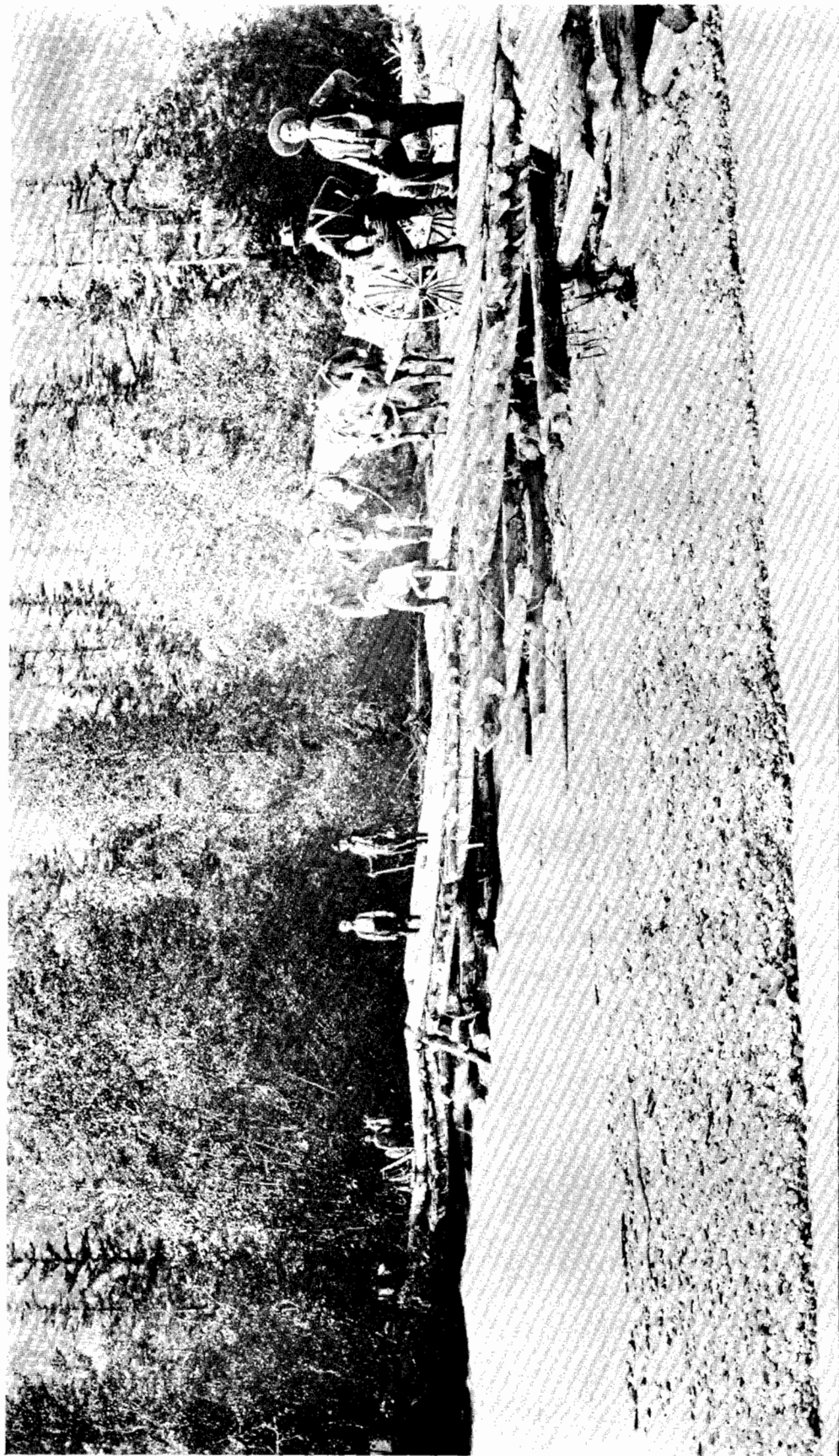


2085. Pack Train, Skaguay.



PLATE 9

"Bridge over Skagway River, Alaska." About one and one-half miles beyond tidewater, the White Pass Trail crossed to the west side of Skagway River. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.

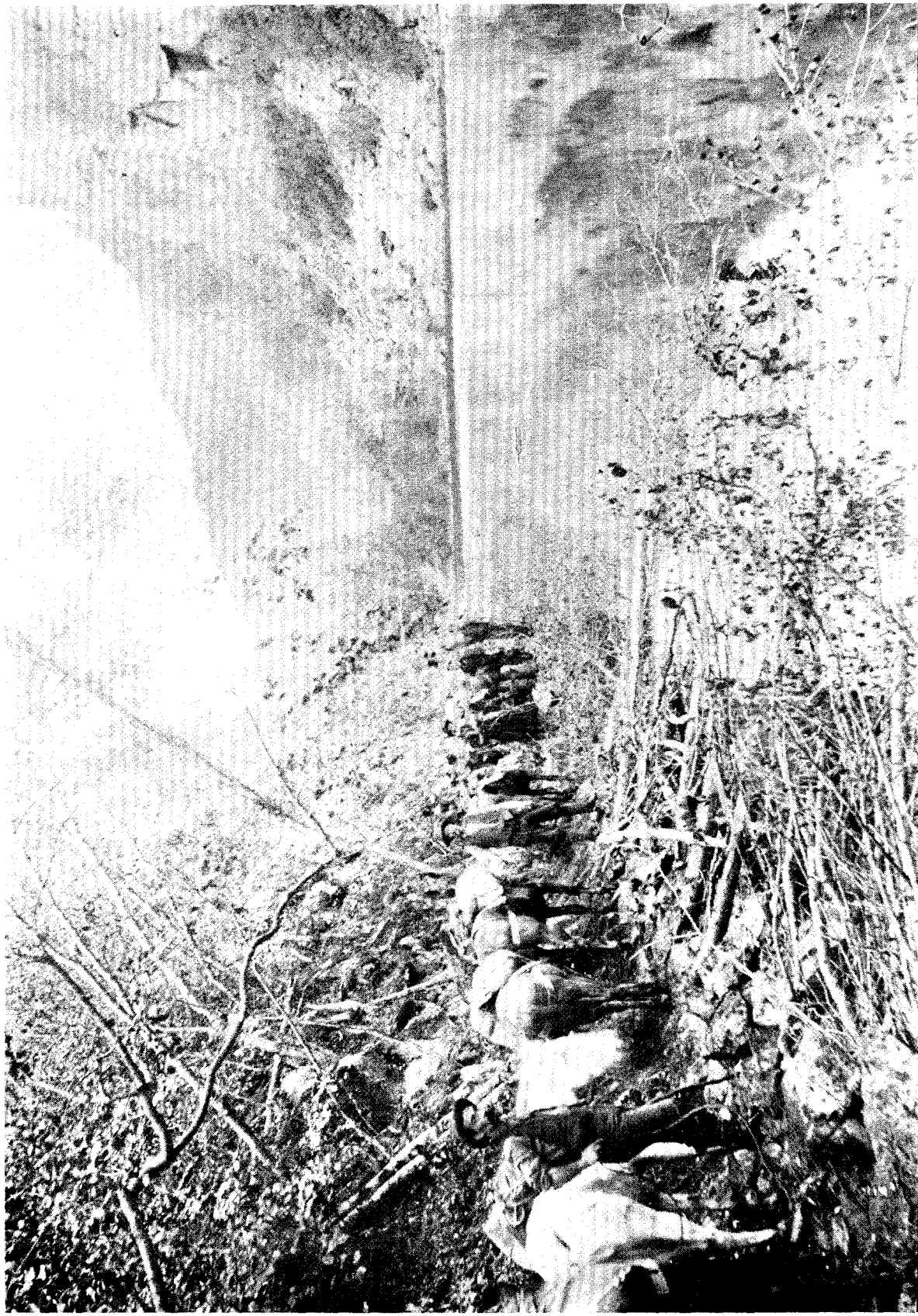


333 Bridge over Skaguay river, Alaska.

Copyright 1897 by Winter & Pond.

PLATE 10

"Pack Train at Black Lake, White Pass Trail." Beyond the first crossing of the Skagway, the trail skirted Black Lake. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.

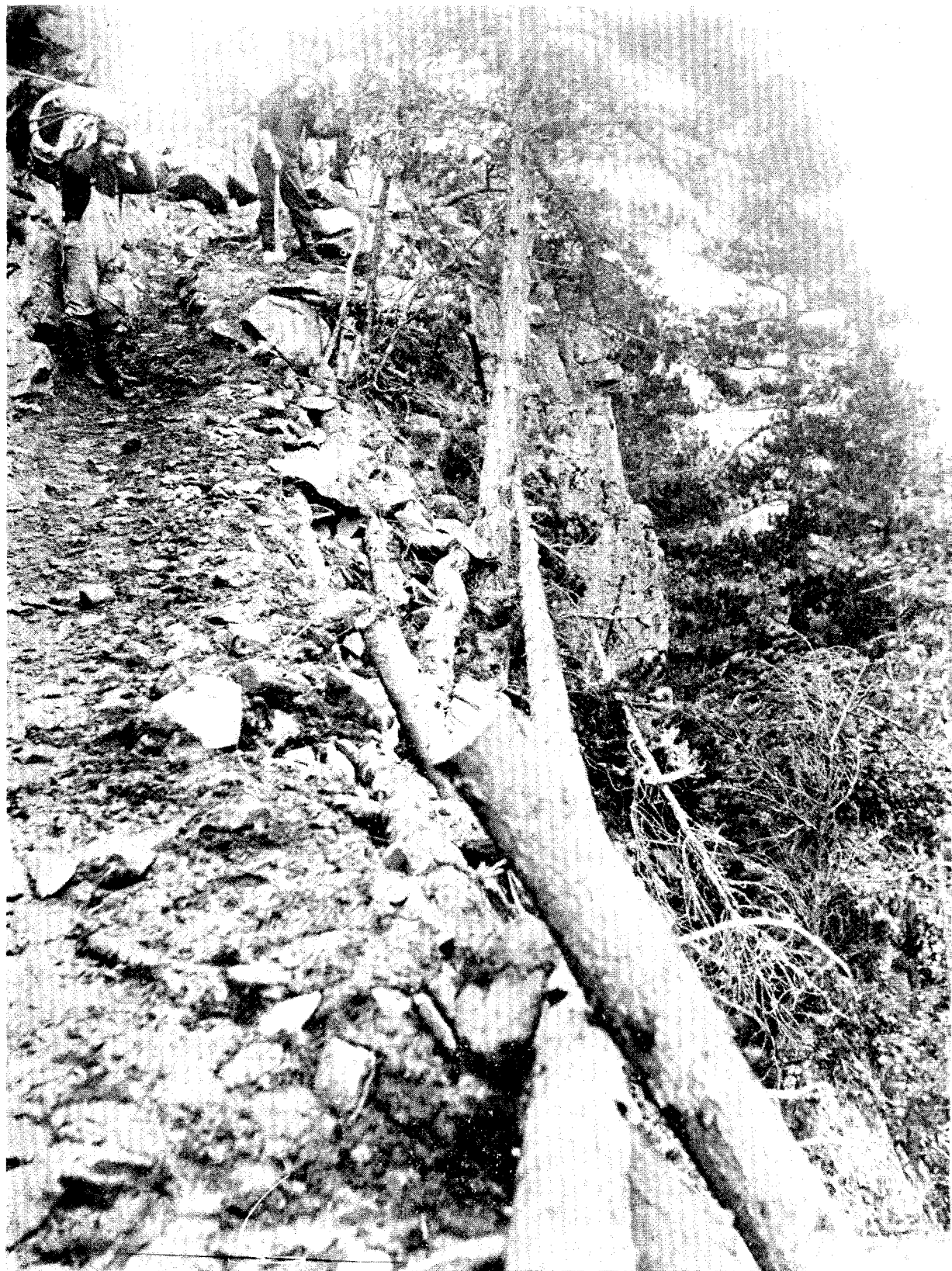


2074. Pack Train at Little Lake, Skaguay Trail.

Copyright, 1897. La Roche, Seattle, Wash.

PLATE 11

"The White Pass Trail Across Porcupine Hill."  
Between Black Lake and Porcupine Creek, the  
White Pass Trail crossed Porcupine Hill, a  
climb which taxed the endurance of man and  
beast. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



1000. Practico, Pinar del Rio, September 1901. Copyright 1897, La Roche, Seattle, Wash.



PLATE 12

"Bridge over Porcupine Creek." The White Pass Trail, after descending Porcupine Hill, crossed Porcupine Creek. The bridge was built by a crew led by J. Bernard Moore. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



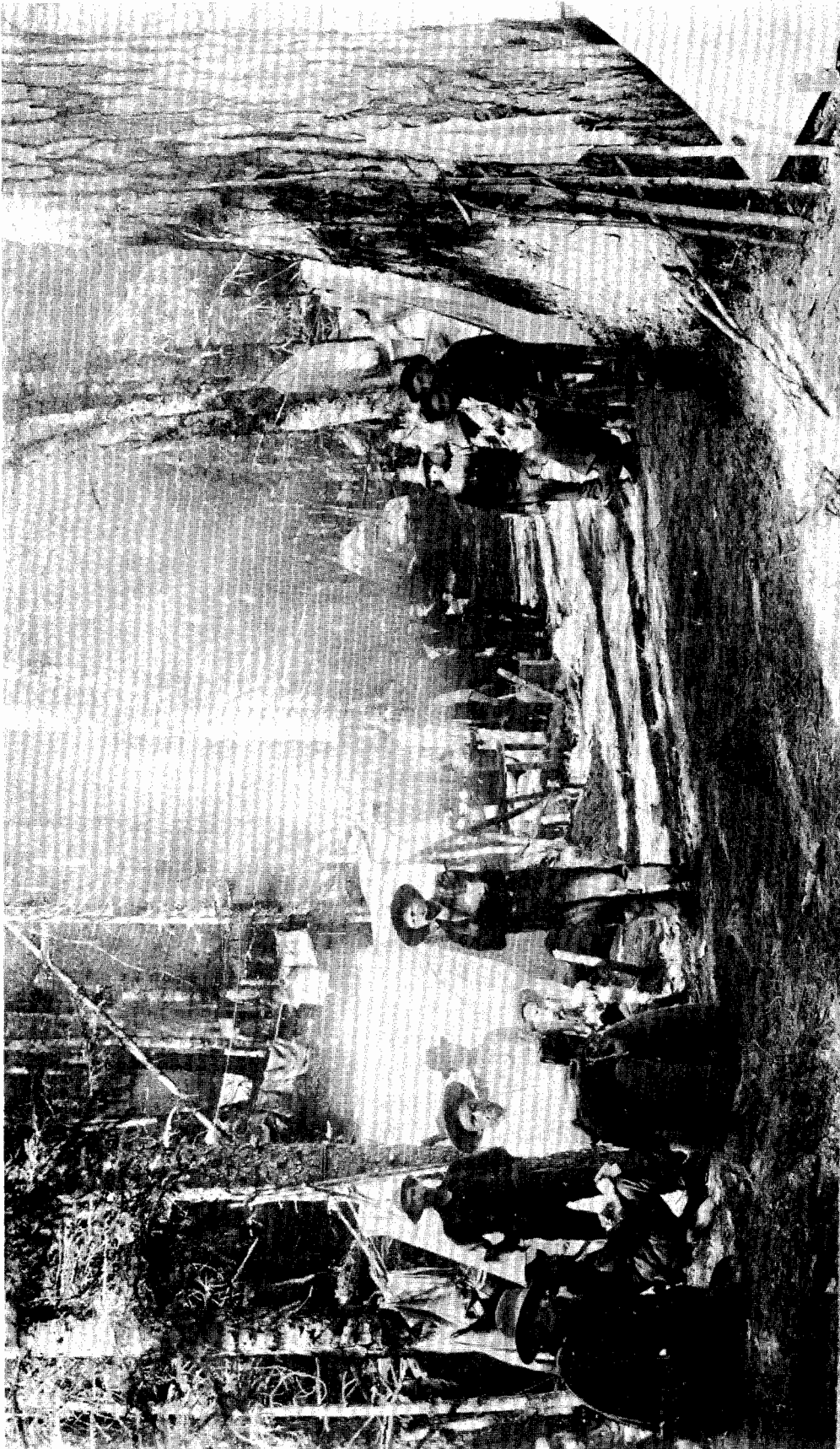
2070. Bridge over Porcupine Creek, Shagway Trail.

Copyright, 1897, La Roche, Seattle, Wash.



PLATE 13

"Camp Four Miles from Summit of White Pass." Above the last crossing of Skagway River and just below the upper box canyon, a camp destined to grow into White Pass City was established in August 1897. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



Chinook Indians, Sitka, Alaska

Copyright 1909 by AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

PLATE 14

"A Pack Train, Having Passed Through the Upper Box Canyon, Pushes on Toward the Summit." With the coming of winter, travel conditions over the White Pass Trail improved. Courtesy National Archives.

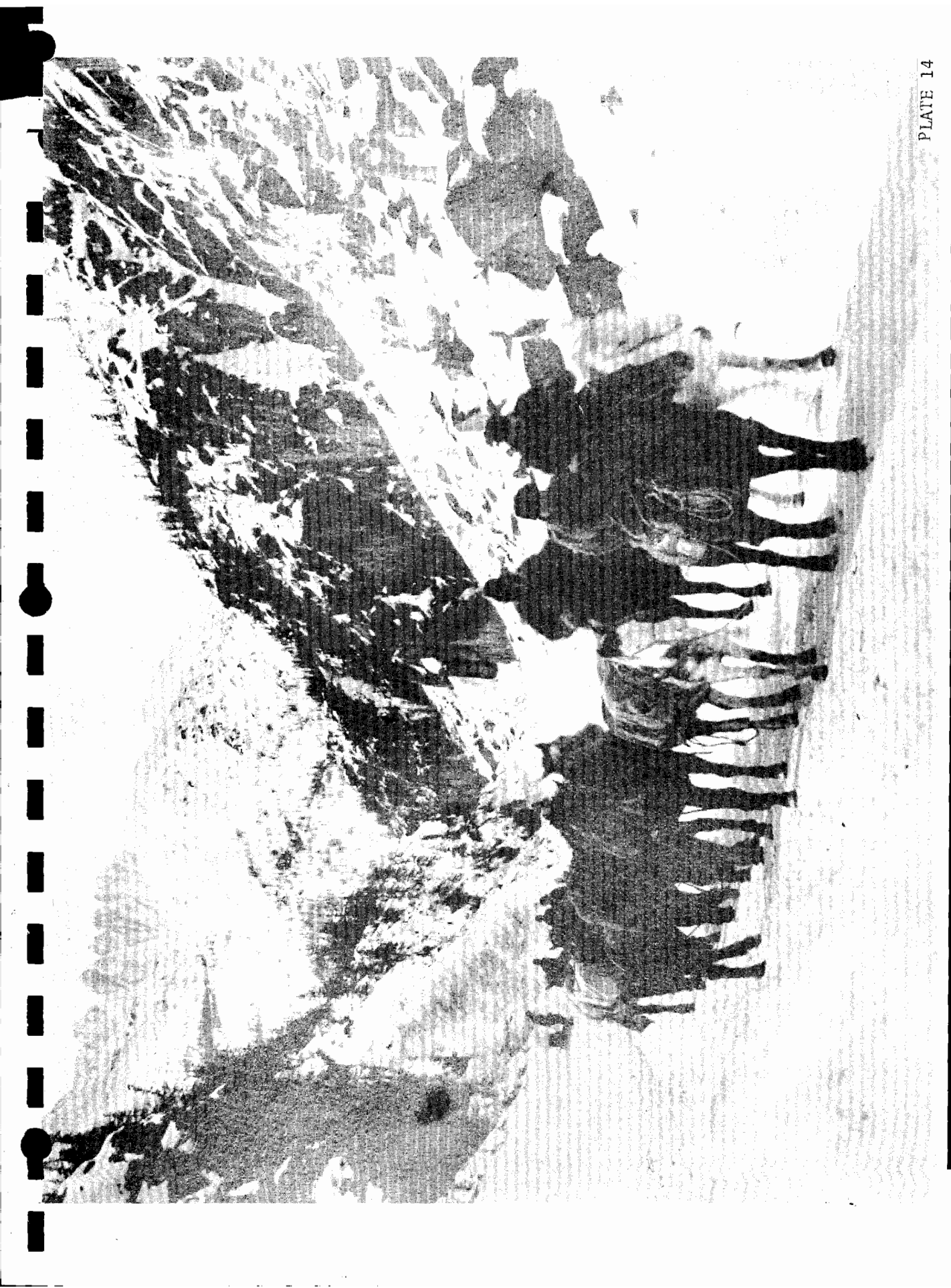


PLATE 15

"The Winter Trail Across White Pass." On favorable days, during the winter of 1897-98, traffic through White Pass was heavy. A pack train returning from Lake Bennett has just passed the summit. Courtesy of the National Archives.



PLATE 16

"The Dead Horse Trail, 1897." An estimated 2,000 horses died on the White Pass Trail in the summer and autumn of 1897. Dedmon Studios.





PLATE 16

THE DEAD HORSE TRAIL.



PLATE 17

"Log Cabin, a Way Station on the White Pass Trail, between the Summit and Lake Bennett." This settlement, where food and lodging could be secured, was a popular landmark on the trail. C. H. Graves Collection, Library of Congress.



The noted "Log Cabin" on the White Pass Trail to Klondyke.  
Copyright 1902 by C. H. Graves.

PLATE 18

"Workmen Clearing Right-of-Way for Brackett Road." In the autumn of 1897 construction commenced on the Brackett Road, leading from Skagway to White Pass City. Courtesy National Archives.



PLATE 19

"Capitalists Looking at a Map," George Brackett, his foremen and engineers are examining plans and maps of the Brackett Road. The structure in the background is one of the cabins erected as quarters for construction hands. Courtesy National Archives.



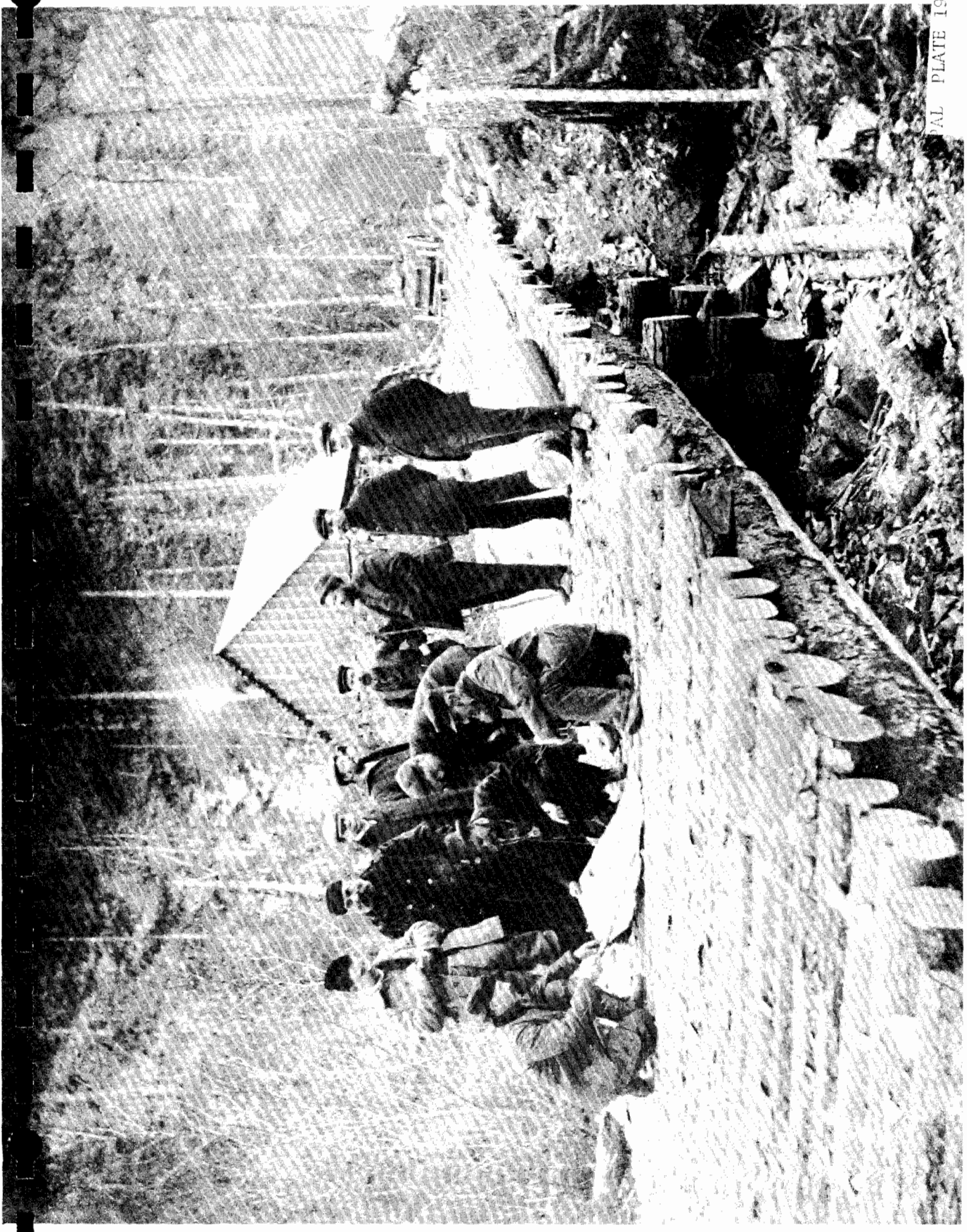


PLATE 20

"The Bridge Across East Fork." One of the last improvements to be completed on the Brackett Road was the East Fork bridge. Courtesy National Archives.

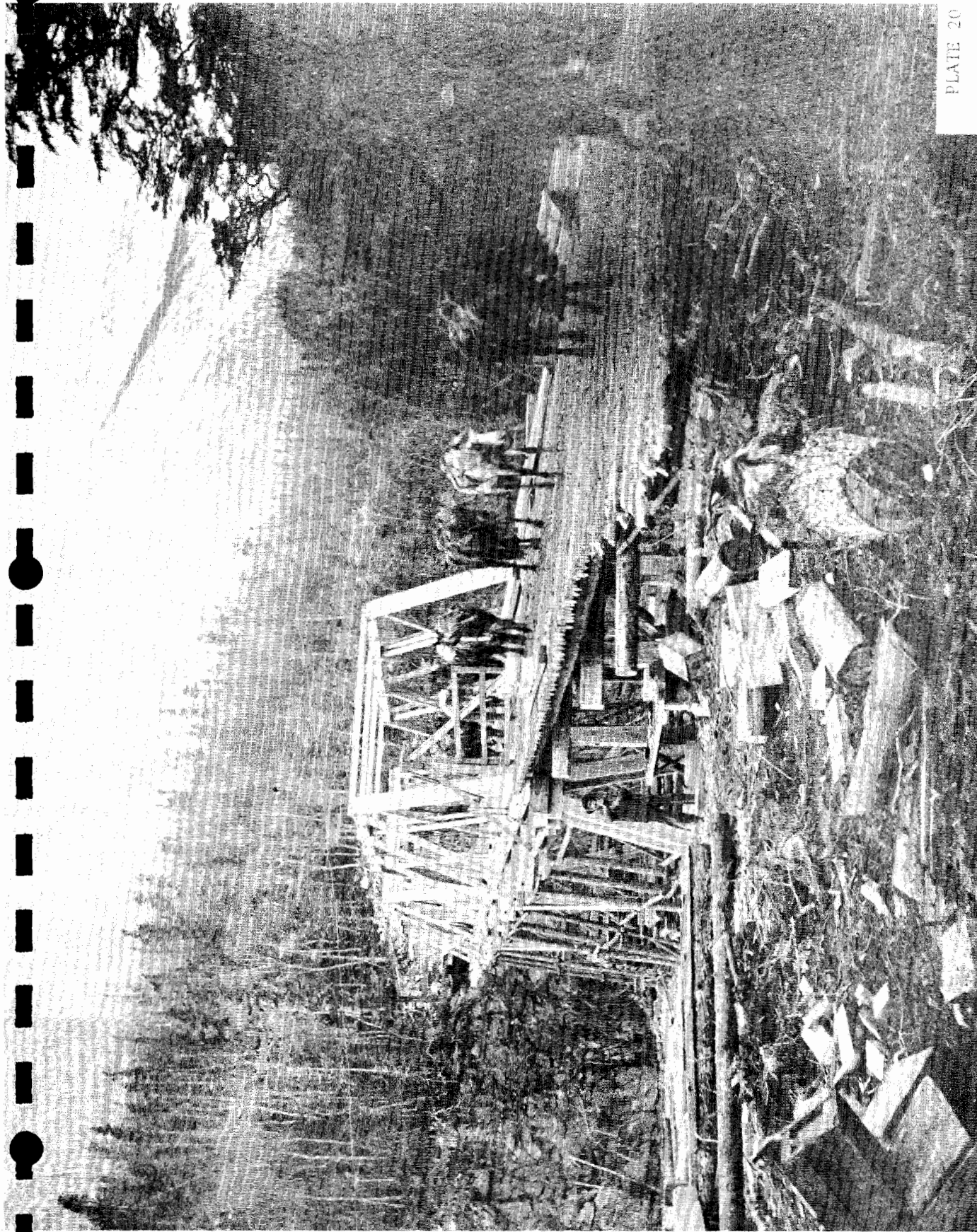




PLATE 21

"A Pack Train Crossing a Corduroy Bridge." Where the Brackett Road crossed swamps and bogs, corduroy bridges were built. Courtesy National Archives.

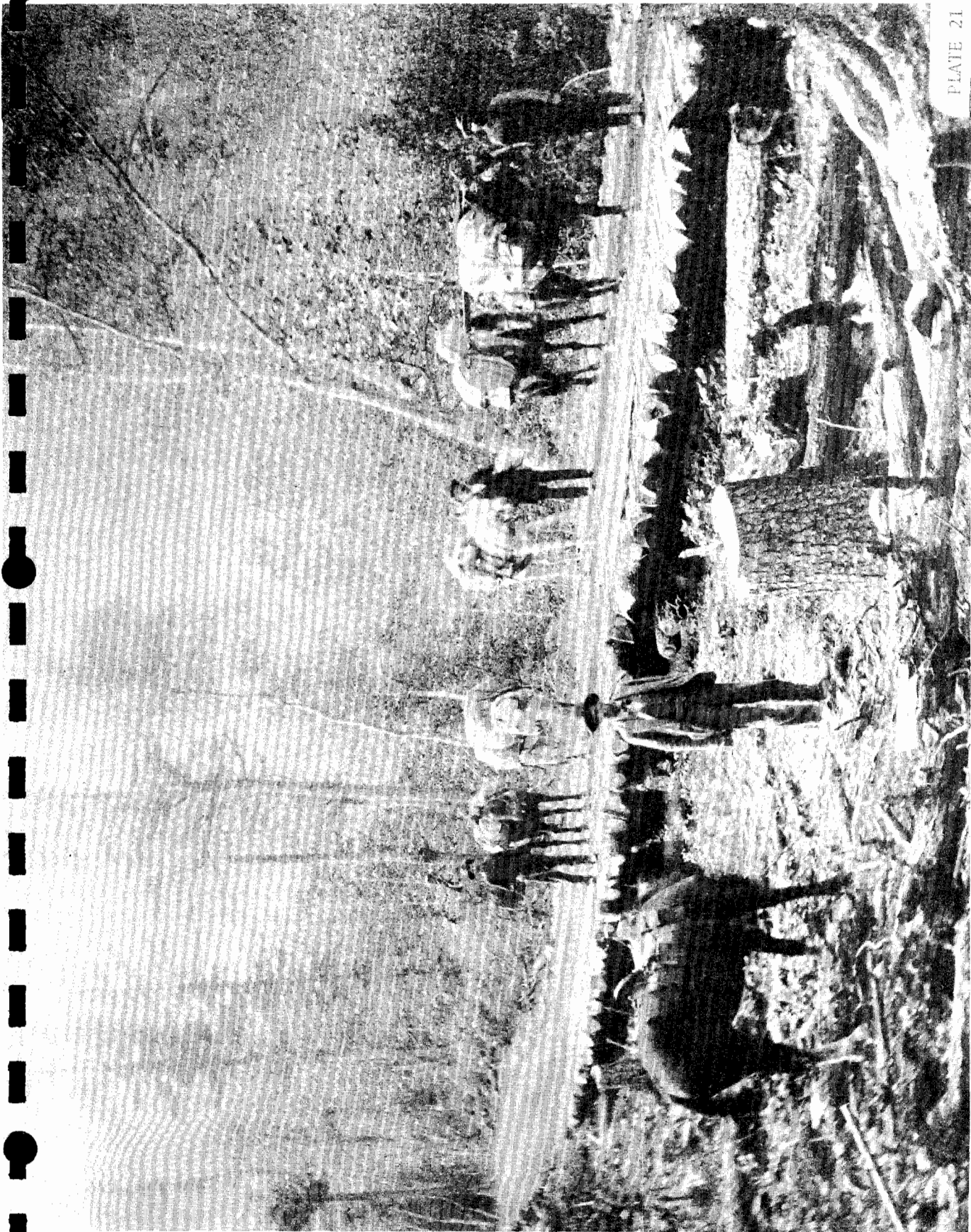


PLATE 22

"Winter Traffic on the Brackett Road." In the background is one of the Brackett Road Bridges, while in the foreground are packers traveling the frozen Skagway River to avoid paying toll. Courtesy National Archives.



PLATE 23

"An Empty Wagon on the Brackett Road." Note the crushed rock with which the road is surfaced. Courtesy National Archives.





PLATE 24

"Packers Approaching the Box Canyon above White Pass City." The Brackett Road ended at Toll Gate 9, and from there to the summit outfits and supplies had to be packed. Courtesy National Archives.

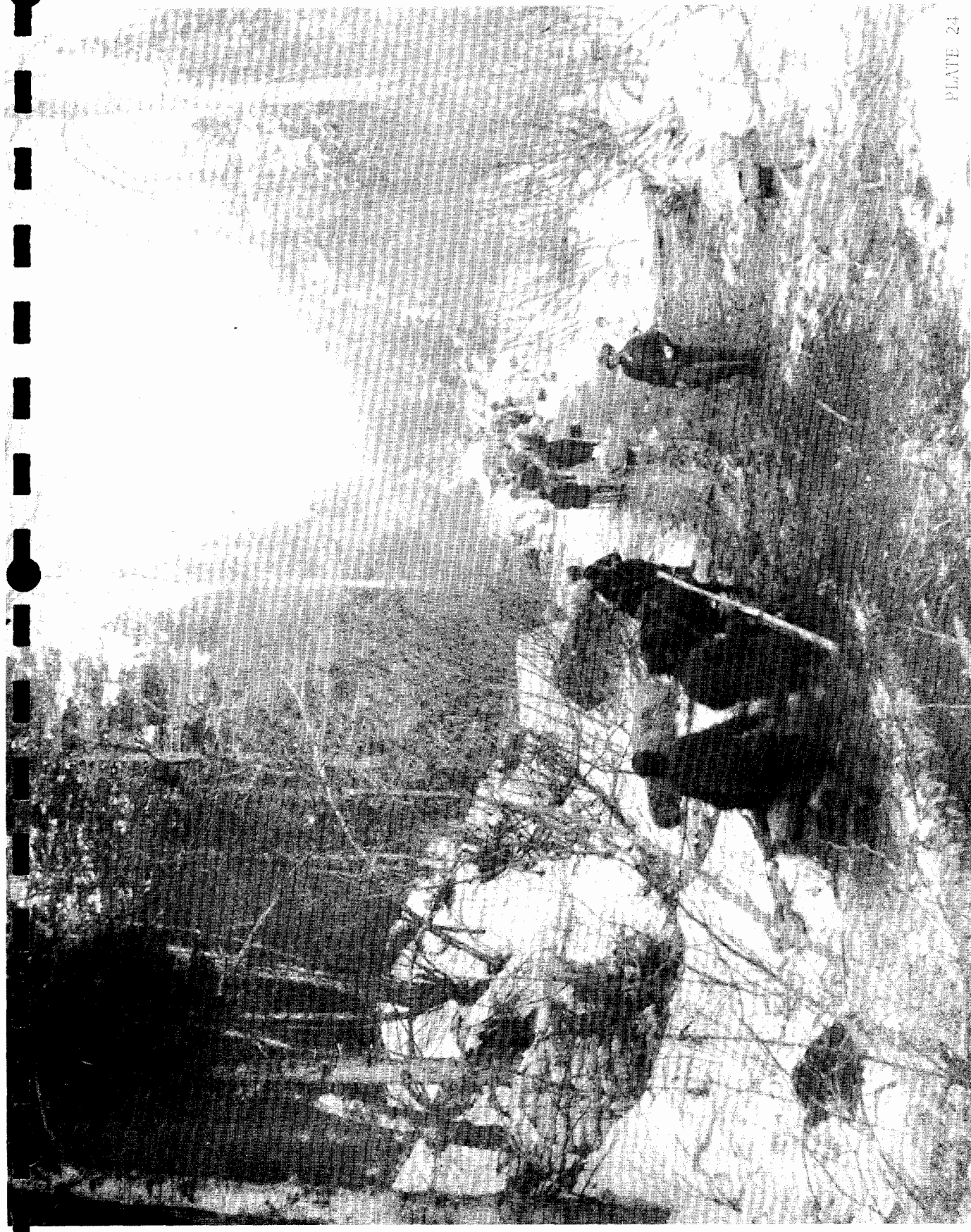




PLATE 25

"Toll Gate Brackett Road." One of the nine toll gates erected by George Brackett. Dedman Studios.



PLATE 25

TOLL GATE BARRETT COMPANY

PLATE 26

"Tunnel Mountain, White Pass & Yukon Route." Construction of a railroad across the Coast Mountains was started in the summer of 1898. This photograph shows a train approaching the only tunnel on the route. Courtesy Library of Congress.



470 TUNNEL MOUNTAIN, P. & Y. ROUTE

PLATE 27

"First Train over the White Pass and Yukon R. R., Alaska." The first through train reached the summit on February 21, 1899, the first through train Lake Bennett on July 6, 1899. Graves Collection, Library of Congress.



First train over the White Pass and Yukon R. R., Alaska.  
Copyright 1902 by C. H. Graves.



JOIN ON THIS LINE

BRANDY Summit  
117,500  
1170  
1170

HIGH MOUNTAIN CHAIN

HIGH MOUNTAIN CHAIN

HIGH MOUNTAIN

TIMBER

LOW MOUNTAIN

LOW BROKEN LAND

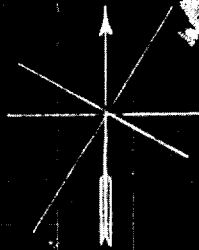
HIGH BROKEN MOUNTAIN

HIGH MOUNTAIN CHAIN

INLET

THUNDER WALL  
(10,000 ft. high)  
10,000 ft. high

LOW BROKEN LAND



SCALE: ONE MILE TO THE INCH

*Campsite of the Chilkoot  
and White Pass trails, and  
section of Tasshi route  
C. D. ...*

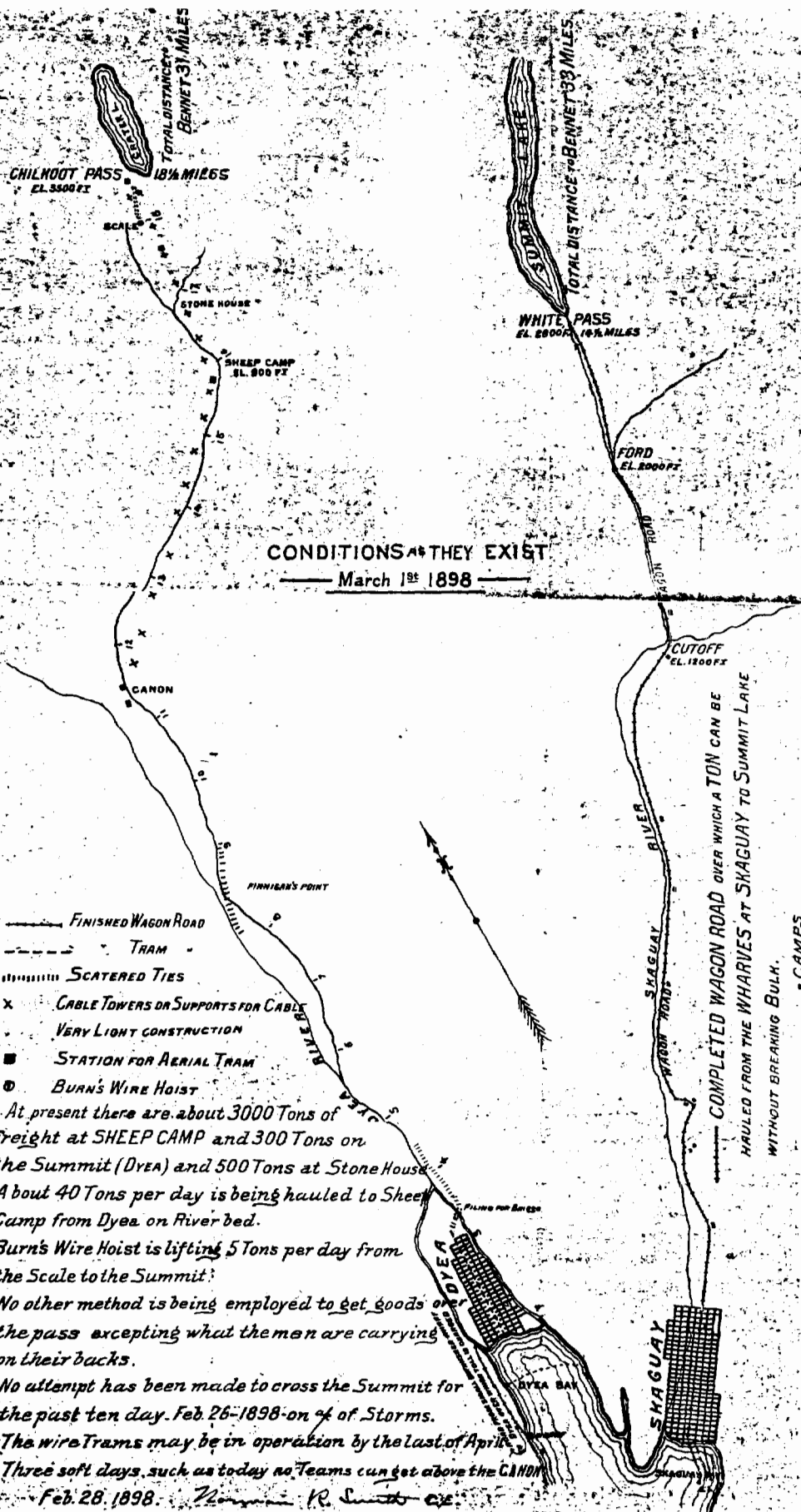
U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY  
LITHO. DIVISION, CANADIAN

PLATE 28

Map of Chilkoot and White Pass Trails.







CONDITIONS AS THEY EXIST  
 — March 1st 1898 —

- FINISHED WAGON ROAD
- - - TRAM
- ||||| SCATERED TIES
- x CABLE TOWERS OR SUPPORTS FOR CABLE VERY LIGHT CONSTRUCTION
- STATION FOR AERIAL TRAM
- BURN'S WIRE HOIST

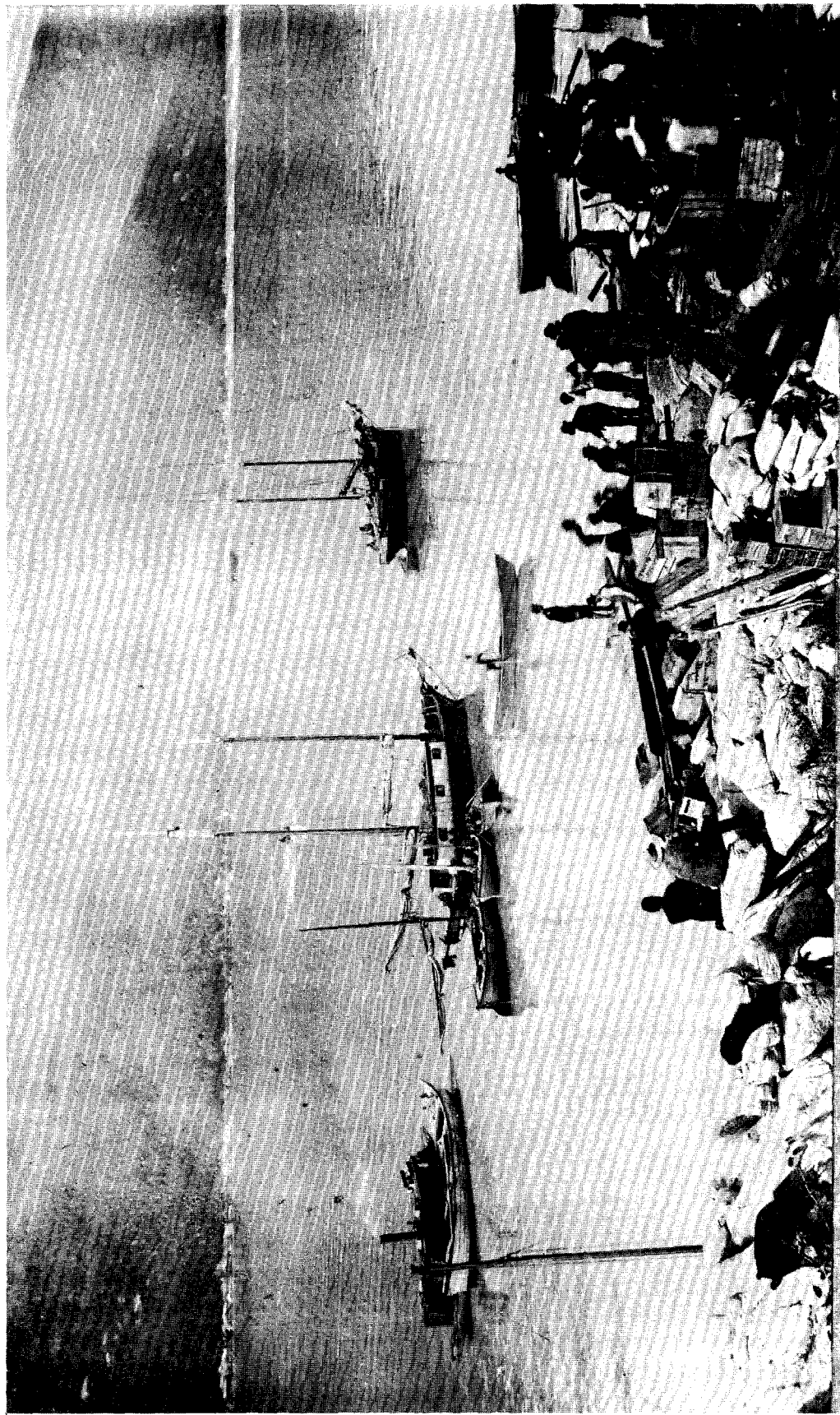
At present there are about 3000 Tons of freight at SHEEP CAMP and 300 Tons on the Summit (Dyea) and 500 Tons at Stone House. About 40 Tons per day is being hauled to Sheep Camp from Dyea on River bed. Burn's Wire Hoist is lifting 5 Tons per day from the Scale to the Summit. No other method is being employed to get goods over the pass excepting what the men are carrying on their backs. No attempt has been made to cross the Summit for the past ten day. Feb 26-1898 on 4 of Storms. The wire Trams may be in operation by the last of April. Three soft days, such as today no Teams can get above the CANON. Feb. 28. 1898. Morrison R. Smith

COMPLETED WAGON ROAD OVER WHICH A TON CAN BE HAULED FROM THE WHARVES AT SHAGUAY TO SUMMIT LAKE WITHOUT BREAKING BULK. • CAMPS

PLATE 29  
 Map Showing  
 Tramways and  
 Brackett Road.

PLATE 30

"Schooner *Elder*, Discharging Freight on the Rocks near Dyea, Alaska." Until 1898, when two wharves were built, adventurers going ashore at Dyea had to either land on the rocks or across the tidal flats. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



Men preparing to reef the top-sails of the "Dover" at the anchorage.

PLATE 30

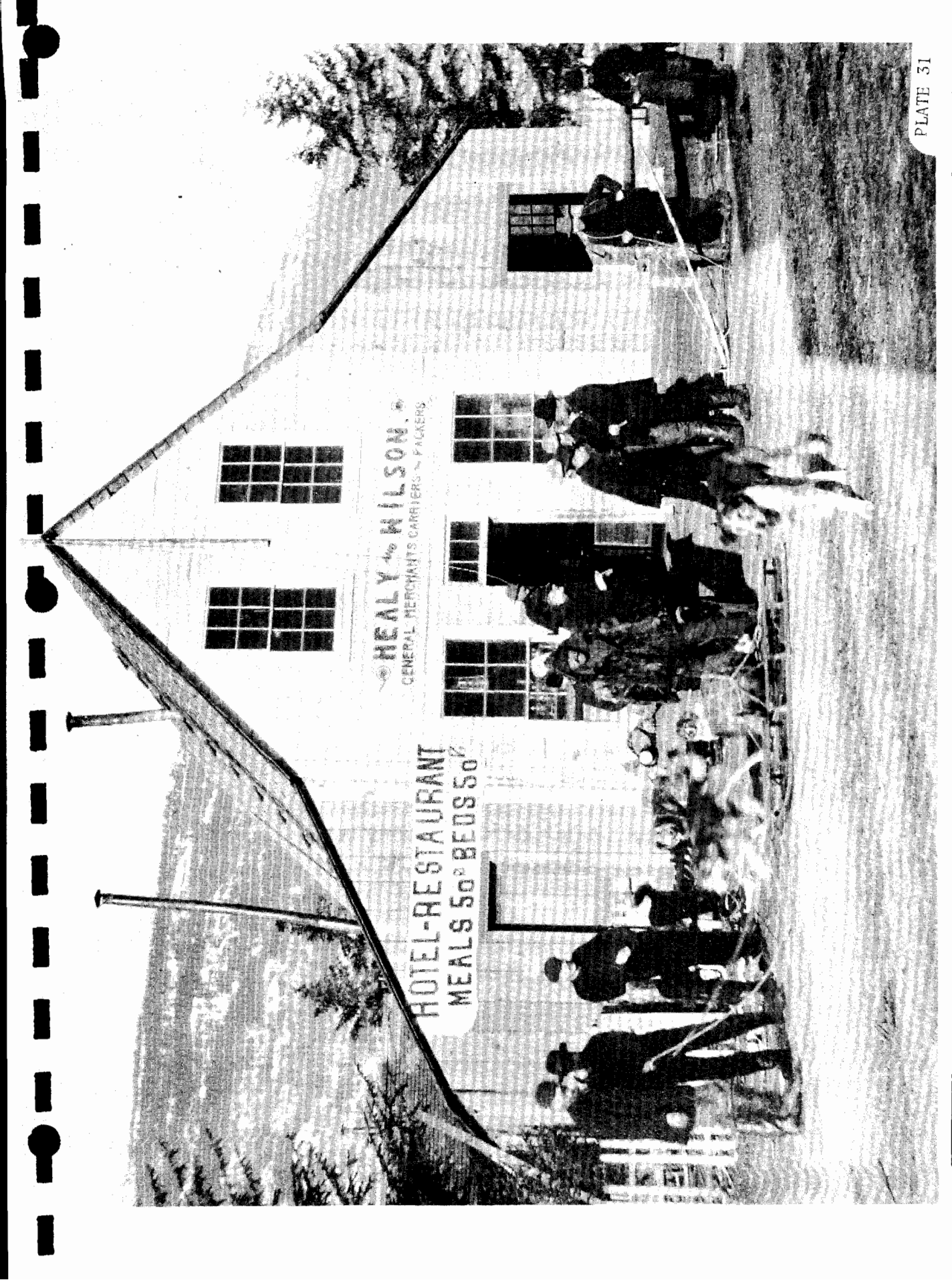
Copyright 1897 by William & W. W. & Co.

Wm. & W.

Wm. & W.

PLATE 31

"Healy & Wilson's Store at Dyea." This trading post, established in the mid-1880s, was managed by Sam Herron during the days of '97 and '98. Courtesy National Archives.



HEALY & WILSON  
GENERAL MERCHANTS CARRIERS & PACKERS

HOTEL-RESTAURANT  
MEALS 50¢ BEDS 50¢

HOTEL-RESTAURANT  
MEALS 50¢ BEDS 50¢

PLATE 32

"Healy & Wilson's Store and River Street in 1897." When the rush to the Klondike began in the spring of 1897, a boomtown grew up alongside the trail. The trail where it led through Dyea became River Street. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



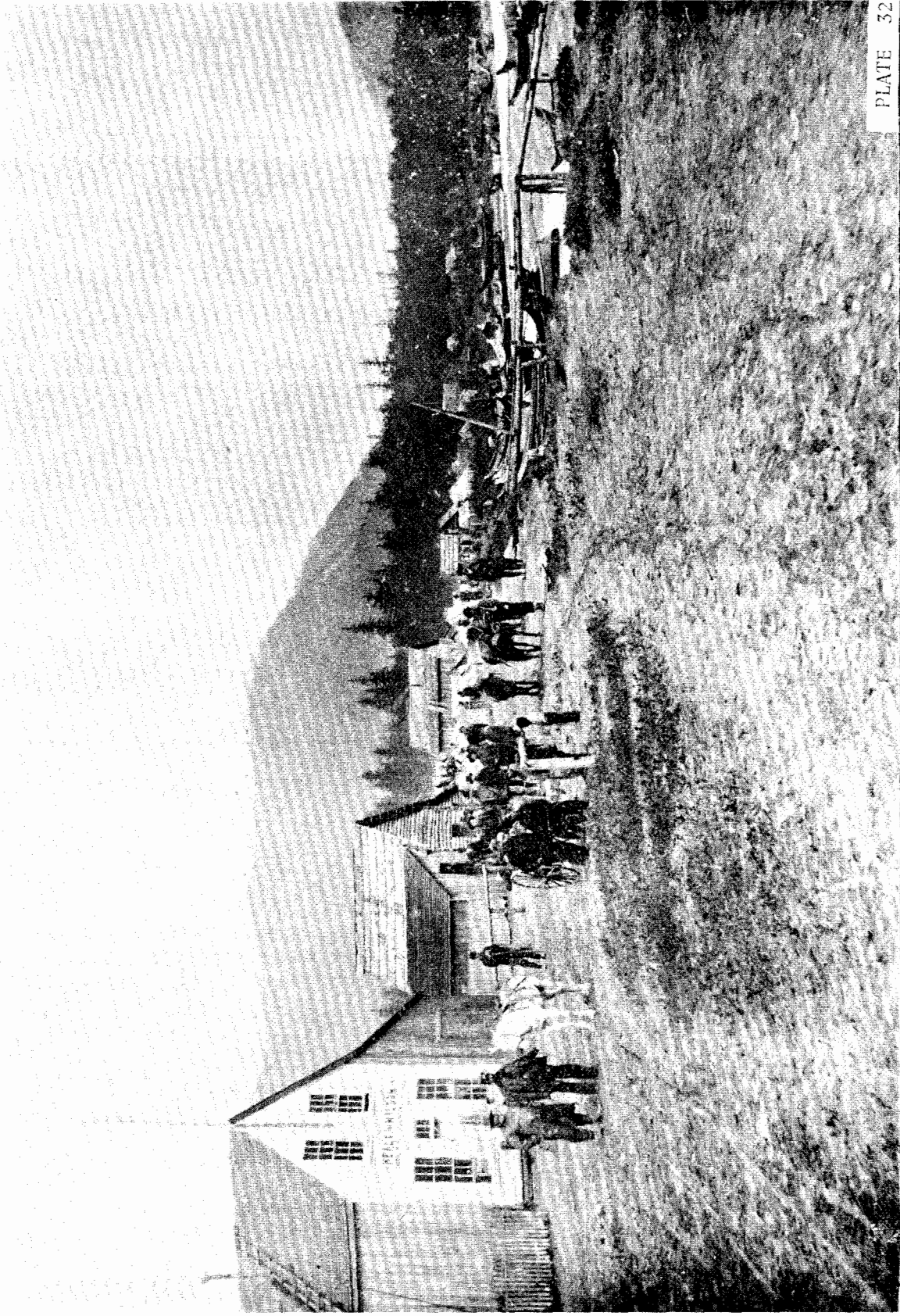




PLATE 33

"View of Dyea from the Southwest, Summer of 1898." This photograph was made when Dyea was at its apogee. In the foreground can be seen the road and bridge leading to the DKT Co. dock, three miles south of Dyea. Courtesy Library of Congress.



SMITH

PLATE 34

"Stampeders Camped on the Taiya Flats, Winter of 1897-98." Until the wharves were completed, the adventurers' outfits were put ashore on the flats above high-tide mark. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



PLATE 34

PLATE 35

"Forty Indian Canoes at Dyea, Late Summer of 1897." Many chechakos engaged the Chilkooot to transport their outfits in study canoes up the Taiya to the head of navigation. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.

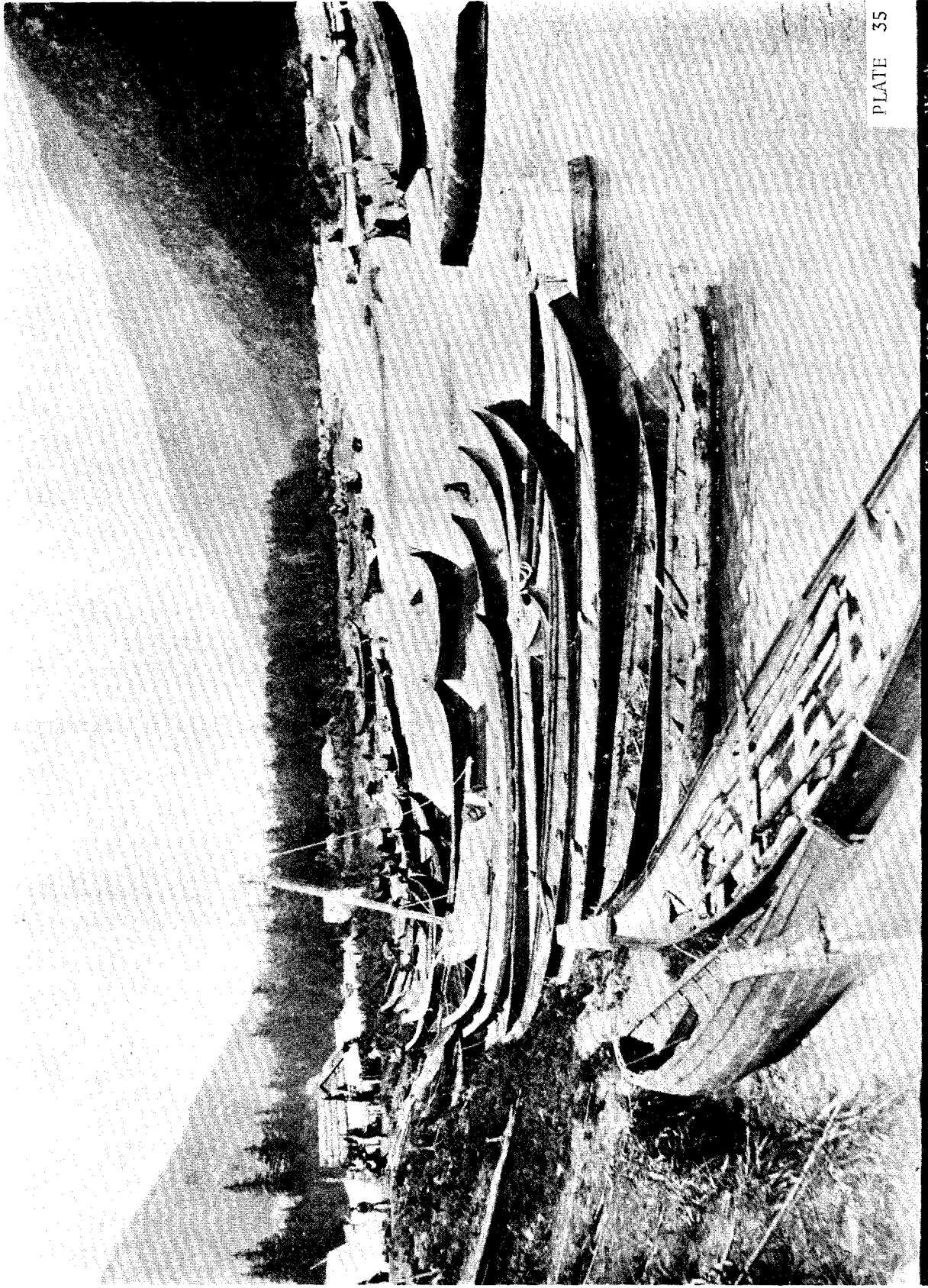


PLATE 36

"Klondike Wagon Loaded with Provisions, Late Summer of 1897." A horse and two-wheeled wagon were employed by some adventurers to transport their outfits from Dyea to Sheep Camp. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



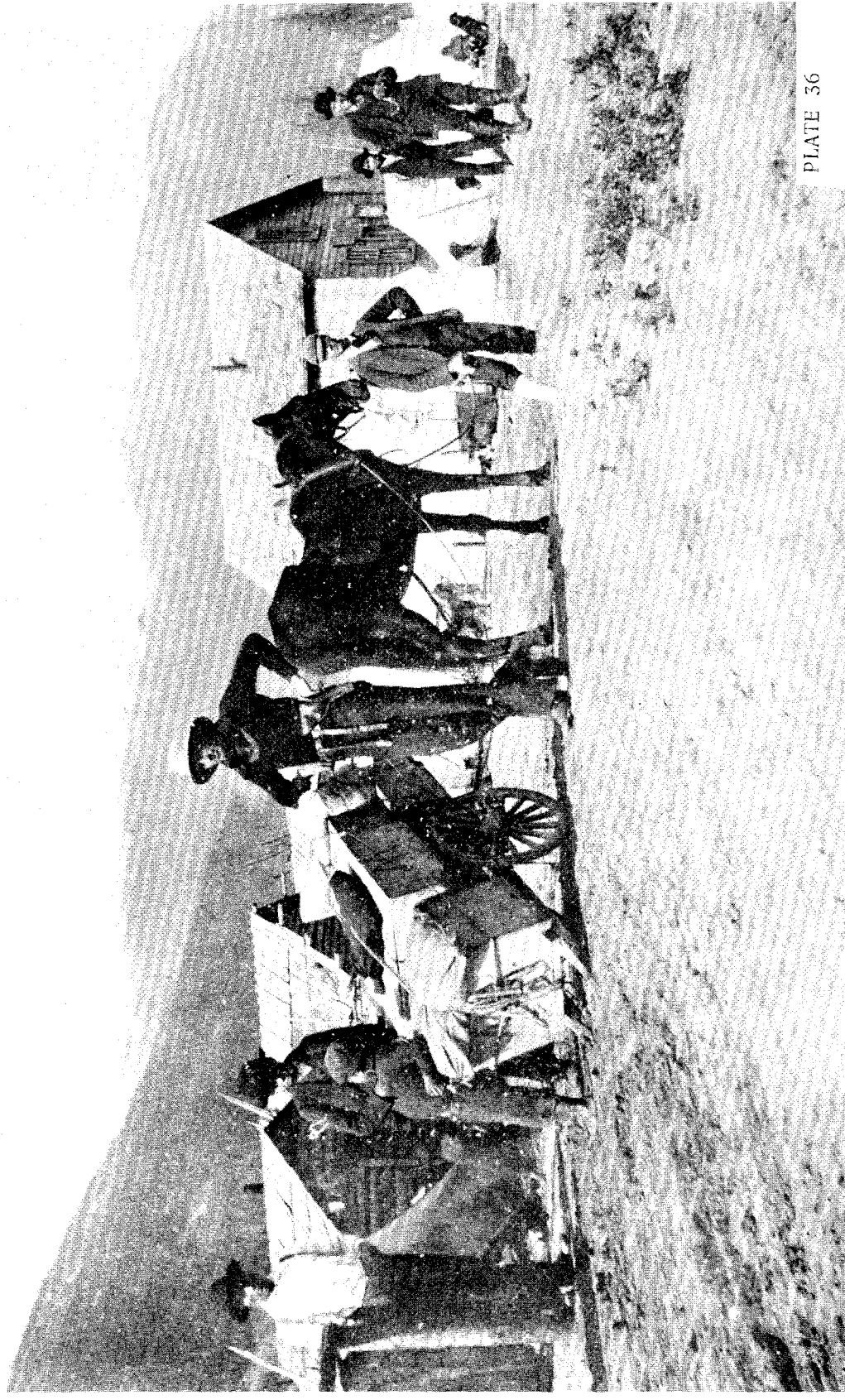


PLATE 56



PLATE 37

"On the Chilkoot Trail, 1897." A company of Klondikers head northward from Dyea, using a two-wheel cart to transport their outfit. The trail at this point parallels the west bank of the Taiya. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



PLATE 37

Copyright 1907 by Winter & Pond

On the Yukon Trail, Dyea Valley, Alaska

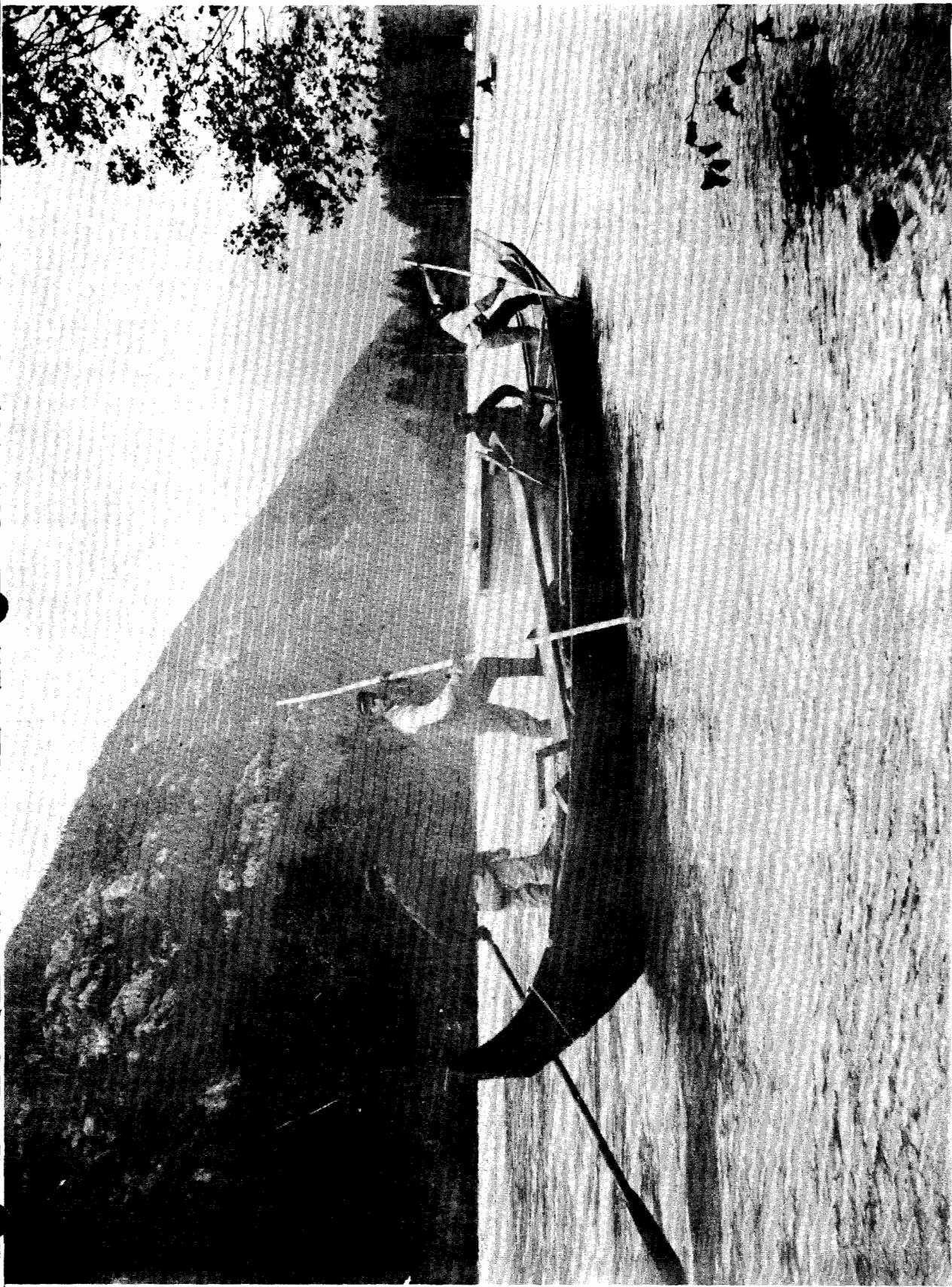
PLATE 38

"Chilkoot Packers and Oxen on the Chilkoot Trail, in the Summer of 1897." Five Chilkoot packers take a break, as a stamper adjusts the packs carried by his oxen. Courtesy Library of Congress.



PLATE 39

"Indians Poling a Canoe up the Taiya River, Summer of 1897." Big Canoes such as this were employed by the Chilkoot to transport outfits and supplies from Dyea to the head of navigation, six miles up the Taiya. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



2016. Indians Poling Canoe up Dyea River.

PLATE 40

"Towing Provisions up the Taiya, Summer of 1897." Some adventurers employed bateaux to transport their outfits up the Taiya from Dyea. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



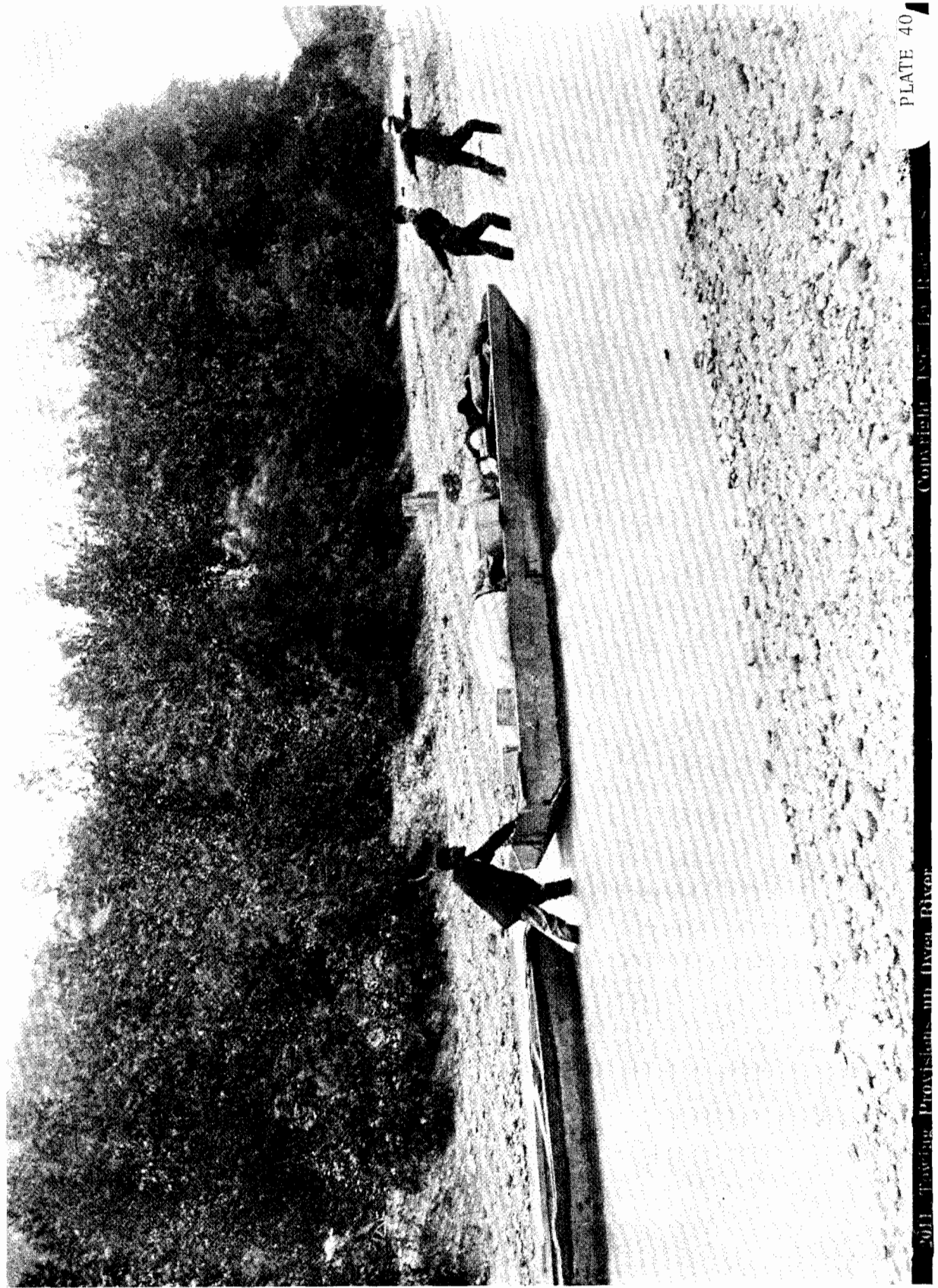




PLATE 41

"Looking South Toward Dyea from near Site of Canyon City, Summer of 1897."  
The eight miles between Canyon City and Dyea were comparatively easy traveling. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



PLATE 41

2024 South from Foot of Canyon, Deer Trail, Copyright, 1897, J. Roche, Seattle, Wash.

PLATE 42

"Collecting Toll, Chilkoot Trail, Summer of 1897." At the entrance to the canyon, the trail crossed from the west to the east side of the Taiya. Here a toll bridge had been erected. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.

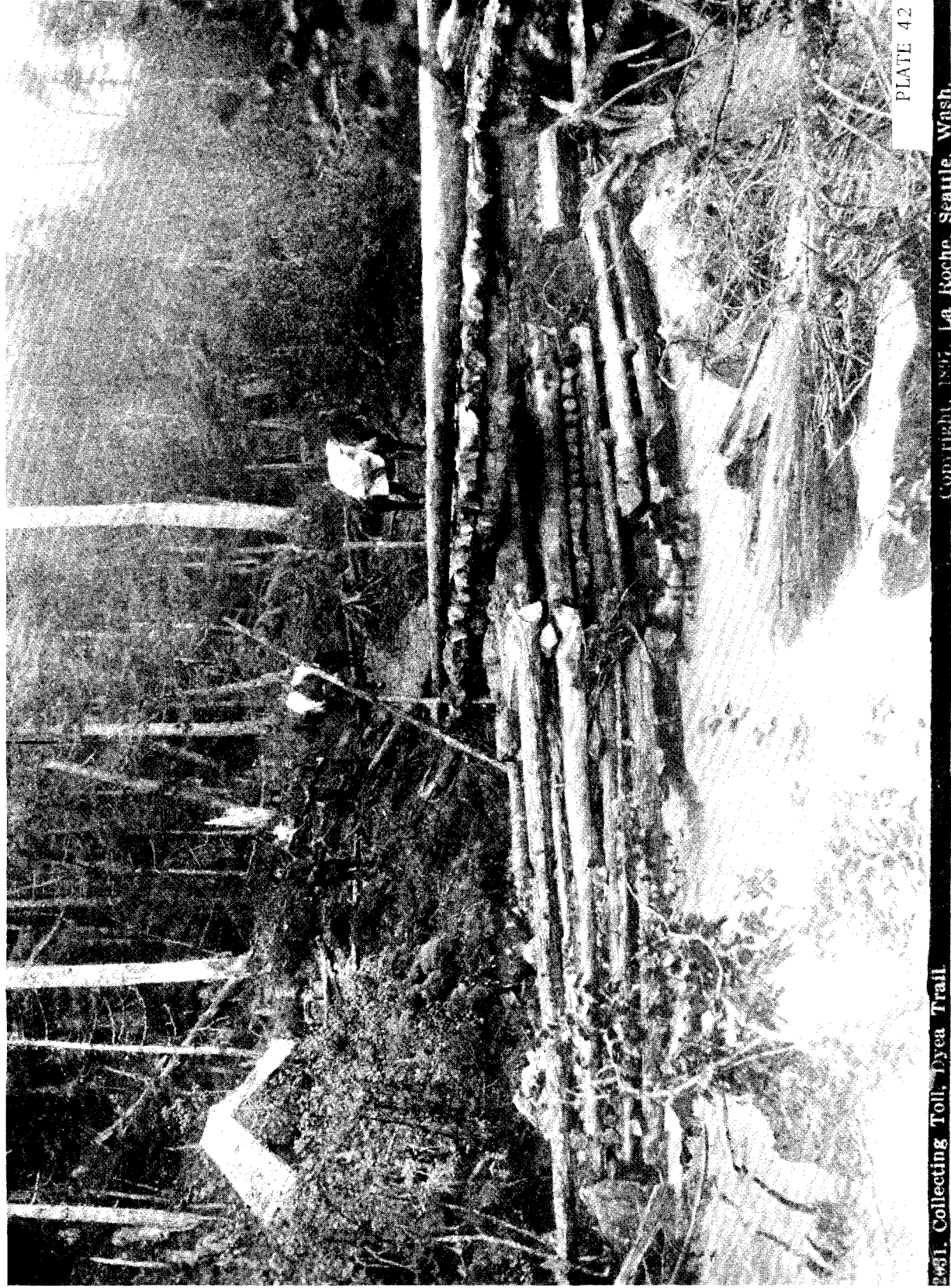
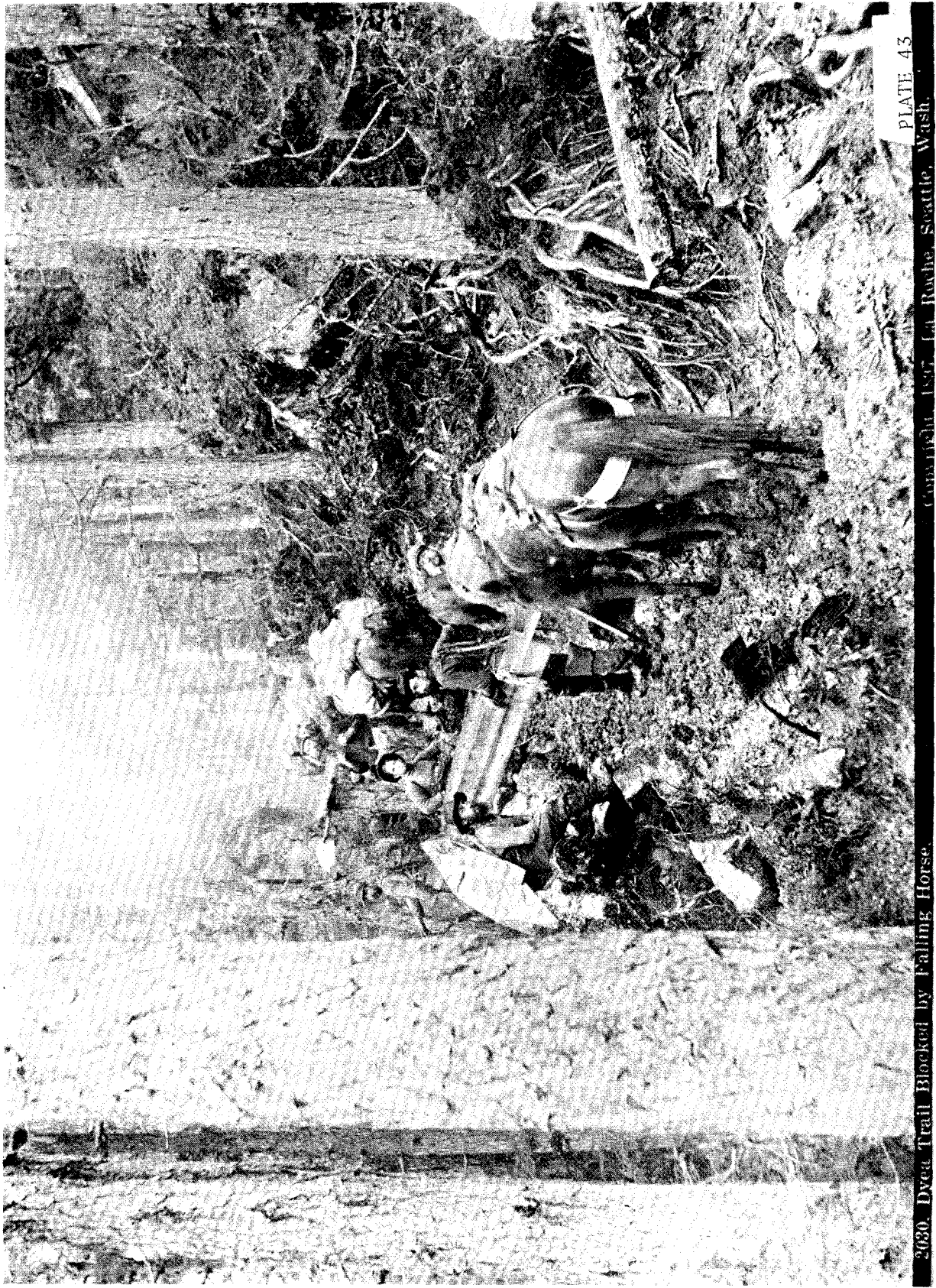


PLATE 42

2661. Collecting Toll, Dyea Trail. Copyright, 1897, La Roche, Seattle, Wash.

PLATE 43

"The Chilkoot Trail Blocked by Falling Horse, Summer of 1897." The trail through the canyon was rugged and the mud deep. In a futile effort to improve conditions the trail was corduroyed. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



2030. Dyea Trail Blocked by Falling Horse.

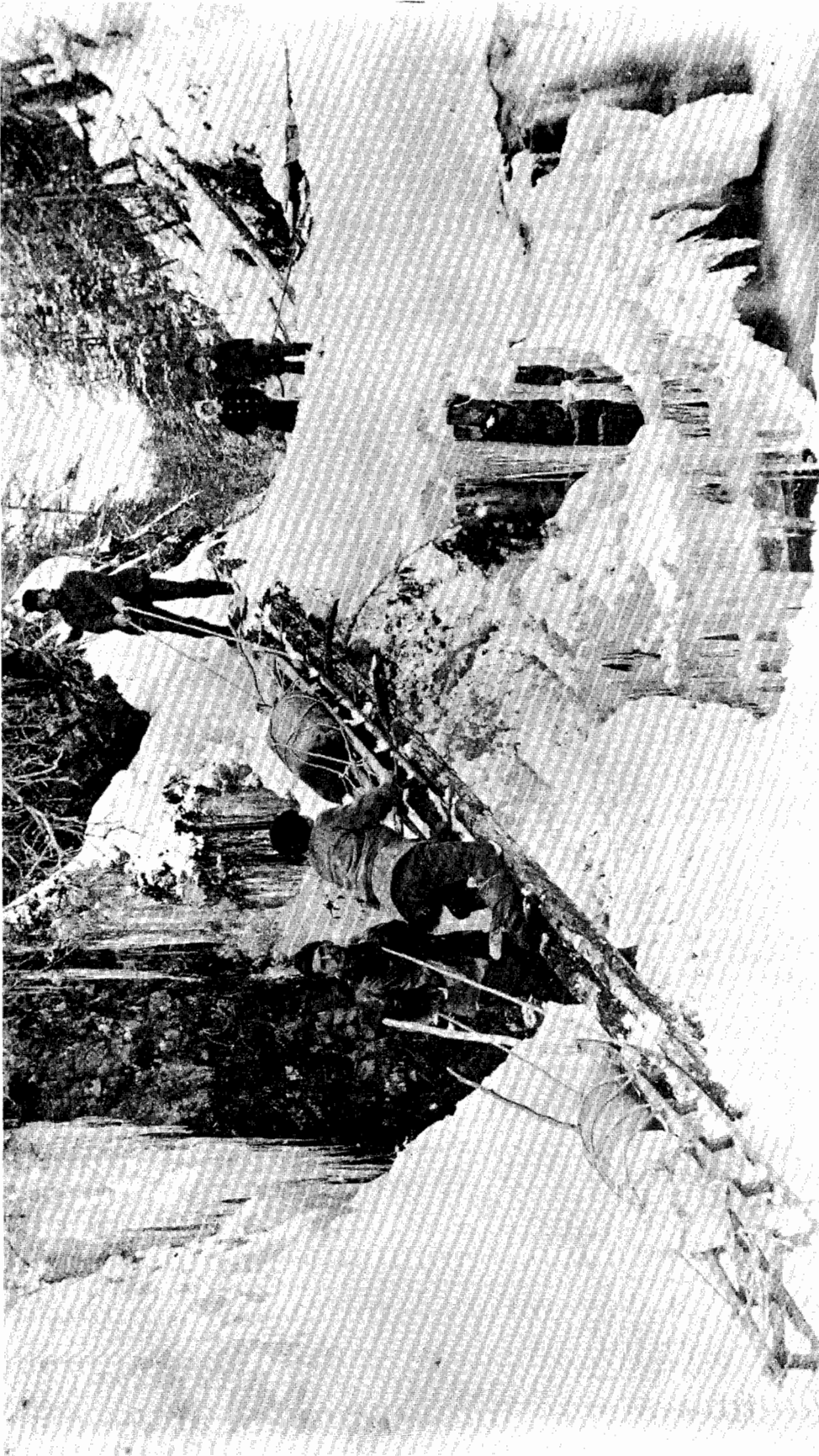
Copyright, 1917, Ed. Roche, Seattle, Wash.

PLATE 43



PLATE 44

"Jacob's Ladder, a Portage in the Canyon, Three Miles below Sheep Camp, Winter of 1897-98." As soon as the Taiya froze over, a trail was opened over the ice. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



Jacob's Ladder, a Portage in the Canyon near Sheep Camp, Alaska. Copyright 1898 by Winter & Pond.



PLATE 45

"Klondikers Using Yukon Sleds to Transport their Outfits,  
Winter of 1897-98." With the Taiya frozen over, the chee-  
chakos opened a trail over the ice and through the canyon.  
Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.

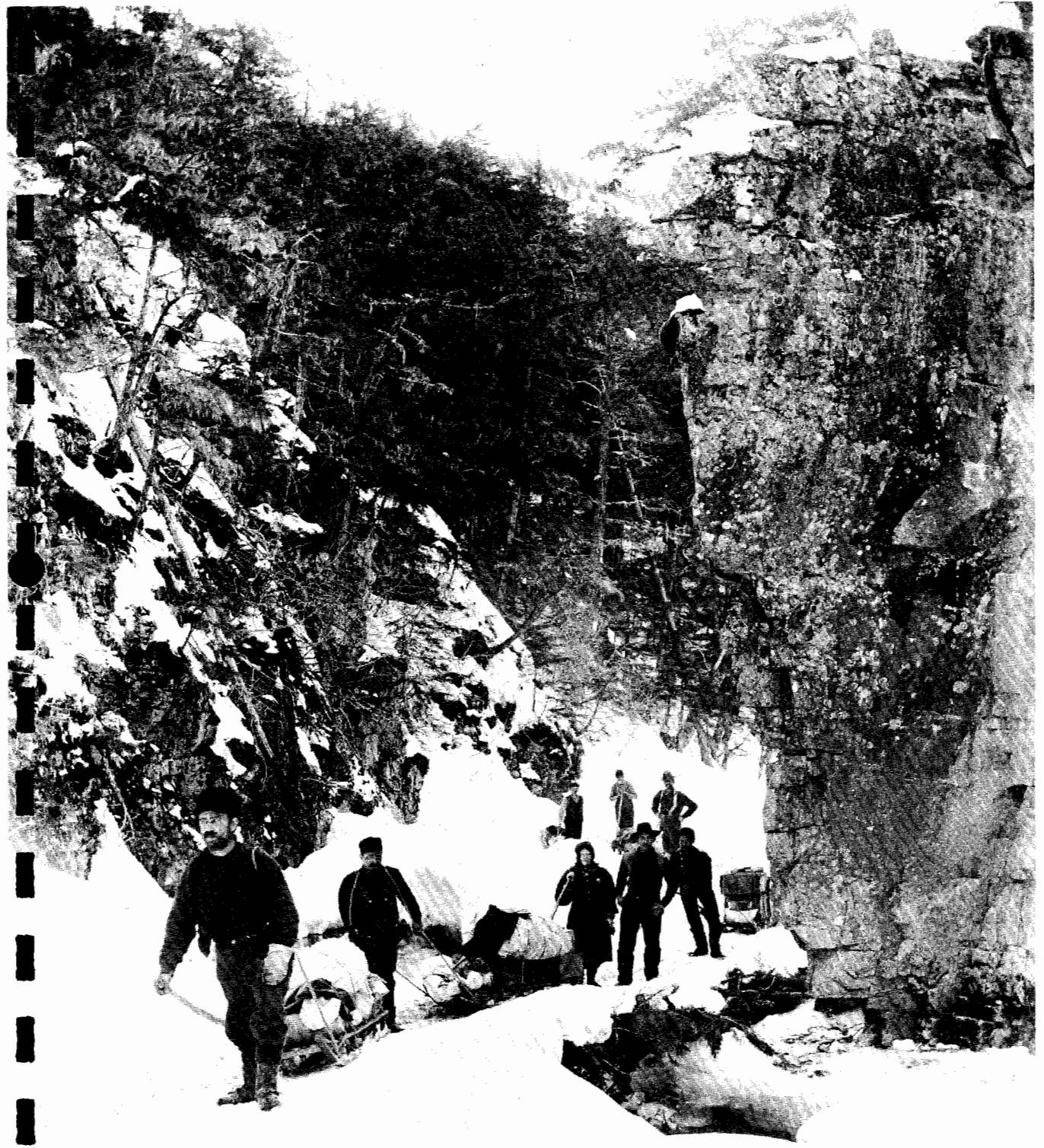
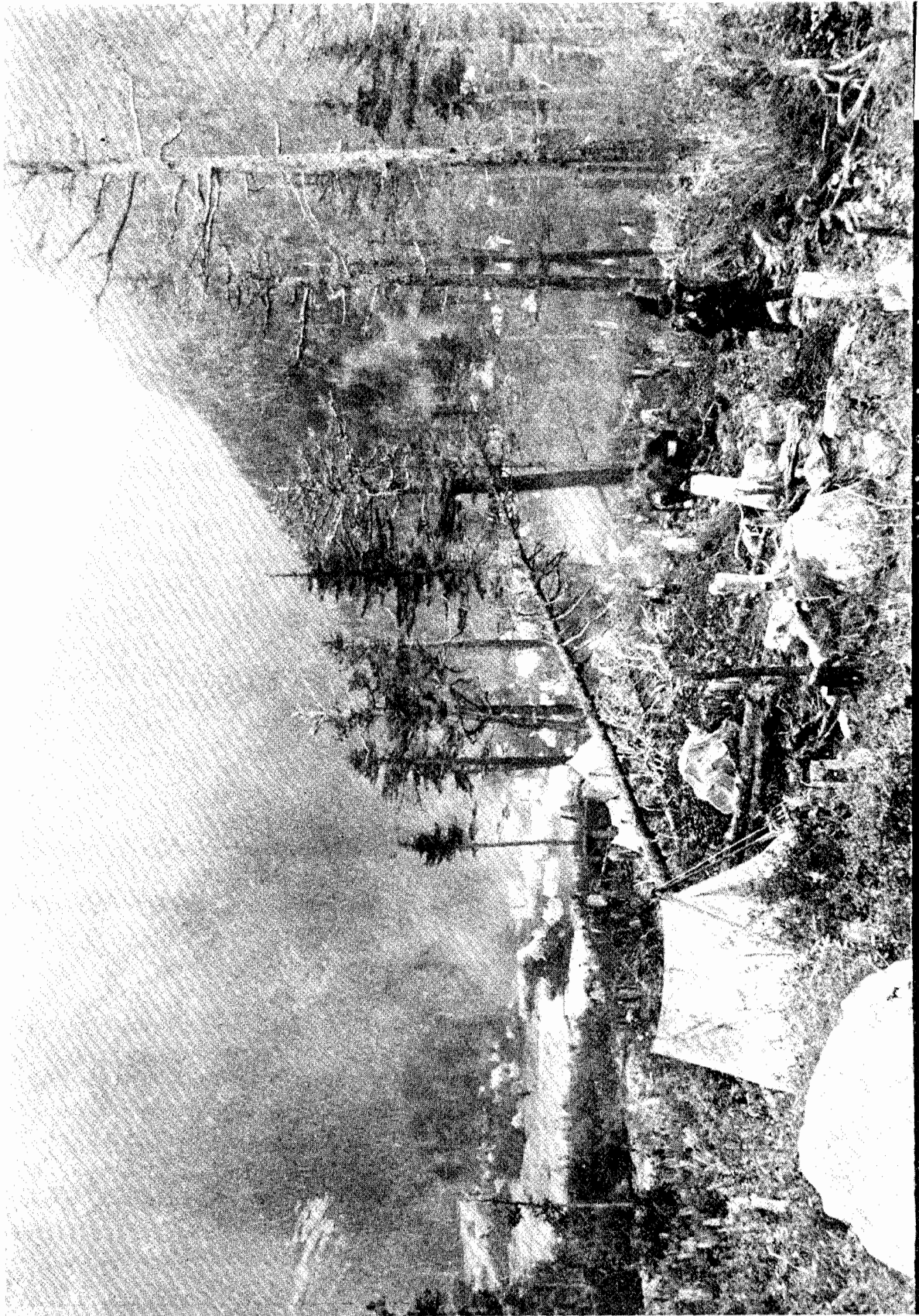


PLATE 46

"Sheep Camp on the Chilkoot Trail, Summer of 1897." A tent city sprang up at Sheep Camp in 1897. Sheep Camp was 12 miles from Dyea and four from the summit. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



1092 Sheep Camp, Dreb Trail.

Copyrighted, 1897 by Lewis & Clark

PLATE 47

"Courtney's Store and Post Office, Sheep Camp,  
Alaska, Winter of 1897-98." Courtesy Library  
of Congress.





9212—Courtney's Store and Post Office, Sheep Camp, Alaska.

PLATE 48

"Main Street, Sheep Camp, Alaska, Winter of 1897-98."  
Note the dogs, telegraph lines, and the Golden Gate  
and Seattle restaurants. Courtesy Library of Congress.

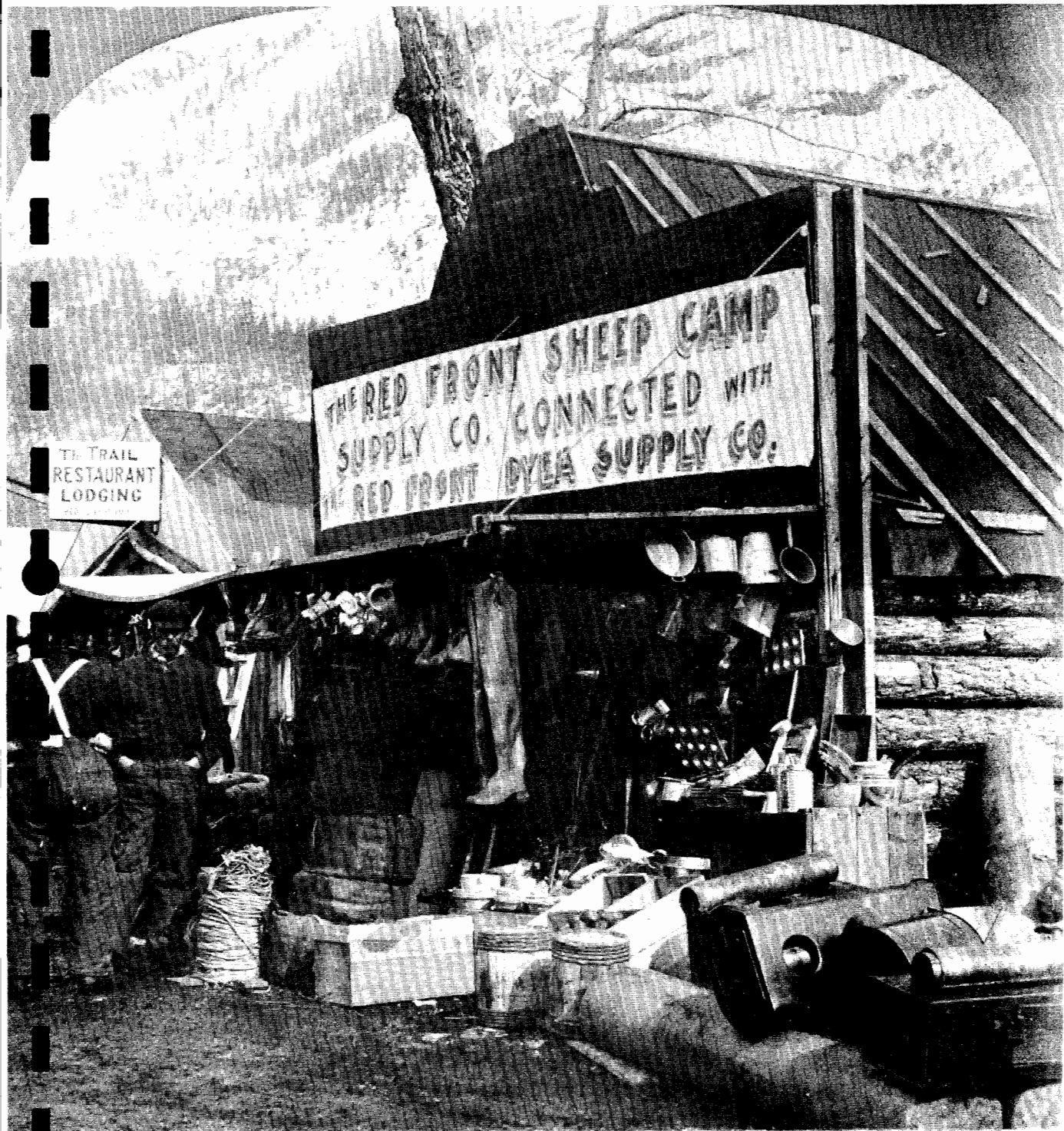


9210—Main Street, Sheep Camp, Alaska.



PLATE 49

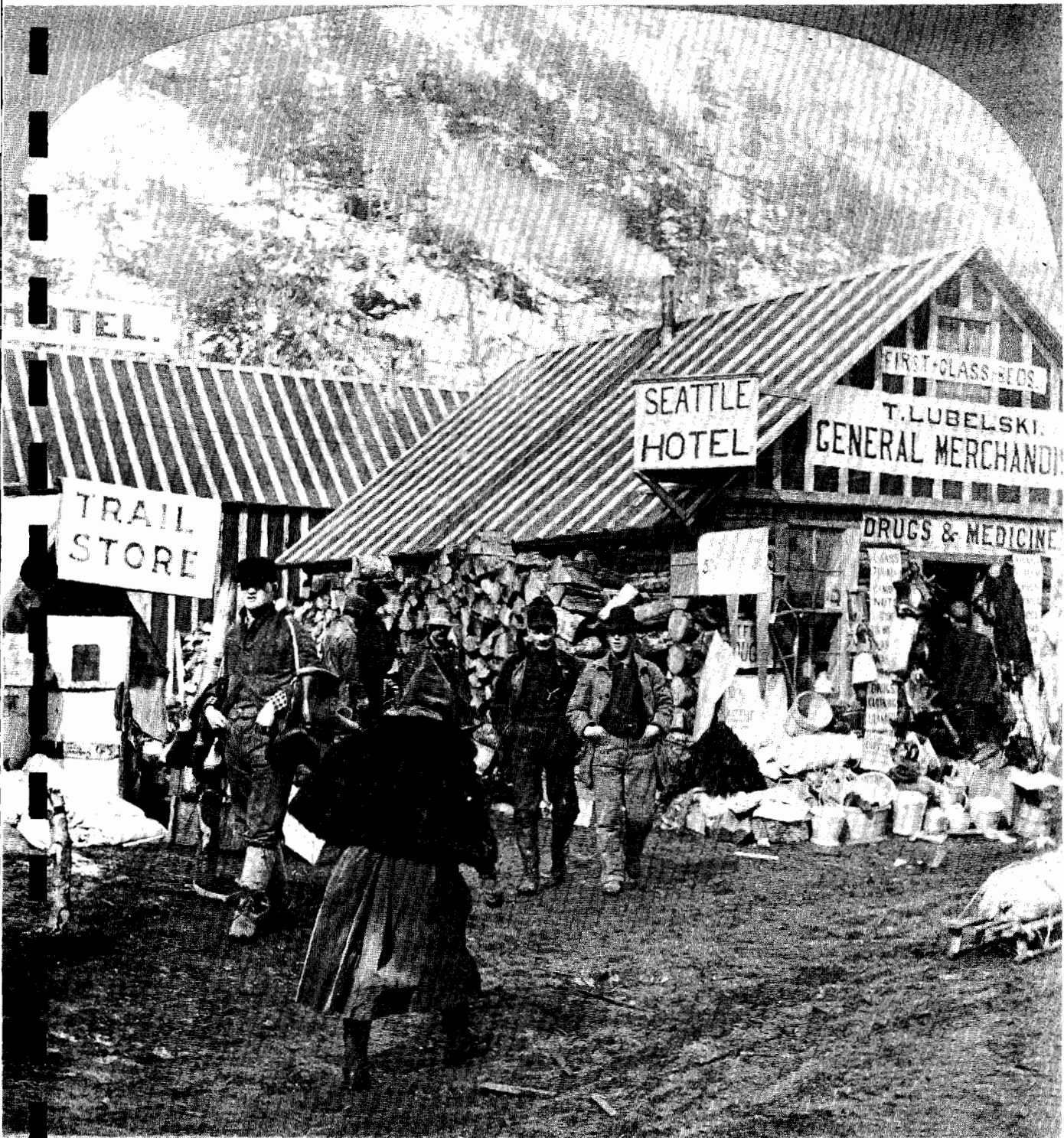
"The *Red Front Store*, Sheep Camp, Alaska, Winter of 1897-98." The Trail Restaurant can be seen in the background. Courtesy Library of Congress.



9207.—The "Red Front Store," Sheep Camp, Alaska,

PLATE 50

"The Leading Store at Sheep Camp, Alaska, Winter of 1897-98." T. Lubelski's General Store and *Seattle Hotel*; note construction of buildings, and firewood for sale. Courtesy Library of Congress.



9214—The Leading Store at Sheep Camp, Alaska.

PLATE 51

"The 'Miner's Friend' at Lunch, Sheep Camp, Alaska, Early Spring of 1898." Mules and burros were not as popular as horses on the Chilkoot and White Pass trails. Note tramway towers in the background. Keystone Collection, Library of Congress.



PLATE 51

PLATE 52

"Stampede and Chilkoot Packers, on the Chilkoot Trail, Summer of 1897." A company halts for a welcomed break about midway between Stonehouse and The Scales. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



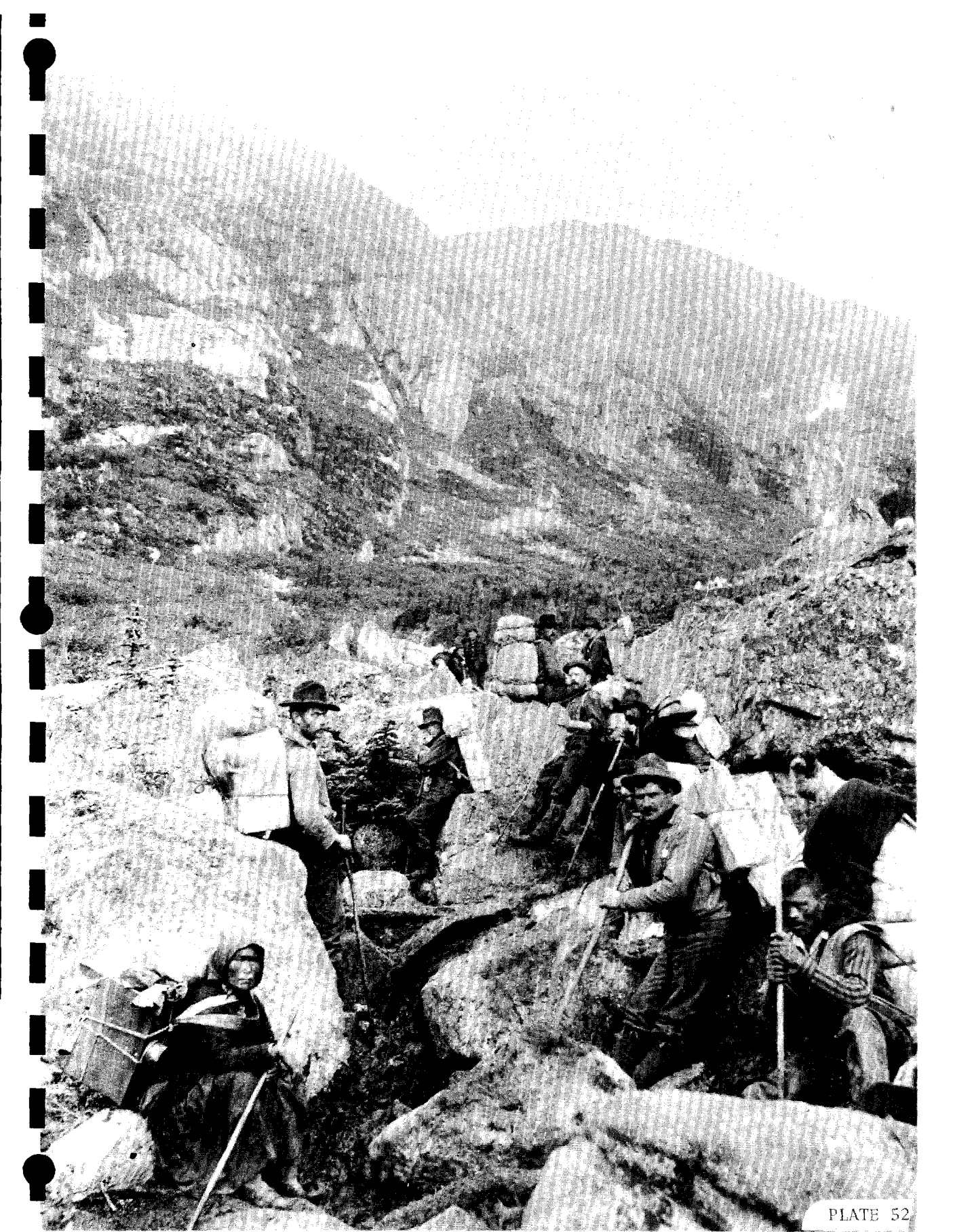




PLATE 53

"The Scales, Summer of 1897." Ahead is the 45 degrees  
incline and the summit of Chilkoot Pass. Note the horse  
in the right foreground. La Roche Collection, Library  
of Congress.

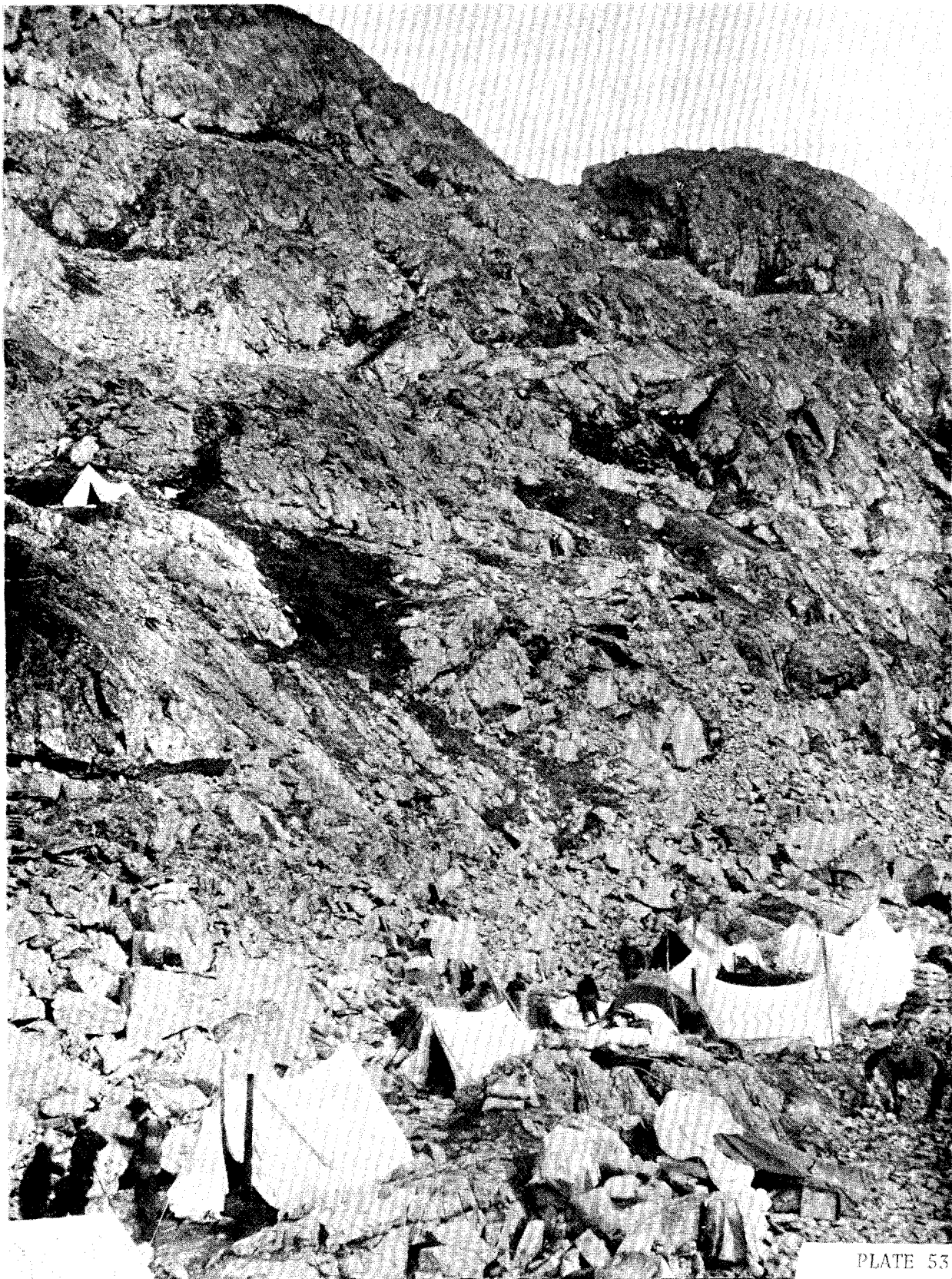


PLATE 53

041. 45 Degree Incline and Summit of Colliad Pass. Converse, Colliad Pass, South W.

PLATE 54

"Approaching the Summit of Chilkoot Pass, Summer of 1897." Veterans of the trail considered it easier to cross the pass when ice and snow covered the scree. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



PLATE 54

2014. On the Summit of Chikoot Pass.

Copyright 1897, L. S. Roche, Seattle, Wash.

PLATE 55

"Looking South from Summit of Chilkoot Pass toward Sheep Camp,  
Summer of 1897." La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.





PLATE 55

2037. Looking South from Summit of Chilkoot Pass

Copyright, 1897, La Roche, Seattle, Wash.

PLATE 56

"Sheep Camp from Stonehouse, Winter of 1897-98."  
As one looks southward, he can see the telegraph  
poles and the towers of one of the aerial tramways.  
Courtesy Library of Congress.



9209—Sheep Camp from Store House, Alaska.



PLATE 57

"Powerhouse of the Chilkoot Railway & Transportation Co., Spring of 1898." In the distance can be seen a line of men climbing the "Golden Stairs." Courtesy National Archives.



PLATE 58

"Powerhouse of the Alaska Railroad & Transportation Co., Spring of 1898." This powerhouse belonged to one of the four companies operating aerial tramways over Chilkoot Pass. Courtesy National Archives.



PLATE 59

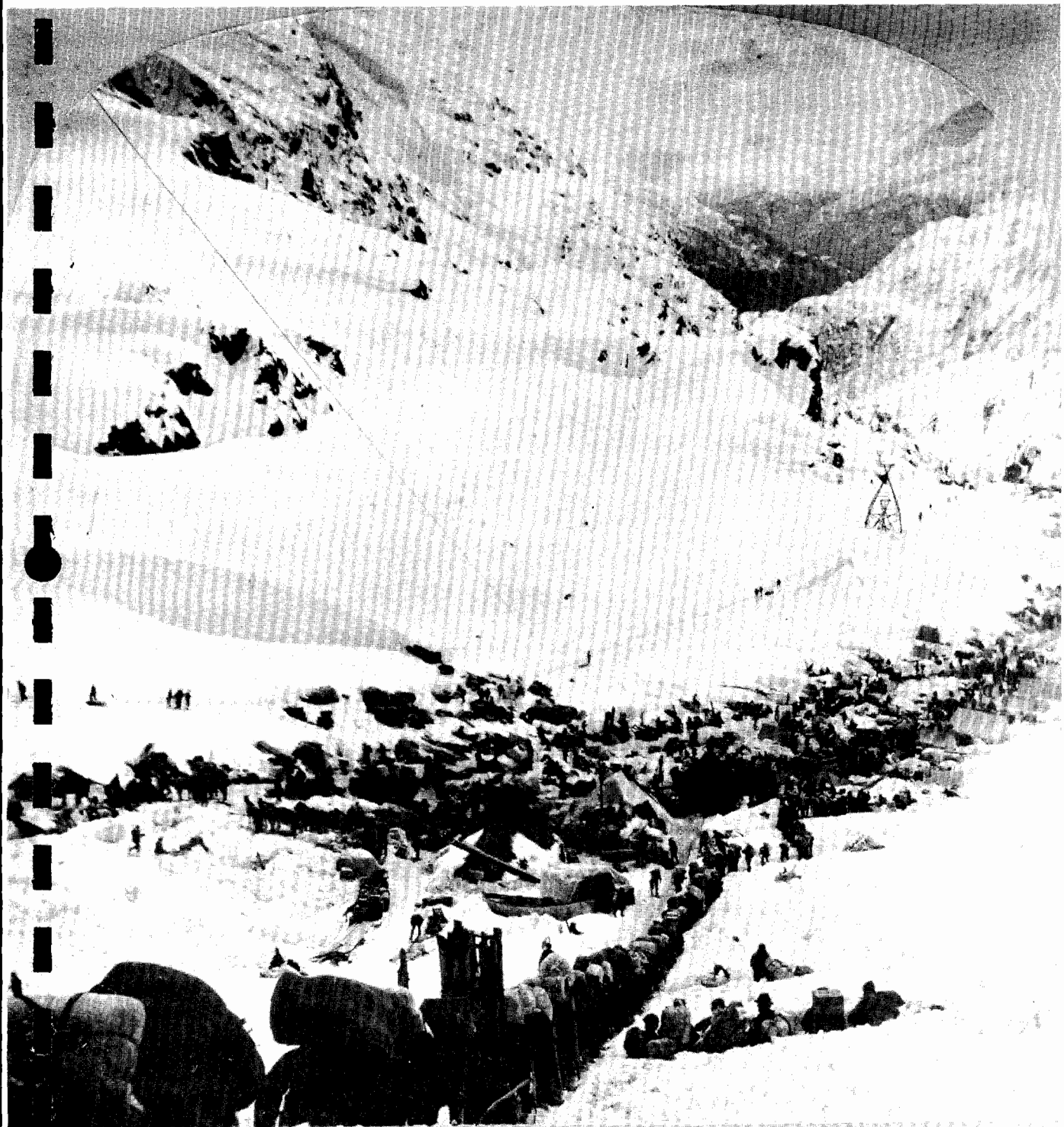
"Heavy Traffic over Chilkoot Pass in 1898." In the foreground is the powerhouse of the Alaska Railroad & Transportation Co. The line of people to the left is climbing the "Golden Stairs," while those to the right are following the Petterson Trail. Courtesy Library of Congress.



PLATE 60

"Miners and Packers Climbing the "Golden Stairs,"  
Chilkoot Pass, 1898." The Scales are at the foot of  
the stairs. Courtesy Library of Congress.





9196—Miners and Packers Climbing the "Golden Star" Trail,  
Chitcoot Pass, Alaska.



PLATE 61

"Bound for the Klondike Gold Fields, Stampeders Climbing the 'Golden Stairs,' Winter of 1898." Photograph taken from upper end of The Scales, office of Burns' Hoist in the right foreground. Lingley Collection, Library of Congress.



9191—Bound for the Klondike Gold Fields, Chilcoot Pass, Alaska.

PLATE 61

PLATE 62

"Chilkoot Pass from The Scales, late Summer of 1898 or 1897." This photograph was taken after traffic over the Chilkoot Trail had slumped but before the tramways shut down. Walter Strand Collection, Library of Congress.



Chlorine Pass  
MOUNTAIN WATER STAMP

SACLES  
RESTAURANT

PLATE 63

"Upper End of Tramway, Chilkoot Pass, Winter of 1897-98." A cache established by a company of Klondikers who had employed Burns' Hoist to get its outfit from The Scales to the summit is shown here. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



PLATE 63

Copyright © by Wintel - Fong

PLATE 64

"On the Summit of Chilkoot Pass, Winter of 1897." Caches established by adventurers at the summit. Winter & Pond Collection, Library of Congress.



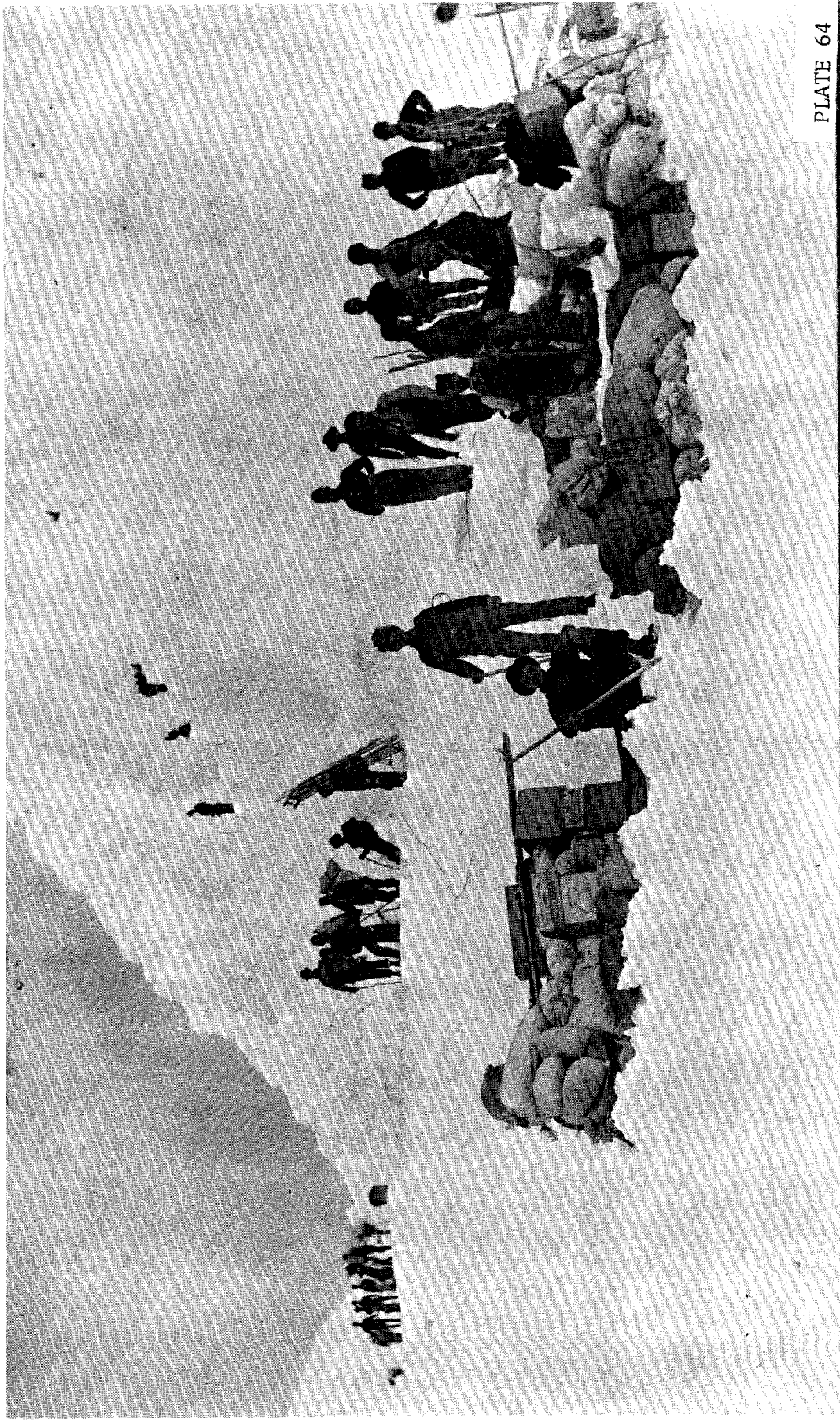


PLATE 64

On the Summit of Chilkoot Pass, Yukon Trail, Alaska.

Copyright, 1897 by Winter & Pond.



PLATE 65

"Canadian Customs Post, Summit of Chilkoot Pass, Late Winter or Early Spring of 1898." On February 25, 1898, the North West Mounted Police established and manned a customs station at the summit of Chilkoot Pass. Brainerd Collection, National Archives.

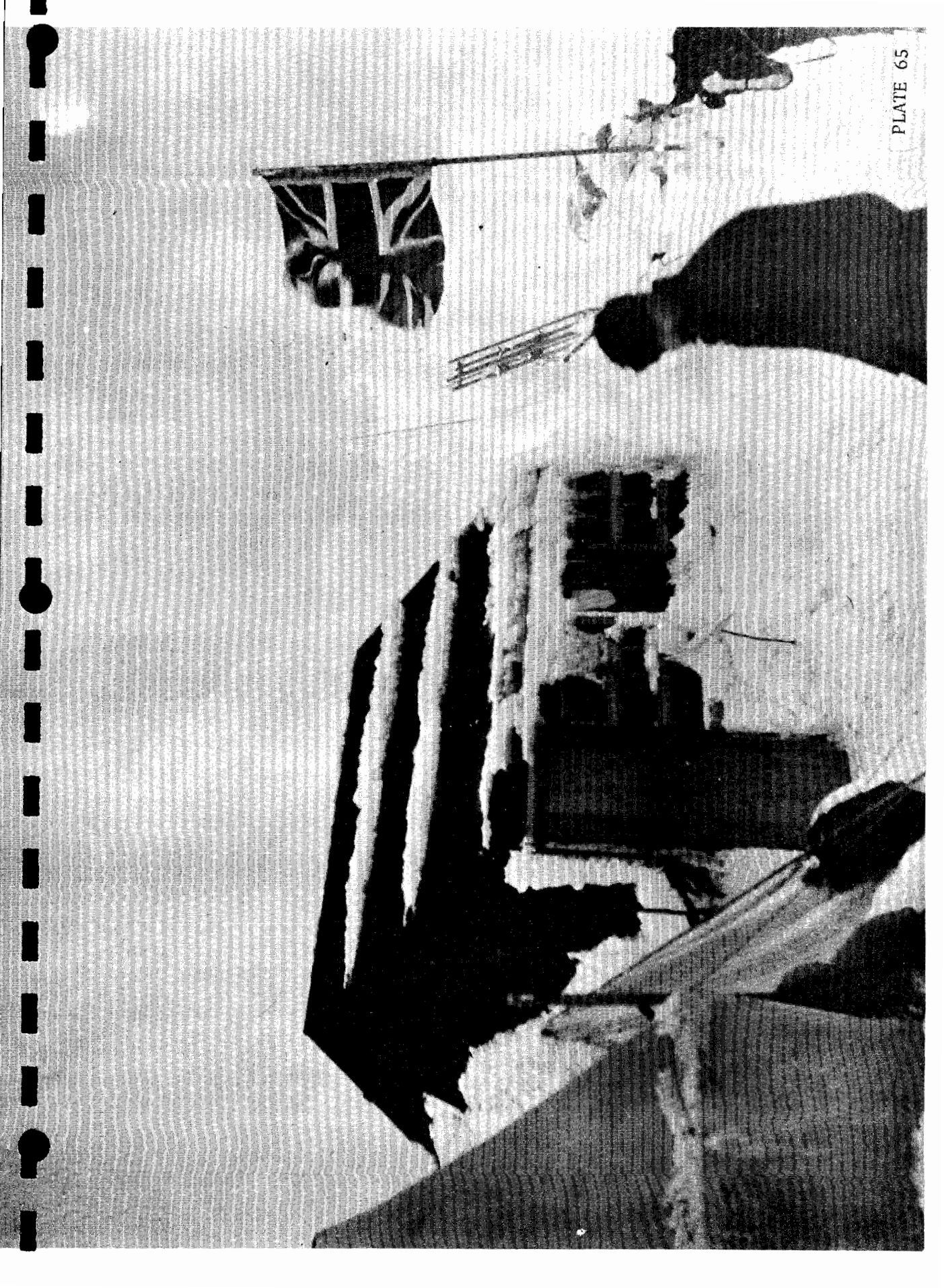


PLATE 66

"Crater Lake from Summit of Chilkoot Pass, Summer of 1897." It was a short but steep descent from the pass to Crater Lake. When there was snow and the lake was iced over, many adventurers rode their sleds down this steep grade. Courtesy Library of Congress.



PLATE 66

PLATE 67

"Fifty Tons of Provisions Stored at Crater Lake, Late Summer of 1897."  
When the lake was open, small boats, packed over Chilkooot, were put into operation to ferry outfits across Crater Lake to the Long Lake Portage.  
La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.



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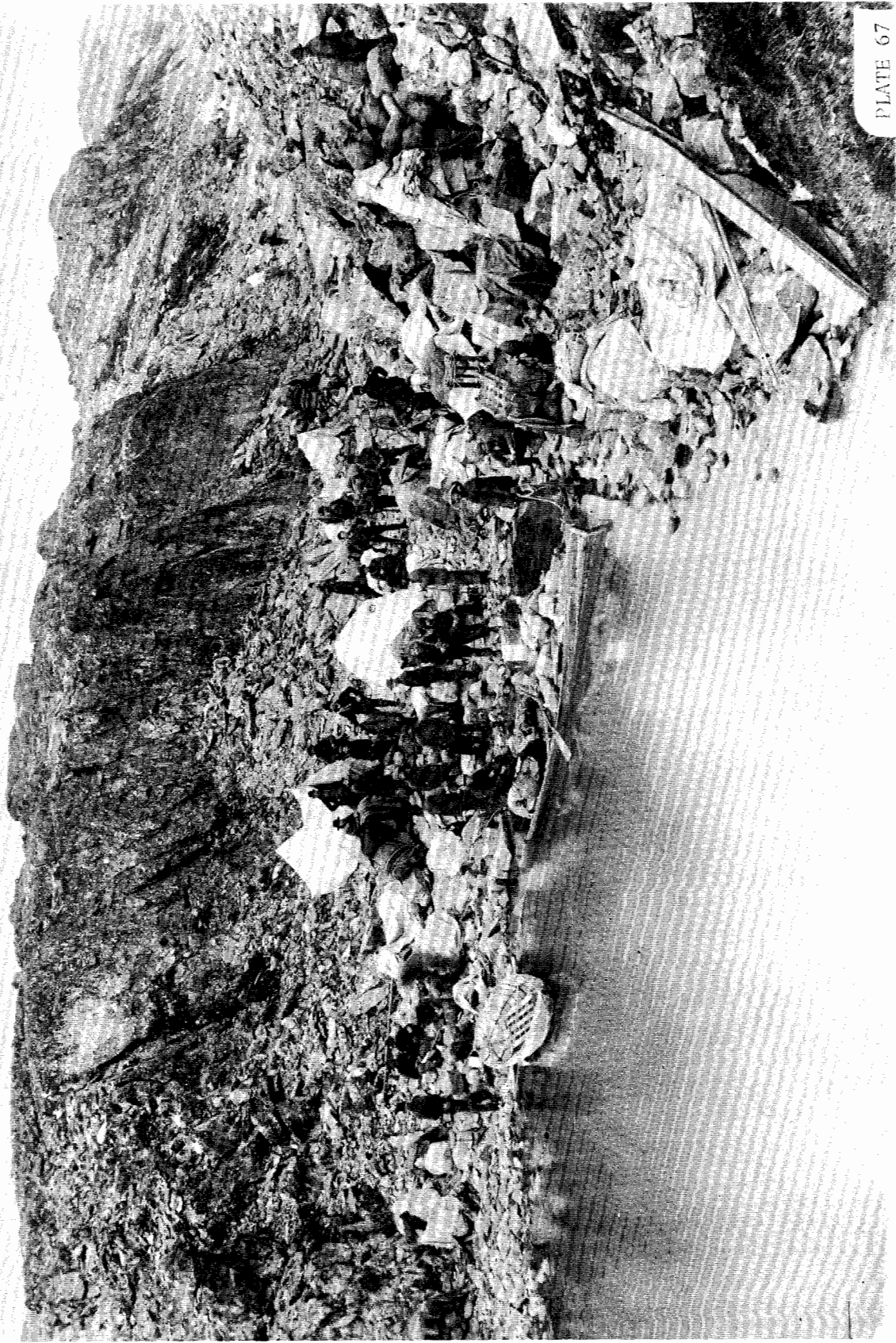


PLATE 67

2048. 50 Tons Provisions Stored at Crater Lake, Dyea Trail.

PLATE 68

"Actresses Bound for the Klondike, at Happy Camp, circa 1898." Happy Camp was a stopping place between Crater and Long lakes. Courtesy Library of Congress.



2049. Actresses Bound for the Klondike, at Happy Camp.



PLATE 69

"Camp at Lake Lindeman, Summer of 1897." At the head of Lake Lindeman there grew up in the late spring and summer of 1897 a huge camp, known as Lindeman City. La Roche Collection, Library of Congress.

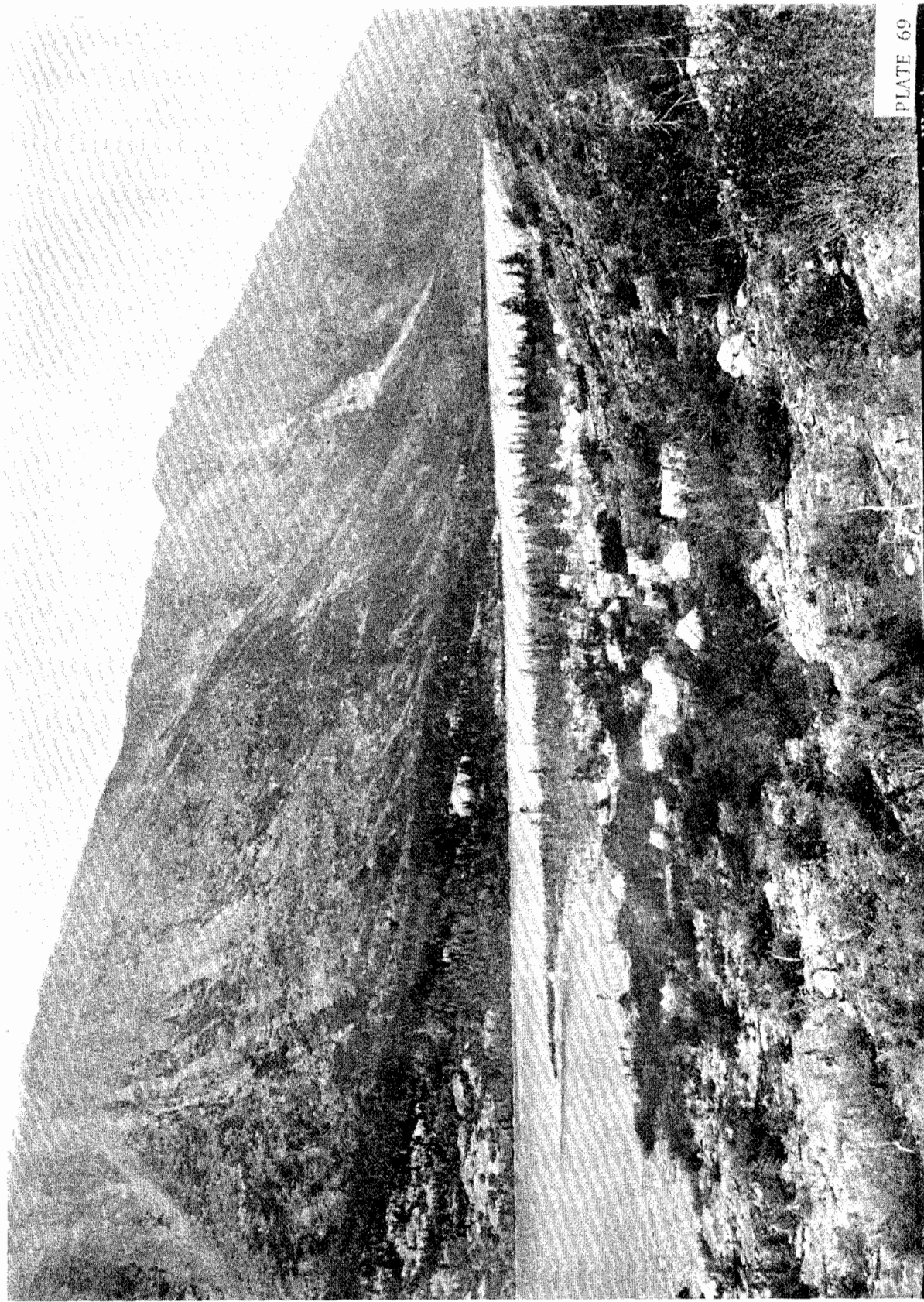


PLATE 69

Copyright, 1897, La Roche, Seattle, Wash.

9055. Camp at Lake Linderman.

PLATE 70

"Boat Building at Lindeman City, Summer of 1897." At Lindeman City many of the adventurers halted to build boats to carry them and their outfits the 500 miles separating them from the Klondike. The rest halted and built boats on Lake Bennett. Læ Roche Collection, Library of Congress.

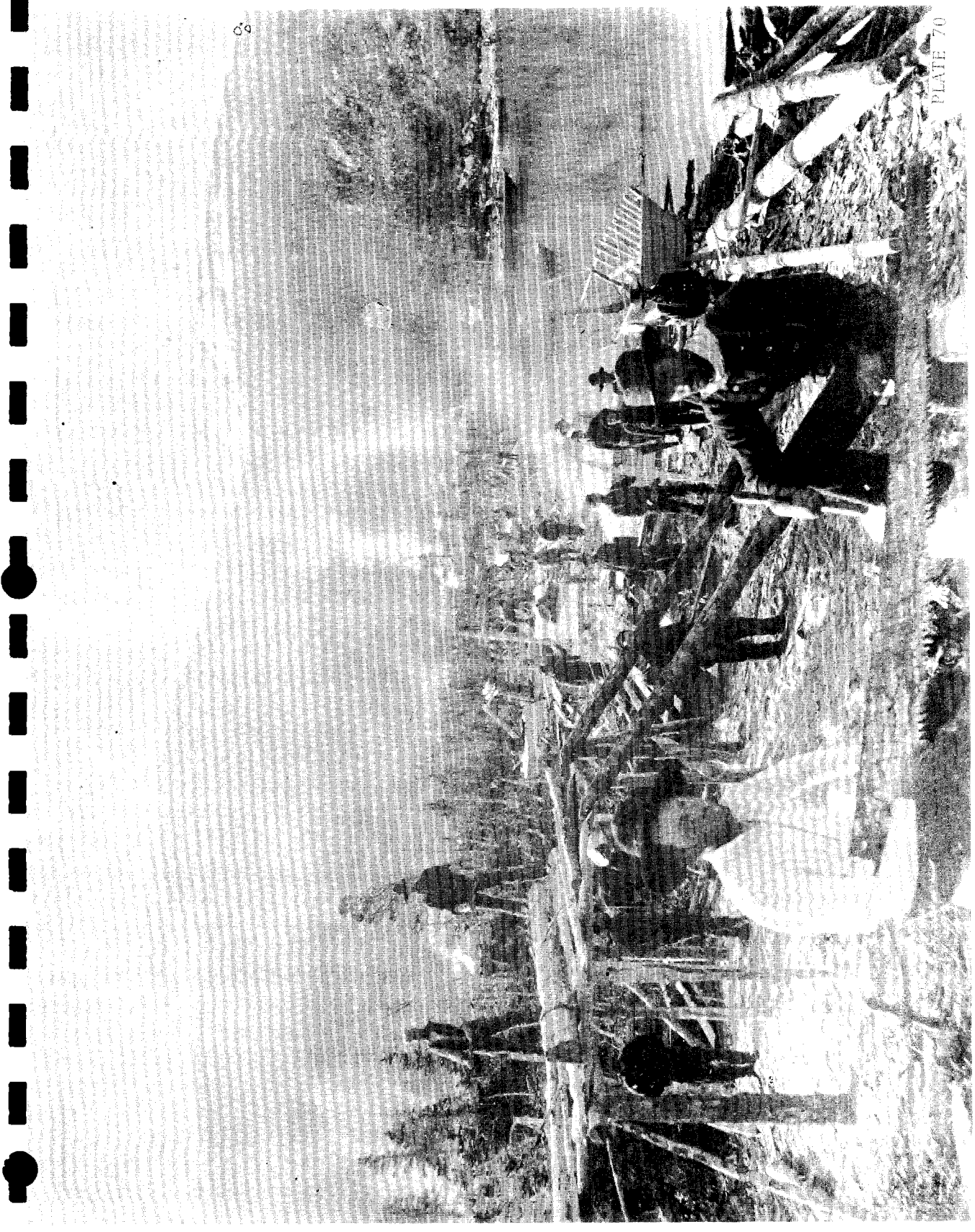


PLATE 71

"Waterway Connecting Lakes Lindeman and Bennett, Summer of 1897."  
Whitewater was encountered by adventurers taking their boats from  
Lake Lindeman into Lake Bennett. Courtesy Library of Congress.



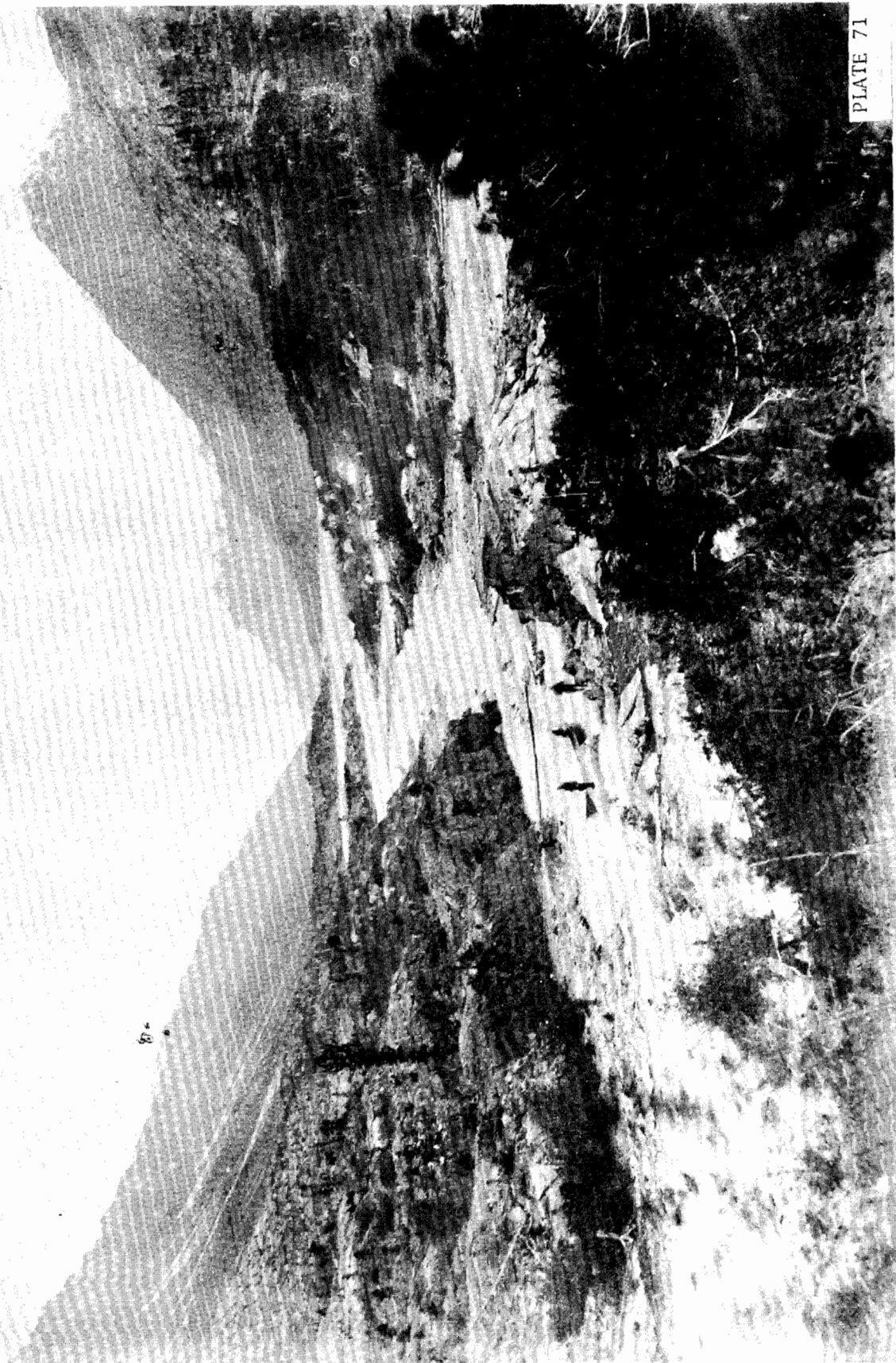


PLATE 72

"Searching for Victims after the Palm Sunday Avalanche, April 3, 1898. More than 50 persons lost their lives in this disaster. In the left background can be seen the powerhouse of the Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Co. Keystone Collection, Library of Congress.

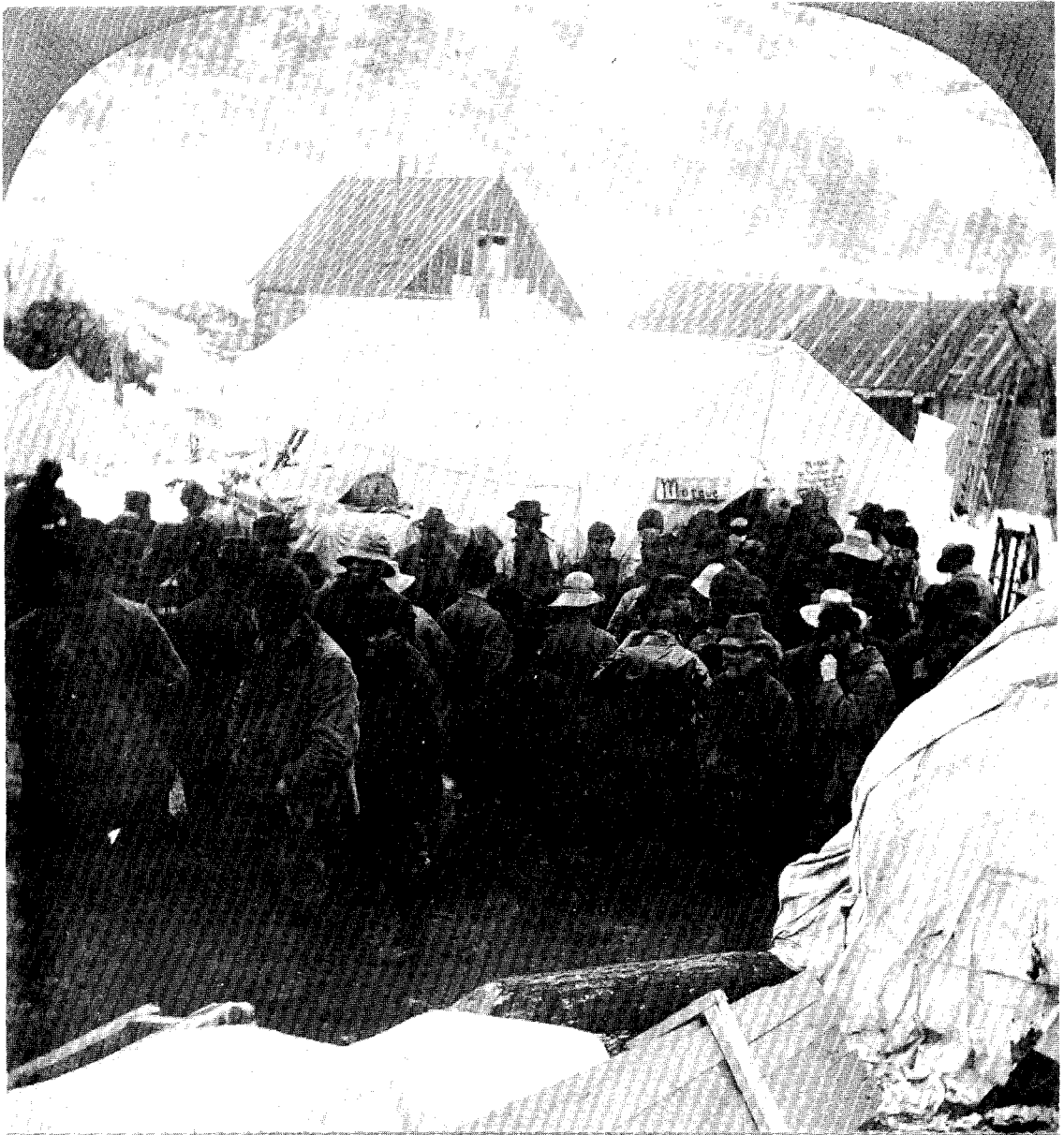


PLATE 72



PLATE 73

"The Morgue after the Snowslide, April 3, 1898, Sheep Camp." A temporary morgue was established at Sheep Camp, and from there bodies of the victims were taken to Dyea for burial by the Army in the Slide Cemetery. Keystone Collection, Library of Congress.



118—The Brigade After the Snowslide, April 1st, 1898. Sheep Camp  
Alaska.

PLATE 73

PLATE 74

"Abutments of the Kinney Bridge, 1906." By 1906 the central spans of the toll bridge spanning the Taiya had been washed out, and the Leland Survey Party rigged up a cable ferry to cross the river. Leland Collection, National Archives.

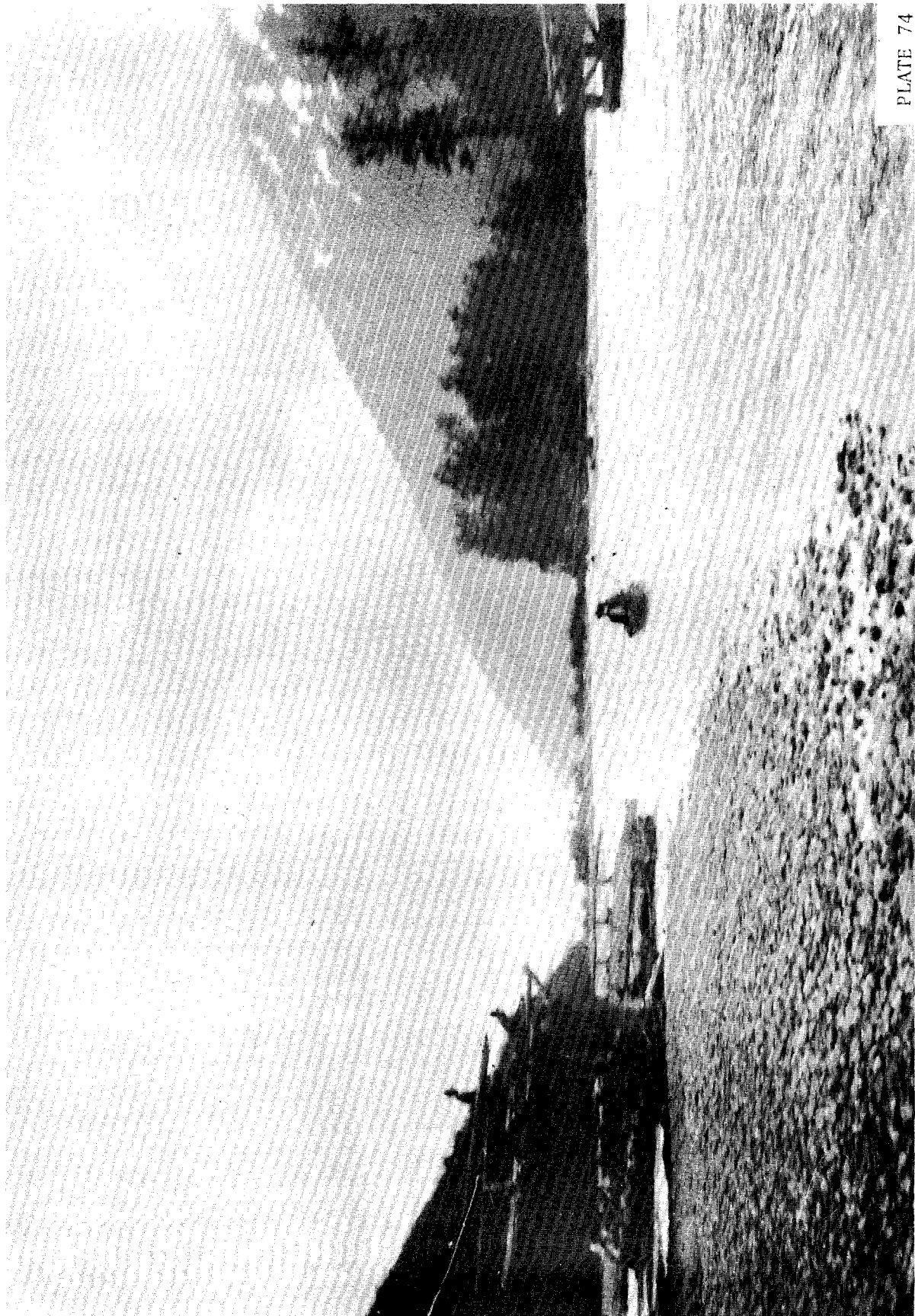


PLATE 74

PLATE 75

"Canyon City in 1906, a Deserted Boomtown." Leland Collection,  
National Archives.



PLATE 76

"Footbridge Across Taiya at Mouth of the Canyon, Powerhouse of Chil-  
koot Railway & Transportation Co. in the Background." Ieland Collection,  
National Archives.





PLATE 76



PLATE 77

"Powerhouse of Chilkoot Railroad & Transportation Co., at the Mouth of the Canyon, 1906." Leland Collection, National Archives.

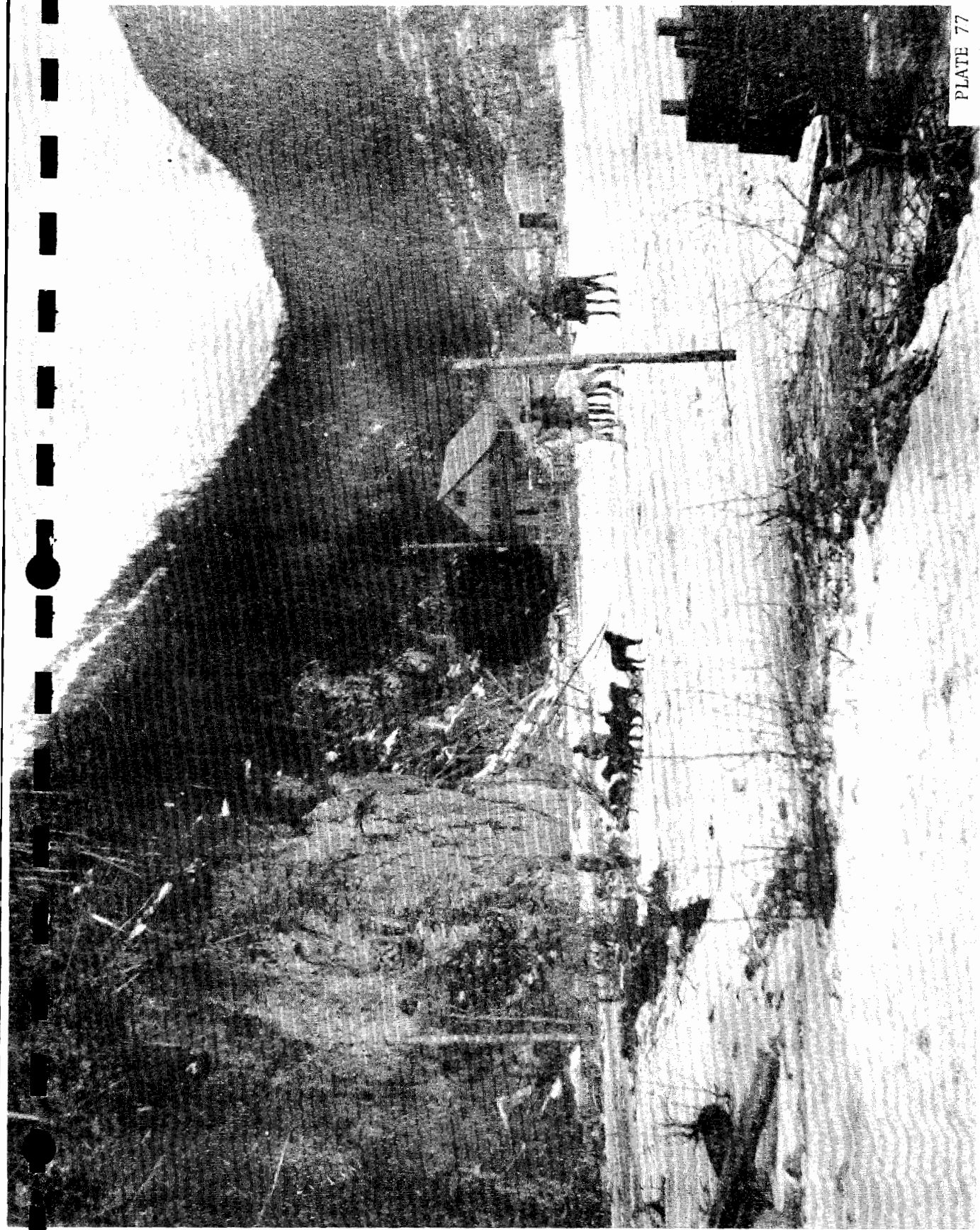


PLATE 78

"Leland's Surveying Party Crossing a Footbridge Spanning the Taiya.  
near Pleasant Camp, 1906." Leland Collection, National Archives.



PLATE 79

"Looking East Across Chilkooot Pass, Crater Lake to the Left, 1906."  
Note Powerhouse of Chilkooot Railroad & Transportation Co. about  
midway between the summit and Crater Lake. Leland Collection,  
National Archives.





PLATE 79

PLATE 80

"Looking West Across Chilkoot Pass, Crater Lake to the Right, 1906."  
Note powerhouse of Chilkoot Railway & Transportation Co. midway between  
O. M. L. and Crater Lake. Leland Collection, National Archives.



6500'

1908

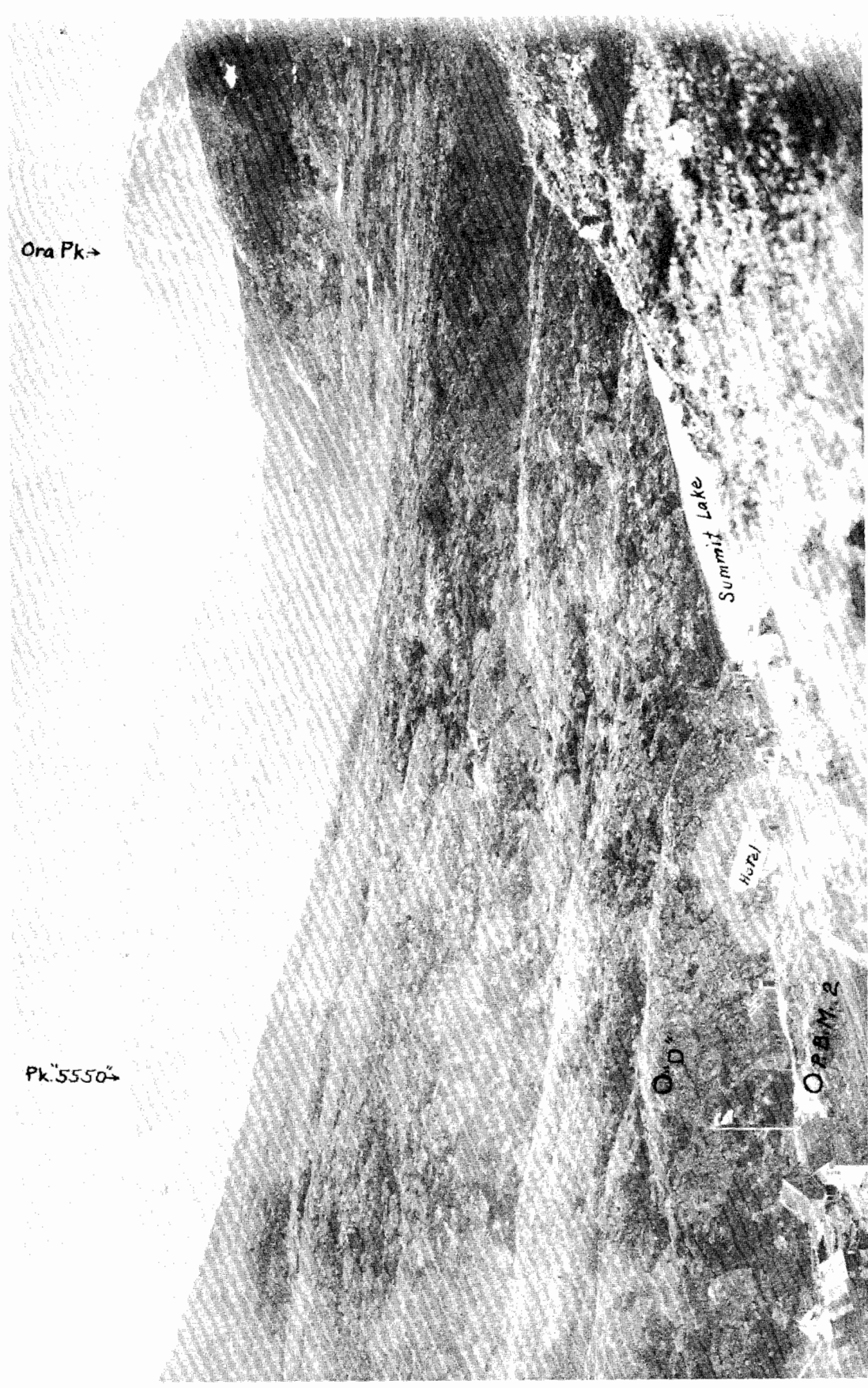
PLATE 80





PLATE 81

"Station of White Pass & Yukon Route and Settlement at White Pass,  
1905." Ieland Collection, National Archives.



Ora Pk →

Pk. 5550 →

Summit Lake

Hotel

O.D.

O.P.M. 2

PLATE 82

"Snow Shed and Settlement at White Pass, 1905." Leland Collection,  
National Archives.

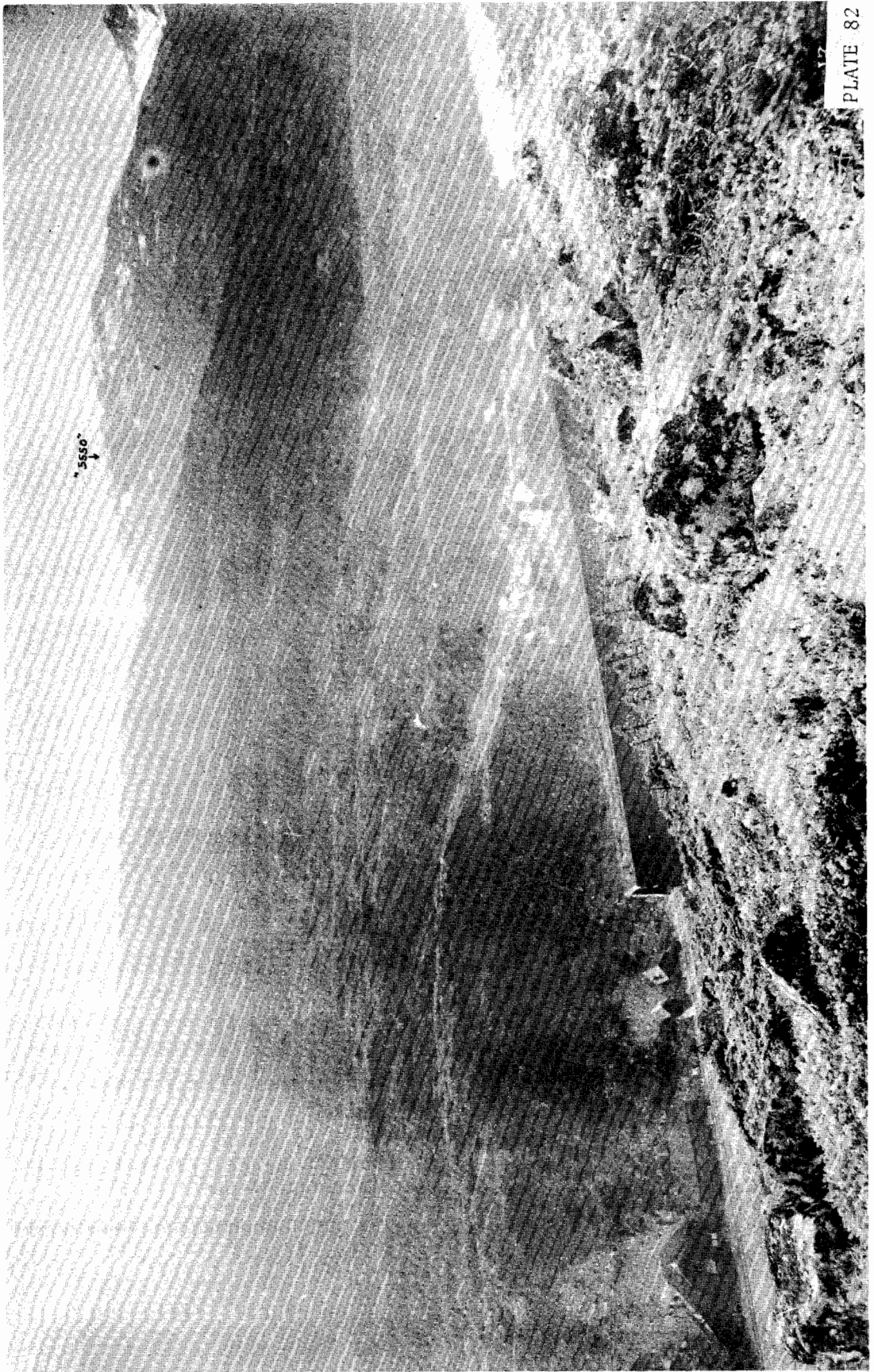


PLATE 83

"Railroad and White Pass Trail, Summit of White Pass, 1905."  
Leland Collection, National Archives.



*Old Bennett Fault*

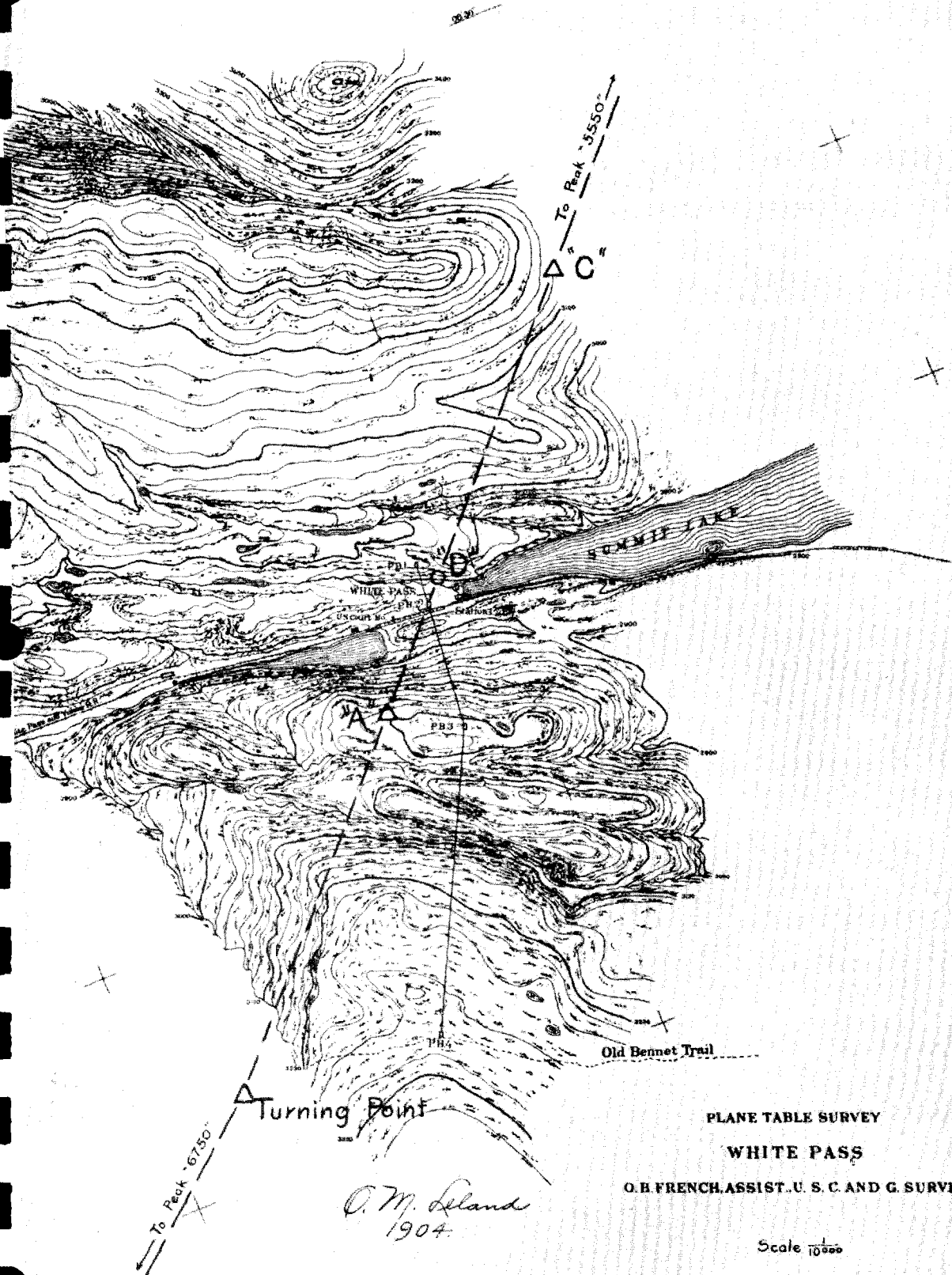
*Railroad*

*Summit Lake*



PLATE 84

"Plane Table Survey, White Pass," by O. B. French,  
Assist., U. S. C. & G. Survey. Leland Collection,  
National Archives.



O.M. Island  
1904.

PLANE TABLE SURVEY

WHITE PASS

O. B. FRENCH, ASSIST. U. S. C. AND G. SURVEY

Scale 10000



PLATE 85

"Soapy Smith at the Bar of his *Parlor*, July 4, 1898." Dedman Studio.



Soapy Smith - July 4, 1898

PLATE 86

"Frank Reid's Grave and Monument, Skagway Cemetery."  
Reid was mortally wounded at the time that he killed  
Soapy Smith.



PLATE 86

PLATE 87

"Panorama of Skagway, Looking Across Heart of Town Toward West."  
Photograph by Edmond Durvain, 1908.

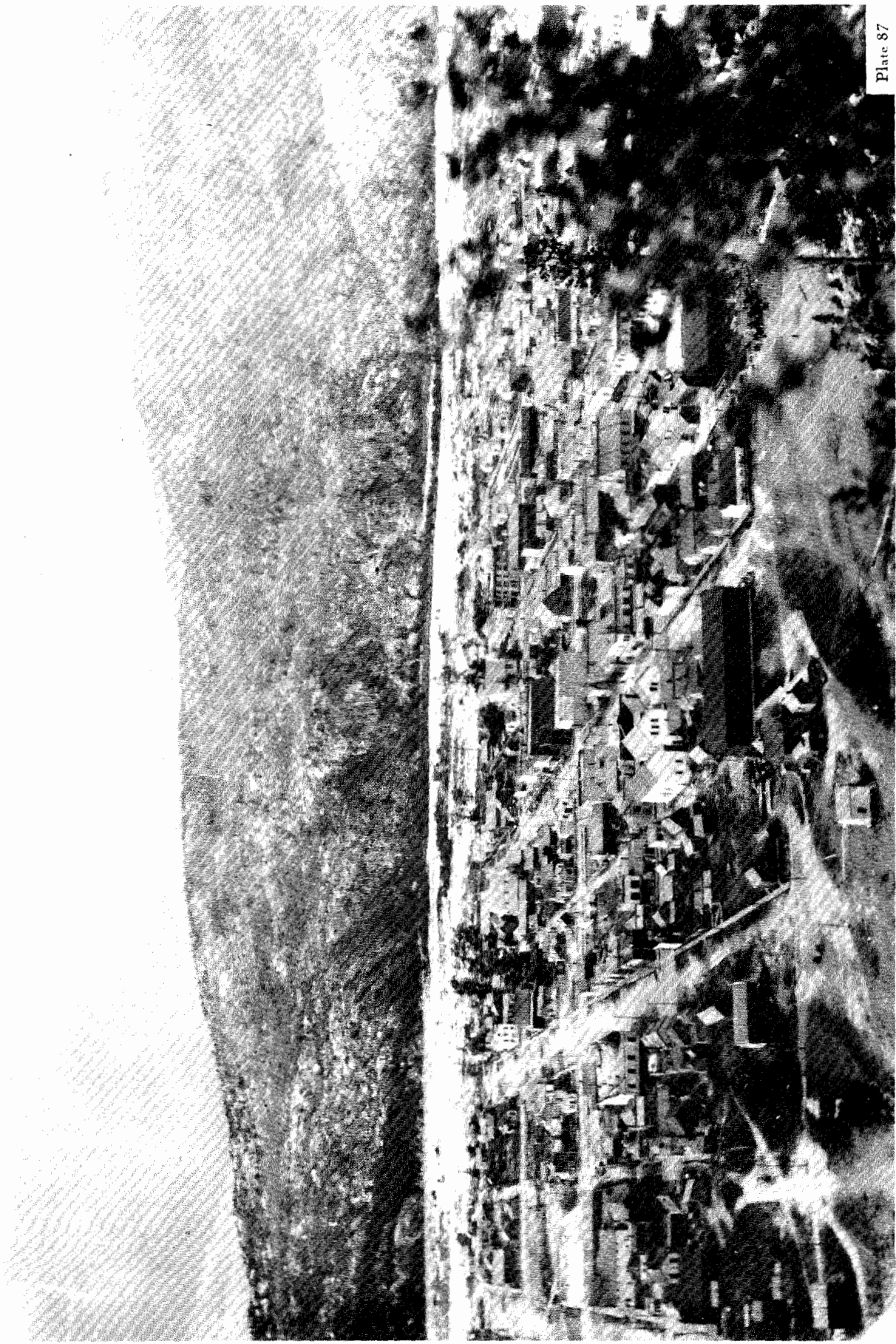


Plate 87





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