

Joe Boyle: SuperHero of the Klondike Goldfields

by Jane Gaffin



Joseph Whiteside Boyle, 1867 to 1923
(Woodstock Library Photo)

Joseph Whiteside Boyle (Honour Roll), whose life story reads like a soap opera, was a flashy, flamboyant, swashbuckling, larger-than-life figure, too fantastic to be real.

He was as impressive for his Herculean physique and strength as he was for the gigantic projects he pushed forward. But his cathedral ego needed fueling with praise and publicity. He never denied a story written about him, regardless of how outrageous. Therefore, it's often difficult to separate the wheat of the real Joe Boyle from the chaff of the fictional Joe Boyle.

Nevertheless, he was a very complex man, his life divided into two distinct parts: The Klondike Years, dealt with herein, and The War Years.

His flawed personality prevented his emotional closeness to the people he should have loved the most. He probably should never have married once much less twice, for he was unfit as a husband and was negligent as a father to his four children.

He kept dumping the two kids in his custody on his parents at their estate in Woodstock, Ontario, just as he dumped his businesses on his brother Charles and son Joe Junior while he selfishly went romping off to do what pleased him.

Joe bored easily and was always seeking another adventure. And he possessed an uncanny instinct for knowing exactly where the action was. Barring that, he was quite

capable of creating his own pot-boiling excitement, much of it generated with serious and whimsical court challenges. He had a fascination for litigation, and "lawsuit" became his middle name.

While history has recorded Joe Boyle with the perfection of a man approaching godlike qualities, truthfully, he was in the crapshoot called life for himself and for nobody else.

Joe Boyle in His Youth

Joe Boyle was born on November 6, 1867, in Toronto, Ontario, to the upper middle-class couple Charles and Martha Boyle. Joe was the second youngest of four children. He had two older brothers, Charles and David, and a younger sister, Susan.

Joe was about four-and-a-half years old when the family relocated to Woodstock in 1872.

Like all the Boyles, he inherited a quick Irish temper coupled with a quick wit and a square-set chin. His chin just happened to jut out a bit farther than the other Boyles' feature.

Joe was terribly restless and his glacier blue eyes glinted with a fearless recklessness. He was once aptly described as a man living inside a young animal hide.

He was as handsome as he was daring and dashing, a romantic who liked to live by his own wits and take on improbable fly-by-the-seat-of-the-pants projects for the sheer fun and competitiveness of it.

Joe had to be in the lead position. He refused to play second fiddle to anybody. If he did not get his own way, he became very quarrelsome, snappy and out of sorts. He had to be the first, fastest, own the finest and travel the farthest.

He was musically talented. He could play most stringed instruments but had a passion for playing the piano and leading sing-alongs in his deep baritone voice. He was good at remembering lyrics or could make up verses spontaneously.

As an athlete, he was most skilled at playing baseball, though he preferred the rough-and-tumble contact game of football and he liked boxing for keeping his body physically tuned up.

Since he grew up around his father's stable, it was natural that he rode horses, though he was reputed to lather a horse with more energy than grace and style.

Momma Boyle made most decisions regarding the education of her brood, although her husband certainly took an avid interest in shaping his children's young minds.

Joe's formal education consisted of attending public schools in Woodstock where he was graduated from the Woodstock College in June, 1884. It was a Baptist institution despite his mother was a Presbyterian and his father an Anglican.

His mother had hoped this part of his education would lead him into the ministry. Mr. Boyle (photo right) didn't care which profession his three sons chose, so long as they didn't enter the horse-breeding business. He wanted his children to have respectable and secure stations in life as lawyers or engineers or accountants or ministers--anything besides the fake, phony world associated with the race track.



Horse breeding was a tough and uncertain business. As well, he wanted to protect the youngsters from an association with gambling and racketeers and con artists as a sole livelihood.

Ironically, Joe was destined to find his fill of crooks and corruption in the Klondike and would be able to deftly handle the contamination due to his early upbringing.

Joe had inherited a gift for the gab, which is not to say he wasn't a good listener, asking questions and learning. But he was loquacious and liked to captivate audiences with his stories. In debate, he was very logical, articulate and persuasive.

A friend of the family tried to guide Joe away from the horse scene to study criminal law due to his natural combative ability. But one of Joe's shortcomings was his having to win every contest, sometimes resorting to his fists inside or outside the ring to prove "might was right", which may have served to have him disbarred or in contempt of court if he chose the same approach to winning every court battle for a client.

Joe was smart but he didn't have much patience for sitting in classrooms, studying. Whether he was a genius or simply energetic is difficult to determine. But he did have a flexible mind that he used imaginatively and had a flair and verve that loaned itself to his becoming a self-made multi-millionaire from gold, although being born with a silver spoon in his mouth wasn't a shabby beginning.

Joe thought big and was never daunted. He possessed a strong can-do entrepreneurial bent and gambling spirit, obviously inherited from his father, a breeder and trainer of fine thoroughbred race horses. The Boyle Stable was successful and Mr. Boyle began concentrating his efforts in the New York area.

Soon, the Boyle family had rented a second home in New Jersey, their home away from home. Later, their second home was a place they bought at Eatontown. There, the boys rubbed shoulders with the trainers, owners, jockeys, bookmakers and veterinarians. It was an exciting atmosphere that kept drawing the boys closer into the glamour, romance and fast money that their father wanted them to shun. In other words, "Don't do as I do, do as I say do."

Charles and David liked the bright lights and kept rooms at the posh Gilsey House Hotel on Broadway in New York City. The ornately-beautifully baroque-styled hotel had opened in 1871 and was the first hotel in the city to offer telephone service. The Gilsey was a favorite haunt of such well-known characters as Diamond Jim Brady, writer Oscar Wilde and other notables of the day.

Joe went to visit his two brothers. As he explored the fascinating city, he found himself drawn to the sailors recently arrived in Manhattan on the clipper ships. The *Wallace*, a wooden, India-bound sailing ship with three masts, was like a magnet to the 17-year-old country boy. His intelligence and enthusiasm swayed Captain Smith to hire him on as a deckhand.

Joe ran back to the hotel for his personal gear but his brothers weren't home to tell them of his plans. He scribbled a hasty note: "I've gone to sea. Don't worry. Joe." It was to be one of many impulsive departures from home followed up by impulsive arrivals back home that was so much a Boyle trait.

After the brat hadn't been heard from for three years—not even a note to his “sweet little mother, a woman from Dumfries, Scotland”—his family members naturally assumed without really believing it that he must be dead. No news can be good news.

Nothing much is known about his sailing days, for he kept no diaries. His anticipated adventure--which may have had its moments—mainly consisted of monotonous weeks in a creaky sea-going crate and waiting many idle hours in ports.

Homecoming

When he conquered the sea and got sailing out of his system, he came home from the United Kingdom to New York almost three years to the day in 1887 on a cargo schooner.

He had left as a callow youth and come back a suave and sophisticated man of twenty. He was taller, tanned and handsome, wearing natty English-tailored clothes and an unbecoming sailor's haircut, which would grow out.

He went to the Gilsey House Hotel to look up his brothers as though he had been gone three weeks instead of three years. They still kept rooms there, or at least his brother David did.

The brothers hastily organized a homecoming party and invited a motley bunch of guests. One was a young bewitchingly-attractive divorcee who currently lived at the hotel with her two-year-old son, William, nicknamed "Little Bill".

David harbored a secret affection for Mildred Josephine Raynor but was too painfully shy to let her know his feelings. Then Joe showed up, swept her off her feet and they married three days later.

As soon as she remarried, her alimony payments from the first husband stopped. Joe had to dance fast to feed her extravagant tastes for a big home in New York and a summer home in Red Bank, New Jersey, with all the attendant servants.

The Boyle family never accepted Millie, nicknamed "Mink", because of her insatiable appetite for furs.

A widow would have been perfectly acceptable. But a divorced woman in this stuffy Victorian age rubbed Mrs. Boyle's fur the wrong way. Even more scandalous was the fact that Millie was slightly older than her son and brought another man's child into the relationship.



David was sore for other reason and wished Joe would go back to sea and he would look after Millie—which he did with great devotion once she and Joe split up. David's attention to Millie and his two nieces, Susan and Charlotte, angered Joe, causing an irreparable rift between the two brothers.

Joe had accepted his domestic responsibilities temporarily. He invested in a feed grain and livery stable business. One thing for sure, horses had to be propelled on food. Transportation depended on horse-drawn conveyances and some of his father's racing cronies were potential customers.

They liked Joe. He was known for his honesty and integrity. He was good for his word. A gentleman's agreement made with Joe didn't have to be spelled out on paper in legalese.

He dressed like a successful businessman. He had been around the block a few times, had seen life and was wise for his young age. His gift of gab came in handy. He held his father's friends spellbound with his real-life adventures, incorporating the proper amount of spin to keep the tales credible.

Dr. Stanley Harcourt, the Boyle Stable veterinarian, knew the father's wishes and took Joe aside one day and urged him to study law. Joe was an eloquent speaker and formulated his arguments with clarity.

Joe did make a concentrated effort to study law. He was clearly fascinated with the subject. In later years, he often dragged opponents into the courtroom just to practice on them. He loved a good sparring match in the ring or in the courtroom. He lost some matches or sometimes a tie was declared when the opponents wearily threw in the towel.

Joe was cracking the books at night but he was soon distracted by a zest for living and abandoned his studies for the bright lights of the Gay Nineties. He had to pay the mounting bills to keep his wife in the life of luxury to which she had become accustomed.

But Joe bored easily and was always seeking another adventure. If he couldn't find one, he had an uncanny knack for generating action on his own.

He dumped the horse feed and livery business into the capable hands of his brother Charles, who possessed great managerial skills. The business was flourishing under his capable direction. They later talked about building a string of grain elevators across the nation. The grandiose plans never materialized.

Meanwhile, Joe had met one of his parents' New Jersey neighbours. Michael Murray's lifestyle was proof of the professional gambler's success. Joe saw an opportunity to make good money, fast, and prove he could pay for his wife's extravagances.

No doubt Millie's spending habits could have been worse had she not been worn down by frequent pregnancies, births and stillborn babies.

Murray and Joe became partners. Joe was a good gambler but as a bookmaker he was a disaster. He was willing to give credit! He was used to operating businesses on the revolving loan system but didn't seem to understand bookmaking was a different type beast. Regardless of how much money he lost and how deep in the hole he went, he always repaid Murray, even when the pay-out put Joe in the poor house.

Mr. Boyle's attempt to keep his boys from the excitement of the race horse was futile. David had the racetrack and betting in his blood. He was preparing and training a black, three-year-old colt he had ominously named Destruction. He was waiting for the "just right" race toward the end of 1893. Destruction had never raced before but would be coming up against horses that had been entered in but never won a racing competition.

More than a race to clean up on the winnings for the sake of making a pile of money, winning would mean the Boyle men could buy a fifty-acre farm outside Woodstock for their mother.

Mrs. Boyle had long admired, though never expressed a desire to own, the lovely palatial brick-and-stone house situated in the middle of rolling farmland and ringed with fir trees. It was reminiscent of The Burnside, though the family home place in Antrim, Ireland, was smaller.

The Woodstock estate was for sale for \$8,000. David mortgaged his soul and his poolroom to the hilt for \$5,000; Joe and his father put up an additional \$2,000.

Incredibly, Destruction won. The eight to one odds paid the Boyles \$56,000 and they bought The Firs, as Mrs. Boyle named her country estate. Mrs. Boyle wasn't keen to live in and preside over the mansion but she was smart enough to keep her mouth shut. Her men meant well.

Joe Boyle was much too restless to settle down to a traditional domestic life. The couple had lived high and fast but the marriage started to unravel about 1896.

The union had produced seven children; only four survived.

Their first child was premature and died. Joseph Whiteside Boyle, Junior, was born on December 15, 1890. Next, their twin sons died soon after birth, followed by a daughter named Macushla, who died at six months of scarlet fever.



Flora Alexander Boyle was born on May 24, 1894, and lived a life of longevity.

Pictured here is a six-year-old Flora with the debonair father she adored, circa 1900. (Woodstock Library Photo)

The first batch of children was born in New York while the last two girls were born in New Jersey. Susan Boyle was born on May 9, 1895, followed by the convenient birth of Charlotte on an unknown date about 1897 after Millie's and Joe's distressing legal separation.

To the mother's utmost grief, Joe equally divided the children like divvying up the spoils from racetrack winnings. He gave custody of his two youngest daughters, Susan and Charlotte, to the mother and had little, if any, contact with them again. One would be hard-pressed to believe he was very fond of children from the way he ignored his own.

Joe took custody of the two oldest children, Joe Junior and Flora, who were offloaded in the care of their grandparents at The Firs estate. By now Mr. Boyle had become the trainer for the prestigious Seagram Stable.

The two youngsters, who had been whisked away from their mother, were too traumatized and confused to cry when they waved goodbye to their father who was setting out by train on another scatterbrained mission. He and Frank Slavin were barnstorming their way across Canada and the United States staging boxing exhibitions.

It was while Joe was living in New York he had quit the bookmaking business and started working out at the boxing clubs to stay in good shape. He had matured into a

super, barrel-chested physique and weighed over 200 pounds. Soon, he was managing one of the clubs.

At the club, Joe had met and sparred with Francis (Frank) Patrick (Paddy) Slavin, a veteran professional prize fighter. They became fast friends and eventually partners on a boxing circuit.



Slavin hailed from Maitland, New South Wales, Australia. Born about 1861, six years ahead of Boyle, he had enjoyed a notable career in the ring.

He had earned the title of The Sydney Slasher or was sometimes known by the less-appealing name, The Sydney Cornstalk. The heavyweight champion stood over six feet tall and wore a comical handlebar moustache (photo left, c. 1892). He was amazingly agile and fast on his feet for his cumbersome size. His claim to fame was endurance and delivering hard punches to the opponent.

To retain popularity in the New York prize-fighting circles, a boxer had to be a showman. Slavin's Aussie accent, replete with adjectives like "bleeding" and "bloody" and other choice and colourful colloquialisms made him a crowd pleaser.

Slavin was past his prime which didn't stop him from following up a litany of tough fights with one more to take the world heavyweight title away from another aging pugilist, John "Boston Strong Boy" Sullivan.

The New York World sports editor, Joe Eagan, asked Boyle to write copy about boxing. It was an ephemeral flirtation with journalism.

The flabby Sullivan had demanded a side bet of \$10,000 otherwise he refused to fight Slavin who couldn't raise that pricey stake. Sullivan ended up fighting James Corbett in New Orleans. Corbett toyed with Sullivan a good many rounds before Corbett knocked Sullivan cold as a cucumber.

Joe Boyle cut loose in print with his anger. Slavin had been deprived of his right to the world heavyweight title simply because he couldn't raise the money that loser Sullivan had demanded.

Editor Eagan fired Joe for writing a bitter, biased, poisoned-pen piece.

Boyle and Slavin embarked on a boxing tour. One exhibition was staged at Woodstock where Joe abandoned his two children just before Christmas while he carried on with the tour. It was the first time Joe had visited The Firs since Destruction's race paid for

the estate which became a drop-in centre and transfer point where the wayward Joe came to visit and adjust his profile before heading off on his next escapade.

By now, Joe was growing bored with the boxing ring despite the exhibitions were drawing good crowds. He needed a new stimulant. The Klondike gold rush was primed to explode into motion, as though it were ready-made specifically for his pleasure.

HO! For the Klondike

While the two men were in San Francisco, they heard plenty about a big Klondike gold discovery. It was a perfect adventure for Boyle. Slavin, who had come through Australian gold rushes, had to be convinced.

San Francisco was abuzz with babble. The excitement was electric. So far, the ships *Excelsior* and the *Portland* carrying gold from the north hadn't even docked respectively at San Francisco on July 14, 1897, and three days later in Seattle that would ignite the Klondike gold rush in earnest.

Boyle and Slavin got a head start.

The boxers worked their way up the coast, staging exhibition boxing matches. They stopped in at Victoria, British Columbia. They either attended William Ogilvie's lectures promoting the Klondike discovery or they read the coverage in the *Times* and *Colonist* newspapers.

Ogilvie (Honour Roll), a Dominion land surveyor, had been stranded overwinter in the Klondike. When George Carmack (Hall of Fame) and Skookum Jim (Hall of Fame) made the fabulous gold strike on Rabbit Creek, renamed Bonanza, the first goldseekers to the site had made a terrible hodgepodge when frantically staking out-of-proportion claims, sometimes overtop another. In 1896, Ogilvie was requested to survey the initial 170 claims. He ultimately brought order out of the chaos.

Ogilvie had come Outside to Victoria on his way home to Ottawa in July, 1897. He and Joe Boyle were destined to meet in Dawson City where Ogilvie would be sent by the Canadian government to preside as Commissioner of the Yukon.

The boxers moved up the coast to Juneau, Alaska. Word about the gold strike was on everybody's lips as prospectors outfitted for the goldfields.

Boyle and Slavin made their way to Dyea, the trailhead for the Chilkoot route. Both were physically powerful men. Scaling the arduous Chilkoot Pass would have seemed like child's play to them.

Boyle was the natural, take-charge leader who mustered and rallied the dozen or so joined forces into his party. He had to get them over the trail to Bennett Lake, the headwaters of the Yukon River. An Indian packer known as Chilkoot Charlie joined the group and stayed on with Boyle for a number of years as a guide and even made a trip with him to Ontario.

Boyle had to come to the realization that others were not of his stamina and self-motivation. But he did know survival is the strongest instinct. It was while at sea battling storms that he learned that when everything looked the bleakest and without hope of survival no cause was lost as long as somebody could rally the troops into a fighting spirit. That person was usually Joe.

Conquer or be conquered was Boyle's motto. The Chilkoot Pass was a steep trail, snow-packed well into the summer at higher elevations. The struggle was slow as they made several trips up and down the mountain to pack all their gear and freight up and over the pass. The exhausted, cold, weary travellers were short-tempered and filled with resentments. People trudged, stumbled and fell in their tracks from tiredness, illness or accidents; some died.

When Boyle's trailmates were too tired to speak, much less move, they had to stop for a day or two of rest. It frustrated Boyle but he was smart enough to shut up. One heated word spoken in the wrong tone would cause tempers to flare and the whole expedition would disintegrate.

Ironically, once they reached Bennett Lake they could go no farther until they built boats and scows to float the several hundred miles down the Yukon River to Dawson. Boyle had packed a 24-foot-long collapsible boat over the pass.

The boat was less than reliable but got the job done. They floated down the Yukon in 1897 ahead of the human wave of 40,000 or more stampedees coming up behind them and descended on the 800-square-mile area called the Klondike sometime around late August.

Frank Slavin had taken to referring to Joe as "Captain", an affectionate reference to his friend's sea-faring days. The tag caught on and people held Boyle in even higher awe as a leader.

In the crazy jumble of men from every nationality, Boyle's racetrack education would come in handy. There were sinners, con artists, fakes and phonies, outlaws, crooks. You name it. They were represented.

"Gold rushes are a favorite trick used by bankers when they want to open up an area for development," explained Glen Kealey, *The Kealey Paper*, October, 1996. "Greed can always be counted upon to attract a sufficient number of prospectors and developers. Once they see a few gold nuggets, thousands more will flock to the area. With the small

amount of gold these people usually find, one may suspect that prospectors were often fooled into participating in gold rushes..."

Some of the stampederers were of Boyle's honest character. But, for sure, all were mad for the common denominator of gold.

The onslaught kept coming and tents were hastily pitched in the hills and along the creeks. The early arrivals and long-time residents of the country insisted that everything worth staking had been staked. Such a carnival of stampederers was accumulating along the creeks that prospects did look slim.

Nothing daunted Joe Boyle. He would figure out something.

But there was another problem. During the peak of the Klondike gold rush and for 20 years thereafter, the Dawson mining recorder's office was notorious for the amount and extent of its bribery and corruption.

Civil servants were paid low wages and could not stake or own claims. It was an incentive to cheat.

If personnel in the mining recorder's office thought somebody had a good claim, they might refuse to record it. Then the government agent would get a kick back in the way of an under-the-table finder's fee or he would be promised a percentage of the gold taken from the claim or whatever other agreement could be arranged.

Stampederers found out after they came back to town that the government held half of each unrepresented 500-foot claim. But the government posted no notices to that effect before men went out to stake.

Getting a claim recorded was a long shot. Claim stakers had to stand in long line-ups for hours trying to reach the agent's wicket.

On an application form, a miner had to describe the claim he had staked on a distant creek in hopes of recording the piece of real estate. Processing took days. When the miner inquired later, expecting the claim to be duly recorded in the mining recorder's ledgers, he was apt to hear that his ground had already been staked by somebody else. How could this be?

Many claim owners lost their mineral claims in this devious method to those who had the wherewithal to pay bribes to the mining recorder or his agents to strike the original owners' names off the record books and insert their own.

The civil service was in control and could cook the books in any fashion it wanted. Just as residents had to pay a bribe, else endure a human chain of 400 men to receive

government mail or buy a bottle of government liquor, likewise prospectors had to stand in line for days to reach a recording agent's wicket.

During the wait, their claims would likely be turned over to the favourites who paid money to "jump" the queue and "jump" the prospector's claim by completing their underhanded business through back-room shenanigans.

Boyle needed to earn more than \$15 as a day labourer on #13 Eldorado to offset Dawson's gruesome cost of living. That's when he proposed a creative money-raising scheme.

The ragtag prospectors were great boxing fans and treated Frank Slavin reverently as soon as they found out who the towering Aussie was.

A "grudge" match would be staged between Boyle and the Sydney Slasher. Tex Rickard, who had made his claim to fame in Madison Square Gardens, was on hand to take care of promotion. He sent word out to the creeks. Everybody loved a good fight but the "grudge" match didn't wash. It wasn't plausible that these two good friends needed to settle any score.

The contest was re-billed by the less-exciting title of "exhibition"--until some bloke came forward and volunteered to test his mettle against Slavin. He used his slug-fest tactics and showmanship. The pleased crowd felt the match was well worth the \$20 admission fee for an evening's entertainment.

Boyle was determined to mine for gold but he was just as sure that the gumboot, pick-n-shovel method was too tedious and labor intensive. There had to be a better way.

Slavin was just as adamant he wasn't going gold mining.

"There were various methods of acquiring a rich claim," described Kim Beattie in the riveting book titled **Brother, Here's a Man!** "You could buy a property, obtain a share in trade for labor or a grubstake, go prospecting yourself, or follow the fickle vagaries of rumor that saw hundreds of panting cheechakos stampeding all over the Yukon and seldom finding a golden grain."

The saloon was a place to do general business and make mining agreements, a tradition that lasted a hundred years in the Yukon.

Boyle didn't drink because he found he could only drink like a drunk and not like a gentleman, so he abstained. Nevertheless, he had a favorite saloon. The Monte Carlo was owned by the infamous Swiftwater Bill Gates (Hall of Fame) who is a whole story unto his own. His friends bestowed the nick-name "Swiftwater" on him as a teasing jab about his overblown fear of fast water.

Swiftwater (right), a generous and honest man, grubstaked miners for a percentage of the gold found and bought out properties that were believed to be duds and turned out to be little Bonanzas. He and Joe Boyle (left) met at Swiftwater's healthy #13 fraction claim on Eldorado Creek and struck a close friendship.



Swiftwater wasn't a suspicious man and didn't want to become one. But he did decide to start paying closer attention to his business affairs and keep tabs on his transactions. So, he hired Boyle to work for him on a percentage basis managing his mining properties. Boyle and his trailmate Chilkoot Charlie set out, ranging far and wide, behind their fine team of Malemutes with special dog Cronja in the lead.

When Ottawa politicians finally woke to the truth about reports coming from the Klondike, they hurried into some ill-considered moves that accentuated problems and further served to outrage the miners.

A Cabinet minister simply signed an order-in-council that reduced creek claims to one-hundred-foot frontages. Overnight, alternate claims were reserved for the greedy Crown that had imposed a 20-percent royalty on all claims producing more than \$500 a day.

A mass miners' meeting was organized. Angry miners voted to send a party to Ottawa to protest. It provoked another order-in-council. Ottawa reduced royalties to 10 percent and increased creek frontages to 250 feet and permitted the staking of ten-block sections.

Whatever the government giveth, it can taketh away. The drawback was that instead of the Crown taking a single claim it was taking every alternate section.

The government's action was not well thought out and not what miners had been bending William Ogilvie's ear about in the winter of 1896-97. The highly-respected land surveyor could do nothing more than listen, sympathize and take the miners' concerns back to Ottawa.

Boyle was aware that the hand method could only recover about 25 percent of the gold. Somebody with brains and an innovative idea could recover the other 75 percent with a more efficient mining system. Monstrous clanking machinery with a line of buckets would dig up the riverbed; these dredges needed to be powered with hydro generation.

The idea was formulating in Boyle's imagination.

Placer gold can be taken from the creek by one lonely prospector with nothing more than a gold pan or a shovel, pick and a sluice box and carried out in his hat. That's why placer gold is referred to as "poor man's gold".

That was too tedious and simplistic for Boyle. He didn't want one mining claim; he wanted the government to grant him a huge concession that would give him hydraulic and timber rights over a great swath of the Klondike watershed before the government had any concept about granting concessions.

Boyle was thinking in terms of gigantic nozzles ripping up the overburden from the valleys and a fleet of enormous floating machines chewing their way to bedrock. As far-reaching as Boyle was in his thinking, it's not likely it crossed his or anybody else's minds that the mountains of tailings to be left behind as souvenirs of the Klondike era would one day serve as a tourist attraction.

"Boyle was convinced that in order to separate the gold from the bedrock the leafy valleys would have to be torn apart, ripped up by huge nozzles," declared Pierre Berton in his book **Prisoners of the North**. "The gold would then be dug up by electrically powered dredges floating on ponds of their own creation, biting into the bedrock with an endless line of moving buckets and washing the gold free in monstrous revolving sieves."

Boyle proposed to build huge dredges and to haul the necessary machinery—tons and tons of it—up the White Pass trail, over the mountains, down the fast-flowing Yukon River to Dawson City, and out by gravel road to the gold creeks—all in the shortest possible time, added Berton.

"The entire dredge system would run on electricity, which meant building a hydroelectric power plant, digging vast ditches, and using the water of the north fork of the Klondike River to achieve his end," continued Berton.

"And all this in a land when the first snow fell early in October and the country stayed frozen until April." Then it was time to go Outside to escape the danger of being caught on the Inside.

Klondikers were warned about a food shortage for the winter of 1897-98. Arthur Harper (Hall of Fame), a partner in the trading trio of Harper, Al Mayo and Jack McQuesten, was trying to get word to McQuesten (Hall of Fame) in San Francisco to double the supply and grocery order with the Alaska Commercial Company's head office. But the supplies wouldn't arrive until spring when the ice broke up and the little steamer could make its way up the Yukon River from St. Michael's, Alaska.

About 800 head of cattle, mostly belonging to Goodall, Perkins & Company, were driven over the Dalton Trail in 1897. The cattle came from Seattle and Vancouver on steamships, up the Inside Passage to Haines Mission, and were organized for the drive over the Dalton Trail to the Yukon River and floated on scows downriver to Dawson. Jack Dalton was held in high esteem for delivering fresh meat to people's tables during the gold-rush famine.

Boyle and his small party thought it was prudent to leave the Yukon that winter of 1897. So did Swiftwater Bill. He was itching to see city lights, spend some Klondike gold and round up a new line of girls to work his Monte Carlo for 1898.

It was less than prudent to set out so late in October. They faced tough, life-threatening odds in minus 25-degree F. temperatures. It was a gruelling journey along the Dalton Trail, scaling the Chilkat Pass before finally descending into Haines Mission on November 23, 1897. It was only a miracle and Boyle's urging and Chilkoot Charlie's guidance that saw the party of five reach safe haven on the coast without loss of life or limb.

While Boyle's intentions were to lay claim to a large swath of the Klondike River, he planned to present his project initially as a proposal for the timber rights so he could establish a sawmill. His idea had to be taken to Ottawa to Clifford Sifton, the new minister of the Interior whose reputation preceded him. He was already known as a politician who needed his palms greased.

Clifford Sifton

Sifton had been sworn into Liberal Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier's cabinet as minister of the Interior and general superintendent of Indian Affairs on November 17, 1896.

The new minister aimed to reduce cost in the administration of Indian Affairs by cutting back on native education. He did not believe that natives could be good contributors to the expansion of Canada. His officials encouraged the natives to relinquish some of their reserve lands in favour of developers' speculation and development.

One such chunk of real estate was the Yukon District, an appendage of the Northwest Territories that became a separate territory on June 13, 1898. The government wanted to easily collect liquor taxes and to achieve the safe passage of prospectors who were heading for the Klondike goldfields.

Sifton was the minister who had the greatest responsibility and influence for the administration of the Yukon Territory during the gold rush which was ignited in earnest in late July, 1897, and hit full stride in 1898.

Officials appointed by Sifton and his colleagues often were unqualified for their jobs except by political connection. Many officials occupied themselves lining their own pockets rather than dedicating their time to the business of serving the public.

Sifton was a controversial figure during his entire mandate. He was renowned for his mastery of machine politics and patronage. Charges of corruption dogged his heels during his entire career.

Strenuous and repeated efforts of the opposition politicians to link Sifton to corruption in the Yukon failed. The charges could never be proven through courts or commissions. But where there's smoke, there's fire. There were enough incriminating documents to show he was making money on the back of his political appointment.

Ottawa lawyer-politician Harold Buchanan McGiverin, a friend of the Boyle family, was greatly influential over the years in laying a path for Joe's introduction to Sifton and led to obtaining approvals.

Boyle was naive about the way the political machine ground so slowly. What he thought would be a few days waiting on decisions about timber rights in Ottawa stretched into seven months.

The idea he was hatching would result in the legendary Boyle Concession.

"It would entail a fortune in financing before an ounce of gold could be retrieved," wrote Kim Beattie. "It would involve the transport of thousands of tons of material over fearful obstacles. It would mean careful lobbying for operating rights in the Canadian capital-- and all he knew about politics was that he disliked politicians."

He met with opposition, of course, because people in Ottawa had no concept about gold mining in Canada's North. Boyle's gift for articulate speech won the day and his sound logic came in handy. He came across as a man of great dignity, one who could not be mistrusted, discouraged nor waved off.

Boyle did succeed in obtaining his valuable concession, yet he had no previous experience in the fine art of wrangling political favors. He had no known powerful political allies. His success had to be credited to his personal charisma and magnetism-- as well as his persistence.

He got everything he asked for, which was plenty because he had the audacity to do it. He acquired the dredging rights in the Klondike valley for a stretch of six and three-quarter miles, the area fed by the richest creeks.

"It was an historic accomplishment, unique in its kind," emphasized Beattie. "It caused political eruption later, and no person ever again obtained such a concession in Canada's gold areas. It sent him back to Dawson City as the Yukon's most important citizen, a role he was destined to play with distinguished skill and much profit until he left the rim of the Arctic forever."

Boyle held timber and power rights with coal mining thrown in for good measure. The first thing he did was build a sawmill at North Forks. By now, his older brother Charles, who had been in the lumber business in Eastern Canada, joined him. He was astounded by the prices for irregular, rough-hewn planks.

Charles was right to think that the sawmill was a gold mine within itself. Dawson was going through a building boom and lumber was needed for sluice boxes, cabins, buildings and corduroy roads. The \$18 per cord of wood in December, 1898, inflated more than two-and-a-half times for a cost of \$48 a cord by the summer of 1899.

Boyle was going to gamble everything he made on the sawmill to organize financing for his dream to mine with power-driven dredges.

From his 25,000-acre claim he would harvest as much gold as the entire gold-hustling mob had reaped in the historic year of 1898. To boot, the legal entanglements would be so many that he would have to retain legal counsel in London, New York, Windsor, Detroit, Washington and Ottawa.

When the vital timber rights was approved, he hurried back to Dawson via Skagway, a rough, rowdy, lawless, wide-open town since he had last seen it. Stampeders were pouring in. Boyle threaded his way over the White Pass and back to Dawson in the early summer of 1898.

Meanwhile, the plot thickened. The secretive Arthur Newton Christian Treadgold was carrying on his own intimate discussions with the Liberal Minister, Clifford Sifton.

Arthur Treadgold

The Klondike attracted some unbelievable characters. Another man who smelled the gold and would rival Joe Boyle as the King of the Klondike was Arthur Treadgold.

He was born in 1863, four years ahead of Boyle, and was the youngest of five children of a Lincolnshire, England, family. Through his mother, the children were direct descendants of Sir Isaac Newton, the scientist and mathematician who came up with the Theory of Universal Gravitation. In other words, planets are kept in place by the same gravitation force that makes an apple fall from the tree to the ground.

With those genes, it was natural that Treadgold was highly intelligent. In that respect, he and Boyle were equals. Both thought big and were as tenacious as terriers. Neither was daunted by obstacles, regardless of size.

Treadgold was unlike Boyle in that he was short and of slight physical frame. But, like Boyle, he possessed a convincing voice that elevated him to beyond Boyle's six feet. Treadgold was strong and wiry, and like many men of small stature, he wanted to prove himself by injecting a double dose of ambition, courage and stubbornness into his make-up.

Whereas Boyle was honest, open-minded, open-hearted and gracious, Treadgold was conceited and cunning, constantly twisting the truth to get what he wanted.

He was raised in a simple English country lifestyle but graduated from Oxford University in 1886, and went on to earn a masters and became a college teacher.

When the Klondike gold rush was in mid-stride, he met Grace Henderson of Toronto who was attending school in England. Somehow through connections at home, Miss Henderson had heard about the great amounts of gold free for the picking from the black sand and gravel in the Klondike. She passed on the news to Treadgold during a family gathering.

Treadgold took a short course in geology at the London Geological College, then made arrangements to visit the Klondike guised as a special correspondent for *The Manchester Guardian* and *The Mining Journal*.

Like Boyle, Treadgold always was able to find financiers willing to back him in his gold opportunities. Using the English press as the avenue to information, Treadgold would become an active participant in the gold rush instead of merely a reporter on the sidelines writing his observations.

On January 2, 1898, Treadgold boarded a ship for New York. Writers, especially representatives from English newspapers, could win him access to people and information quickly. His intellect and writing style brought a new dimension to the mud and muck mining world.

It was through his journalism that he was able to make an appointment for an interview with Clifford Sifton in Ottawa and would soon launch his concession idea with the minister of the Interior.

Like Boyle, Treadgold was quick to act on an idea and could charm men into accepting his plans. But, unlike Boyle, Treadgold was careless about details and lacked the take-charge leadership qualities that instilled confidence in followers beyond their own expectations.

Ottawa politicians didn't have a handle on the situation in the Klondike although William Ogilvie, the Dominion land surveyor, had certainly made more than enough recommendations to them.

Sifton was reputed for his irritating habit of wily-nily changing mining regulations. The constant alterations were due to a bunch of clueless politicians in Ottawa failing to understand mining and the local conditions. Sifton was merely reacting to pressures coming down on him from Yukon dissidents.

The interests of the individual placer miners conflicted greatly with the ambitious, aggressive capitalists, such as Boyle and Treadgold, who sought large hydraulic concessions from the government that would justify monstrous floating dredges digging up gold from the beds of creeks and rivers.

Sifton believed that the large-scale plans of the capitalists and financiers would provide greater stability to the Yukon's future than the labour-intensive sluice box miners who greatly opposed the large concession concept.

The individual miners were angry because they would lose their mining claims to these big interests, most of them foreign, and many absentee owners had never been within a thousand miles of the Klondike, much less set foot on or worked their mining properties.

As a member of the press, Treadgold was a very important person. He was buttering up Sifton and the civil servants with his glowing reports in *The Manchester Guardian*. Obviously, he hoped to curry favor with the Ottawa politicians and to offset the embarrassment created by Flora Shaw of *The Times of London*.

One of Treadgold's analyses of the situation was published September 20, 1898. He sympathized with the government, claiming that the long queues of men waiting at the post office and the mining recorder's office were nothing more than an understaffing problem. It forced miners to wait in line-ups many hours in temperatures well below zero. No wonder they were out of sorts and grumpy, he suggested.

"...All these Government offices are hopelessly undermanned and, I fear, underpaid, with resulting dangers to business. I think, too, that the Gold Commissioner has had far too many things thrust on him...Dawson has had to emerge through very rough times, but she is emerging," he wrote.

"The marvel is that things work at all and they would not have but for the very orderly character of the Klondike mine owners and miners. I have never seen such patience, such willingness to help the authorities as up here."

Treadwell's and Flora Shaw's interpretations varied greatly. After *The Times of London* reporter's visit to the Klondike in the summer of 1898, Miss Shaw contended a corrupt and incompetent system, as many placer miners noted in their personal gold-rush journals.

"...there is a widely prevalent conviction not only that the laws are bad, but that the officers through which they are administered are corrupt," began her scalding commentary.

"It is hard on innocent and upright individuals whose administrative duties may be performed with scrupulous integrity to be associated in the sweeping charge which is made against the whole official body, but there is no disguising the universal dissatisfaction, and innocent and guilty stand condemned together.

"It is impossible to talk for five minutes on business with any one on the mines or in the street without some allusion occurring to the subject, and it is a painful experience for

Englishmen proud of the purity of the British system of government to be compelled to listen to the plain-spoken comments of Americans and foreigners."

Sifton and his colleagues were stinging with embarrassment from Miss Shaw's accusations, which achieved wider readership when reprinted in the Canadian and American press.

It didn't hinder Treadgold and Sifton from becoming bosom buddies engaged in a rather murky, conspiratorial scheme. Treadgold asked Sifton to support his big project, and his alone. If Sifton ignored everybody else and refused to approve their requests and applications, they would surely fail in their endeavors. It should be just the two of them working together.

Treadwell lobbied Sifton for complete control of the water supply and hydroelectric power in the heart of the Klondike in order to bring water to the high-level gravel deposits at sufficient head for hydraulicking and sluicing large-scale gold-mining operations.

On October 7, 1898, William Ogilvie, the Dominion Land Surveyor who marked the international boundary at the 141st meridian within a whisker of the line that would be accepted in 1919, was the newly-appointed Commissioner of the Yukon.



Ogilvie replaced ex-police officer James Walsh (photo left), who, after two months in the role of Commissioner, was forced to resign under a cloud of suspicion and accusations of wrongdoing.

Walsh had reserved some alternate mining claims on Dominion Creek, causing a great bitterness among the individual miners when they learned that friends and relatives of Commissioner Walsh had staked claims the day before he informed the general public that the creek was open for staking.

This tactic along with other similar complaints led to Walsh's removal from his position. He was recalled to Ottawa and replaced by William Ogilvie whose integrity was above reproach.

Ogilvie's first job was to head a commission to investigate complaints and accusations registered in a miners' petition dated August 25, 1898. Most of the key witnesses had gone Outside for the winter, which may account somewhat but not entirely for the failure of the royal commission that was supposed to investigate charges of government graft and corruption.

Boyle was perplexed by the long delay in approving his request that would eventually be known as the Boyle Concession. It had been 18 months since the original application was submitted and over a year since the promise that the grant would be approved.

On June 9, 1899, Boyle sent a letter to jolt Sifton's memory. He probed the problem by requesting that the hydraulic concession be made out in his name only as he had bought out Slavin's interests for \$20,000.

Besides, the timber license, which he couldn't afford to lapse, was due for renewal. Boyle was operating two sawmills, one called the Arctic. Together, production was more than one million feet of logs in 1899, but the hazard was poachers. Lumber was more precious than gold.

Boyle had built a 200-foot wharf along the Dawson waterfront as well as a warehouse and lumber dock. Then he purchased several valuable pieces of Dawson real estate.

By 1899, the great Klondike gold rush was ebbing. Many thousands of goldseekers pulled up stakes and left Dawson impulsively, descending on Fairbanks and Nome, Alaska. The human tide was a social disorder during a depression when people were on the move for the sake of being on the move.

But some goldseekers, like Boyle, did wrest great wealth of between \$13 million to \$25 million from the Klondike, but only years after the area began to stabilize. Then he would control Dawson. He would have his fingers into every essential service, such as the power and telephone companies, lumber and laundries, and a coal mine.

While Boyle fretted over a mysterious delay in approval of his hydraulic concession from Ottawa, he and Swiftwater Bill were partnering on some concession plans for some property they owned on Quartz Creek.

In the fall of 1899, the *Dawson Daily News* produced a special mining edition in which Boyle was glamourized to the hilt as "a citizen of substance".

"Although Mr. Boyle has worked hard and incessantly, his work has had no ill effects for there is no finer specimen of physical manhood in the world today--his magnificent physique, great strength and happy, sympathetic nature, coupled with a total abstinence from the use of liquor and tobacco, make him an ideal character for this rigorous climate," the story read.

"Mr. Boyle has always taken a lively interest in public matters. During the fall of '98 the front street of Dawson had become impassable for teams. Getting the teamsters together Mr. Boyle, in one day, laid a slab road from the A.C. corner to the Fairview (Hotel)...

"[H]e is at present, in connection with Alex Macdonald, setting on foot a movement among business men and mine owners to establish a hospital tax for the maintenance of St. Mary's Hospital.

"He is a member of the board of trade and chairman of the committee on legislation. Mr. Boyle has, by his strong personality, determination and downright honesty, won for himself the respect and esteem of all who have come into contact with him."

While Boyle was nonplussed over Ottawa's mysterious tardiness in approving his hydraulic concession, Treadwell was doing some fancy footwork behind Boyle's back with Sifton in an attempt to corner the water resources. The entire mining operation depended on water to separate gold from gravel.

Hydraulic mining, with huge hoses pouring great streams of water on the earth, would sift thousands of tons of waste material in such a fashion that it was bound to interfere with, or halt, the work of the hand miners.

Treadwell assumed this could ultimately frustrate most of the small-scale miners into selling out to Treadgold who was bent on being King of the Klondike.

Treadgold was wheeling and dealing, raising capital easily and trying to convince Sifton that his scheme was the one to back while shunning all others. A convoluted deal was struck which would benefit Sifton personally. But none of the accusations of corruption and fraud would ever be proven against him.

Boyle's wait ended November 5, 1900. It had been two years and nine months from the time he made application to Sifton in Ottawa.

Boyle had friends in high places, albeit they maybe weren't super powerful. One was Hon. James Sutherland, the government whip and a minister without portfolio. He was from Woodstock and a close friend of the Boyle family. It probably wasn't a good idea for anybody to tangle with Boyle. He always had another ace up his sleeve to get what he wanted.

The Boyle approval opened the door for other actions to be approved by Sifton. In May, 1901, the government approved the Treadgold application with all its water-diversion clauses. Treadgold had sole rights to ownership of lapsed claims. How convenient. As czar of the water supply, Treadgold would be the czar of the Klondike. Or so the wannabe ruler thought.

Suspicious about Sifton were long-standing. His name appeared on an application for a concession that was awarded to a man named Anderson.

Individual miners were angered over the wide-sweeping ownership of the Treadgold concession and hammered Ottawa with protests. The politicians procrastinated over their blunders but finally ordered the gold commissioner to reopen the claims and treat everyone fairly.

There were miners' meetings and commotion until Treadgold's original concession was cancelled and substituted with more restrictive measures. Protesters launched another public meeting to demand an end to all concessions: Treadgold, Anderson, Milne, Boyd, Matson, Ray & Bronson, Slavin & Gates, and the Millers.

In June, 1901, after nearly three years of lobbying, an order-in-council granted Treadwell what he wanted. It justified the approval, saying that large tracts of gold-bearing gravels were left unworked because of the inadequate water supply. It had confined washing of the richest gravels to only a small area.

Based on information from the Gold Commissioner of the Yukon Territory, it was believed by the Governor General in Council that the riches of the Klondike District could only be properly extracted with such a water supply as proposed by Treadgold and two other applicants, Malcolm Orr Ewing and Walter Barwick.

The Government of Canada was very generous indeed. But it is unknown how much graft Treadgold had to pay Sifton to get this marvelous package approved.

As per Lewis Green's book **The Gold Hustlers**, "There are 13 sections each beginning with the phrase: "The right," occasionally strengthened by the adjectives "sole", "prior" and "exclusive".

"Basically, with the exception of existing claims and water rights, the Treadgold Concession, as it would soon be known, gave Treadgold control of the portion of the goldfield lying in the Klondike River watershed. It included all of Bonanza, Eldorado, Bear and Hunker creeks--it was the heart of the Klondike!

"Within this district the holders had the exclusive right to construct water systems, cross any ground with either water or electrical schemes, take any timber required.

"They would have rights to any mineral deposits found in their operations and could take over and work any abandoned placer claims.

"The rights were conferred for a period of thirty years, following which the works were to remain the property of the concession holders. In return for the concession, the holders undertook to spend \$250,000 prior to the end of 1902 and to deliver a flow of 1,000 miner's inches (about 1,500 cubic feet per minute) of water to the district not later than July 1, 1905.

"Clearly, Orr Ewing, Treadgold and Barwick had written their letter of application with their own interest in mind, and little protection was offered to the ordinary miners.

"Dawson lawyer C.M. Woodworth charged that the authorities in Ottawa who granted the concession were either fools or scoundrels."

The newly-appointed Yukon Commissioner James Ross (1901-02), in keeping with the party line, contended that the rights of the people working the creeks had been thoroughly protected and that it was largely in the interest of the whole territory that these large schemes for development of resources should be fostered and encouraged.

This political attitude toward big development schemes had a way of ending in failures and disasters for the rest of the territory's history.

The Britton Commission

The Laurier government established a territorial council with limited powers. The proviso that Treadgold was not to be criticized served as a powderkeg to the already volatile mood.

In May, 1903, Prime Minister Laurier tried to appease the angry critics with the appointment of one of those infamous royal commissions to investigate the "mining problems". Royal Commissions are a conventional and expensive show to appear that Ottawa is giving attention to a serious matter when the hearings are actually worthless public shams.

Judge Byron Moffatt Britton, a former Liberal member of Parliament before his appointment to the bench in 1899, was chairman of the commission. He arrived in Dawson on August 13, 1903, with assistant commissioner Bell in tow. His staff included a stenographer and a Mr. Rowatt who kept an ironfist control over the department of Interior's files.

With time, the Crown had granted 40 hydraulic leases, or concessions. At the time of the Britton Commission 27 concessions were in good standing; of those, eight were under protest.

A few concessionaires, like Boyle and Treadgold, had been in the Klondike since 1897. Most of the other property owners had never been anywhere near the Klondike, much less set foot on the concessions bearing their names.

It smacked of favoritism. Some of the names attached to the concessions belonged to friends and business associates of none other than Minister Clifford Sifton.

The first Britton Commission meeting convened on August 17, 1903. It happened to be the seventh anniversary from the day George Carmack and his Indian friends had recorded their discovery claims on Bonanza Creek that sparked the world's greatest gold rush.

When more than one person smells wealth, there is no end to the conflict. Stir in a few politicians and the muddle thickens. In this case, timber and water rights were as precious as gold.

Klondikers with mining interests--and that was just about everybody--were brainwashed into believing the Britton Commission would give them the opportunity to express their bitter resentments about Treadwell, Boyle and other concessionaires who thwarted the efforts of the individual miners. They expected to be compensated with justice.

As absolute proof that the Britton Commission was a whitewash without intentions to ferret out the truth, an impatient Justice Britton started the meetings by restricting the time for submissions. His dictum prevented exhaustive evidence from being presented.

The Dawson Board of Trade had retained two lawyers, a Mr. Walsh and a Mr. Woodworth. Almost every Dawson lawyer, including George Black (Hall of Fame), was retained for one side or the other.

The room was packed to standing room only. On one side of the room were the angry observers who were hostile toward the concessionaires seated across the room.

The Treadwell Concession was under attack because he had been given his rights for six years, free of any work commitments. He controlled the water supply. If and when the water did reach the other miners' workings Treadwell could sell the water for any price he wanted. If the miners couldn't pay whatever atrocious price he might set, they would be out of business and he would take their mining claims.

As one would expect, Treadwell was articulate in his defense. He was cagey. He refused to reveal financial backers. Most attempts to question him closely or trip him up were met with "off the point", "no comment", or the bluntly stated, "I will not answer that question".

Britton and Bell supported Treadwell's refusal to disclose any detailed information beneficial to the commission.

Engineers and miners told the same stories when testifying. Mining the high-level White Channel gravels was difficult. Of the essence was the assurance of an adequate water supply to wash down the hills and benches. But they did not accept the terms granted to the Treadwell Concession.

Joe Boyle and Frank Slavin were accused of not conducting the required exploration work before filing for a concession. On the original application, they had requested nine-square miles to each claim. The Commission heard that those terms were altered to four times the said amount of land.

Boyle testified that he had pulled out of the Quartz Creek syndicate but was still a stockholder. He was operating a ten-square-mile timber berth in the Quartz Creek area, he said. He also held a lease on the Dawson waterfront and acted on behalf of Treadgold in the Englishman's absence from Dawson.

Boyle admitted to not doing the appropriate development work as required under the terms of the lease. He had made several trips to London, England, but failed in his bid to come up with financing. Boyle had exhausted his own financial resources, although he was accused of getting rich off the goldfields while not complying with the rules.

The Board of Trade lawyers met with resistance when asking to examine certain documents that related to the concessions. At first, Justice Britton would approve a document to be brought forward when a specific one was requested.

As the proceedings progressed, the keeper of the files for the department of the Interior became overzealous in his authority. Besides flatly refusing to show some files to the lawyers and concessionaires, he wouldn't let the commissioners see them either.

It's hard to understand how this could be unless Justice Britton had bestowed this authority on Rowatt who was nothing more than a government functionary.

Boyle agreed to having the Boyle Concession file examined. But he did add that he had not been able to access it himself while in Ottawa. So, he didn't know what was in the file.

Another witness was Sigmund Rothschild, president of the Detroit Yukon Mining Company, an American firm working claims on what was known as the Williams concession.

Rothschild, who lived in New York where all self-respecting Rothschilds hung out, would later make a deal to participate in the development of Boyle's properties that would end up in a string of complicated court cases.

Justice Britton packed up his commission and moved to the creeks for two meetings. First was Grand Forks and next was Gold Bottom, where Robert Henderson (Hall of Fame) had found the first Klondike gold in 1896 and later shared the news with George Carmack.

On September 7, 1903, the hearings moved back to Dawson. Nerves were raw on both sides of the fence. The second morning, sparks flew.

George Black pressed to see a document on a specific concession that caused Justice Britton to erupt into an uncontrollable rage before engaging in a heated argument with Joe Clarke, the senior Yukon councillor who was on the stand.

Then, bang, it was over.

Justice Britton tersely instructed the lawyers to forward their written arguments to Ottawa within the next two weeks. They would be given 10 days to rebuttal.

The hearing adjourned at 12:40 p.m. on the afternoon of September 8. By 4 o'clock, a steaming Justice Britton and his stenographer were on the sternwheeler *Whitehorse* bound for the town of Whitehorse where they could catch the train for Skagway, Alaska.

The rest of the disgruntled entourage had to wait in Dawson until they could book passage on another boat later in the week.

Nearly 10 months elapsed.

On June 29, 1904, the Treadgold Concession was cancelled. The action had nothing to do with the Britton Commission. Justice Britton had never written a report and neither had assistant commissioner Bell before his death in March, 1904.

The surprise news of the cancellation was disclosed in the House of Commons when a Conservative opposition member and Prime Minister Laurier had a brief exchange on the matter.

It was evident to the prime minister, even without a report tabled about Britton's findings, that there would be no peace in the valley as long as Treadgold held great tracts of land, held a monopoly on the Klondike River water supply, and was allowed to mine in opposition to the interest of the hand miners.

Prime Minister Laurier cancelled Treadwell's lease with a notorious backroom order-in-council that required no notice and no parliamentary debate.

Then Prime Minister Laurier demanded that Justice Britton show a little initiative and produce a report. One was finally tabled in the House of Commons in early August, 1904. It was nearly a year since the Britton Commission had been to Dawson.

The exhausted parliamentarians, who didn't give a hoot what was going on in the Klondike and had very little understanding of what the fuss was about, did not mention the contents of the report, much less debate it.

It basically said that the Yukon would benefit from hydraulic concessions. Well, whoop-de-do. But it avoided any accusations of possible fraud and misrepresentation of the mechanics of how the hydraulic concessions had been granted. The question of whether the concessionaires had complied with the terms of their leases was sidestepped, too.

When all was said, Prime Minister Laurier and Clifford Sifton got into a spat. Sifton resigned, which is a nice way of saying the prime minister fired him as minister of the Interior and appointed Frank Oliver.

Stanley Cup Challenge



Joe Boyle (centre front) shown with his hockey team, the Dawson Nuggets

Joe Boyle was of competitive and community spirit. He was an avid promoter of the Dawson Athletic Club and chairman of the sports and gymnasium committee.

In August, 1904, he boasted the idea for a Dawson hockey team that could beat any team anywhere.

A hockey league was formed and players sided up and competed against each other. Team members worked hard, lived hard, worked out. They were fit, tough and confident.

Some of them had been imprisoned so long in the north they were homesick for civilized society and relished an exhibition tour, which Boyle sponsored and organized.

Over beer-drinking sessions another goofy idea materialized. Why not challenge the Stanley Cup? The idea stuck and the Dawson Nuggets showed up at Dey's Arena in Ottawa for the event.

The Stanley Cup, fashioned into a coveted hockey trophy, was named after its donor, Lord Stanley, once Governor-General of Canada. It was the Silver Chalice, the Holy Grail of hockey. Every year a series of hockey games were played to determine the nation's best team. The champions walked away with the Stanley Cup for a year.

Time came to head off on tour. Interest was intense. The Nuggets were destined to play in Toronto, New York, Brooklyn, Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh with possible games lined up in Detroit, Chicago, St. Paul-Minneapolis, Winnipeg and Brandon.

The Nuggets walked, jogged and biked to Whitehorse and boarded the White Pass train to Skagway, Alaska. They missed the S.S. *Amur* for Vancouver and had to wait three days for the *Romano* to transport them to Seattle. Then another day was lost backtracking to Vancouver to catch the CPR (Canadian Pacific Rail) transcontinental train to Ottawa.

Boyle had telegraphed ahead, requesting a delay in the opening game. No dice.

The Nuggets arrived dead tired and out of shape in the capital city on January 11, 1905, and had to be ready to play two days later on Friday, January 13.

The team had travelled 4,000 miles at an expense of about \$6,000 and was suffering what we would call "jet lag" today. They had been off the ice for a month and didn't have a chance to familiarize themselves with the dimensions of the Dey rink. The arena was packed to the gunwales with 2,500 excited fans, poised and eager to watch the Stanley Cup playoffs.

It was amazing that the exhausted Nuggets managed to hold the invincible Ottawa Silver Seven's goals to nine and score a couple of their own. Boyle was sending special dispatches back to the *Dawson Daily News*. He wrote that "the fast, rough game was a great game".

He was optimistic about the next game, scheduled for Monday, January 16. By then, the team was composed of skating zombies. The Nuggets lost 23 to 2.

One highlight was Frank McGee, the Silver Seven's one-eyed centre. He scored fourteen of the 23 goals. Despite his limited vision, he had set a record to be entered into hockey history.

While some newspapers weren't gracious to the Nuggets, the *Ottawa Citizen* praised Nugget goalie Albert Forrest for playing a really fine game--regardless that he had 23 goals scored against him.

Boyle accompanied the team in a series of exhibition games in Montreal and the Maritime provinces. When finished, the team members went their separate ways. A few strays returned to the Yukon.

Boyle stayed behind at his Woodstock base, The Firs, to straighten out his financial affairs. The four years between 1905-1909 marked a self-imposed exile from the Klondike when he wasn't taking an active part in the operations getting underway on the Boyle Concession.

Detroit Yukon Mining Company

Early in 1905, it was announced in Ottawa that Boyle's enterprise was now launched with capital provided by the Rothschild group. The Rothschild clan was famous as money-changers who controlled bank deposits and financial markets of the world.

The Dawsonites took a shine to the Rothschilds because they were refined. Fred was an accomplished pianist. So what? So was Joe Boyle.

One should never let his guard down when doing business with a Rothschild. They were slick. The only person who came out on top of a business deal with a Rothschild was a Rothschild...until they tried to cross Joe Boyle.

Boyle had to come to an agreement with Detroit Yukon Mining or another solvent company, otherwise the federal government would have cancelled his concession, as it had Treadwell's.

Treadgold's original lease had promised to keep a stranglehold on Boyle's program. The leverage it contained through water rights had promised to remove Boyle from control altogether.

Thanks to Prime Minister Laurier's decision in Ottawa, Boyle was free of the pressures that Treadgold could have imposed; thanks to the Detroit associates, the mega-bucks Boyle desperately needed would allow the much-criticized work delay to go forward.

Boyle had three years to comply with terms of his government lease but he couldn't scare up the hundreds of thousands of dollars to do any work. He also had failed to carry out the annual \$5,000 worth of development work.

One of the influential Rothschilds was Sigmund, said to be a cigar merchant. He headed the group that operated as Detroit Yukon Mining Company and was mining the Williams Concession on Hunker Creek and Claims #19 and #20 on Bear Creek.

Since Detroit Yukon Mining Company was fairly well surrounded by the Boyle Concession it only made sense to cut an agreement to take over and mine it, too. Sigmund Rothschild and his associates offered Boyle and his lawyer Harold Buchanan McGiverin \$750,000 for the concession.

Shortly, thereafter, as is usual in these type agreements, Detroit Yukon tried to do an end run around Boyle by withdrawing the offer and inserting new terms.

Boyle was in Ottawa when he heard that Rothschild proposed the formation of a joint stock company that would be named the Canadian Klondyke Mining Company. The Detroit syndicate would put in \$500,000 cash and issue 30,000 company shares.

Boyle would receive 10,000 shares--or one-third interest--and be paid \$250,000 as a royalty from gross gold production. As a minor shareholder, he would control nothing and would be paid off over a three-year period.

It must be the first time in Boyle's life that he accepted a proposal that stripped him of his control, unless he knew something we don't.

As usual when Boyle went Outside, his base camp was his parents' estate where he was reunited with his children Joe Junior and Flora. He travelled to England and often took Flora with him when he visited legal advisors.

Boyle's boredom proved a short-lived symptom.

While he was keeping a hawk-eye vigilance on Detroit Yukon, a red flag went up. He noticed the \$500,000 deposit to the treasury (\$100,000 per syndicate member) had been written off the company books by selling Canadian Klondyke Mining two mining claims near Boyle's property and some old, broken down machinery.

These were the so-called assets Rothschild was using to cover the \$500,000 Detroit Yukon Mining owed Boyle.

While Boyle had been out of the loop, they were trying to dupe him. He came brilliantly alive and charged into battle like a roaring bull. Boyle's friend and partner McGiverin in Ottawa knew that Boyle had retained Woodstock lawyer Wallace Nesbitt to file a suit in the Supreme Court of Ontario.

In 1905, Canadian Klondyke Mining Company Limited had been formed for the expressed purpose of working the Boyle Concession. Under the Rothschild

management, it was agreed that the Boyle Concession was finally going to be mined. It seems Canadian Klondyke Mining was destined for a successful future.

Sigmund Rothschild was the principal backer and his son Fred was the general manager of Detroit Yukon. Otto Brener, a shareholder, had been employed to take over Boyle's role as manager of the Canadian Klondyke properties.

The mammoth-sized Canadian Number One dredge, built by Marion Steam Shovel Company, was installed in August, 1905. It gouged away on Detroit Yukon's Claim No. 20 on Bear Creek near the Boyle Concession--but not on the Boyle Concession. Detroit Yukon had bought another monstrous earth-eating dredge that was on its way from the manufacturers in Marion, Ohio.

In the summer of 1906, a juicy piece of gossip was circulating. Arthur Treadgold was in New York trying to strike a merger deal with the Guggenheims (Honour Roll), Boyle's arch rivals who owned the Yukon Gold Corporation. Soon, politicians in Ottawa were hearing complaints from Dawson and sounding their own alarm about the great extent of foreign ownership in Canada's Yukon.

Oh, what a tangled web gold-hungry folks can weave.

While the Guggs were negotiating with Treadgold, the Rothschilds were toying with the idea of selling out to the Guggies who were offered 10,000 shares in Canadian Klondyke for \$110,000, or \$11 a share.

Boyle's lawsuit claimed that he was acting on behalf of himself as well as the other shareholders. Due to the Rothschilds selling one-third of its interest in Canadian Klondyke meant Boyle was the largest shareholder. He asserted that the Rothschilds did not own the 20,000 shares--or two-thirds interest--they alleged. Upon completion of the sale, the Detroit group would be relieved of its control in Canadian Klondyke Mining.

In March, 1907, Boyle launched an action suit to restrain the Detroit folks from acting as the directors of Canadian Klondyke Mining Company.

Life went on as usual. In June, 1907, Fred Rothschild returned to the Klondike to supervise dredging operations until freeze-up in early October. In mid-July, he received word that his father, Sigmund, had died in New York.

His death had no profound affect on Boyle's application heard in October, 1907, at a place in Ontario called Sandwich, just across the river from Detroit. Judge R. M. Riddell presided over and completed the tangled mess in eight hours, a feat indeed.

Boyle claimed that the Detroit group had failed to put \$500,000 in cash into Canadian Klondyke Mining's coffers as called for in the articles of incorporation, filed with the government in Ottawa.

Therefore, the Detroit group's shares weren't fully paid.

Instead of cash, the Detroit group had simply transferred the two mining claims and some mining equipment of dubious value that belonged to the Detroit Yukon Mining Company in exchange for their shares in Canadian Klondyke Mining Company.

Witnesses for the Detroit group couldn't produce any written or supporting evidence to the contrary.

Judge Riddell was visibly miffed with Michael Murphy, a financier associated with the Detroit Security Trust. The bill of sale, which was properly drawn up, made no mention of any transfer of money for machinery. Murphy finally admitted that he had signed the agreement without even reading it!

The judge was outraged when he had to listen to another principal player named Moran or Moron who made the same claim of ignorance.

Boyle's lawyer, Wallace Nesbitt, and his associate counsel, a Mr. A.H. Clarke, KC (King's Counsel), of Windsor, Ontario, pointed out that the agreement clearly called for a \$500,000 deposit in cash by the five Detroiters.

In a surprise move that elicited a surprised gasp from the observers, Boyle's counsel brought Otto Brener of London, Ontario, to the stand. Brener was a major shareholder in both Detroit Yukon and the newly-formed Canadian Klondyke Mining. He also was an employee.

He testified that he was present when the deal with Boyle was struck. He said that the purchase of the machinery had not been discussed at any of the meetings in question. Although he was a large shareholder in Canadian Klondyke, he had been kept in the dark about the transfer of machinery until a year after the transaction had taken place.

Boyle's case was on solid ground.

His brother Charles came out from the Klondike after six years to give evidence. A Dawson surveyor named Barwell also testified.

Arthur Treadgold's articulate and logical testimony helped win over the judge, as did Joe Boyle himself. He was one of the best and most convincing witnesses.

He regaled the court with his story of going to the Klondike as a penniless pauper with nothing more than the clothes on his back and 50 cents in his pocket and succeeding where so many other stampeders had failed.

Boyle just happened to neglect mentioning that trips back and forth between the Klondike and Ontario cost money and that he stayed in the plush Russell House when on business in Ottawa. He skipped the details about his being an owner in a lucrative New York feed and livery business, owned valuable waterfront property in Dawson and could tap into a well-padded bank account at his leisure.

Judge Riddell quickly returned his verdict. He found that Boyle had not known of any decision to spend the \$500,000 on machinery and that it was never part of the original agreement. Riddell found the directors fraudulent and the syndicate liable for breach of trust.

The acting directors of the Detroit company were all directors of Canadian Klondyke. The pretended sale was a fraud, not only in respect to the plaintiff, Boyle, but also with the largest shareholder, Otto Brener.

The judge ordered the Detroit group to pay \$500,000 cash, less the value of the two claims which he established at \$15,000 and the machinery estimated to be worth \$50,000. The judge loaded the Detroit group with the court costs of \$3,150.

Boyle won but the story was far from over. The case dragged on another two years.

The Detroiters went to court across the river on their own turf and obtained an injunction to restrain Boyle from interfering with Canadian Klondyke Mining Company's assets or properties.

The Detroit group attempted to cover the \$500,000 cash that was in dispute by depositing \$190,000 in a bank account. The group further offered bills and various accounts as a way of covering the outstanding \$310,000. But the Detroiters refused to pay court costs awarded to Boyle at the Sandwich hearing.

On January, 1908, Boyle asserted that he and some friends were the only bona fide, paid-up shareholders. Therefore, they were the only shareholders able to conduct business. Shareholders with opposing views broke away to hold their own meetings and elections in another room.

On March 10, 1908, the court battle resumed before Justice Riddell. He found that the court actions in Detroit had been an effort to avoid payment of the \$500,000 and that the intention was that Canadian Klondyke Mining Company should never have control of the money. Riddell called it "dishonest behaviour".

"I do not think that the affairs of the Ontario company are safe in the hands of these persons in a foreign country, who cannot be reached personally by the Court, and who show by their conduct no desire to abide by the direction of the Court," he ruled.

Judge Riddell ordered the appointment of a receiver to bring within the jurisdiction of the court all the assets of the company. Boyle got the appointment. He agreed to post a substantial bond of \$300,000.

The judge also ruled on the court costs, redistributing what the plaintiff's lawyers had envisaged and reduced payment by nearly \$500. Boyle was awarded only a scant \$22.50 as an adjustment to the scant \$300 he had asked for himself as a witness.

The acrimonious fight still wasn't over. Obtaining a bond had left Boyle vulnerable to another attack. Again, the dispute came before Judge Riddell who ruled the bond insufficient and gave Boyle 14 days to put up a total bond of \$450,000.

An Ontario Divisional Court hearing of May 22, 1908 overturned Riddell's decision as well as Boyle's appointment as receiver.

The ruling seemed to put the Detroiters back in charge. Boyle wasn't whipped. He launched an appeal that took a year to be heard on April 5, 1909, this time before Justice R.M. Meredith and the appellate court in Toronto. Meredith told Boyle there were "no substantial grounds" for taking the management out of the hands of the Detroit men. Other judges at the hearing concurred.

Boyle didn't miss a beat. He filed two more actions, one against the Canadian Klondyke Mining Company and a second against the individual directors of the company. The case was scheduled for May 28, 1909 in the Sandwich Court House where Boyle had received a favorable decision two years before.

Everybody involved was resigned to another lengthy battle. But the Detroiters cried "uncle" to stop the bickering.

An arrangement was made that Boyle could make an outright purchase of the 20,000 shares from the Detroit group at \$20 per share (\$400,000)--minus \$45,000 due him under the former arrangement, which equalled \$355,000. It would give Boyle complete control of the company.

Boyle became a major shareholder and would take over where Fred Rothschild left off. The Rothschilds had introduced the large-scale dredging to the Klondike but Boyle would take the lead and revolutionize it.

The Detroit group had equipped the property and now it was Boyle's to develop as he pleased.

A mere five years before, Boyle had nothing to show for his mining efforts. Now, he owned it all!

Return to the Klondike

Boyle's divorce from Millie was finalized in 1907, leaving him vulnerable to gold diggers. The 40-year-old romantic was rich, handsome, gregarious, kind, generous and "available". While he wasn't a womanizer, women chased him. To rid himself of the aggravation of fortune seekers tugging at his coat tails, it was practical for selfish motives to re-marry.

At a Detroit hotel where Boyle stayed during his legal fracas, he met Elma Louise Humphries, a manicurist. She must have thought she had gone to heaven when she latched onto this prize.

Of course, the marriage would leave her perplexed and unfulfilled. Joe Boyle was much too complex for anybody to understand. Little did this nice, quiet person know that she should have married a less impulsive man, for life with Joe Boyle would not be normal or routine. Eventually, he would turn his back on her in favour of another adventure.

Their marriage in the spring of 1909 was a shock to Joe's children. Flora took to calling her new stepmother "Steppie" and the two bickered incessantly until Joe later shipped his daughter off on tour of China.

The Boyle couple made their home in the small, self-contained village of Bear Creek, six miles from Dawson.

Charles Boyle had married, too. He had brought his new bride and her little son, Ralph, to Bear Creek after he had testified in the Sandwich court case in 1907. Nan was an attractive, personable, Pennsylvania widow of a man named Ralph Morgan.

Charles, Nan and the little boy lived in a log house next door to Joe's and Elma's big log house that Joe had expanded to accommodate his new wife and Flora. Later, Joe Junior, would finish his engineering degree and be a much-appreciated addition to the Bear Creek operation in 1913.

The village hosted the headquarters for Canadian Klondyke Mining and quarters for the company employees and a common dining room for all the villagers. There was a gold room for refining and casting gold ingots. Other buildings housed animals. There were big flower beds, lush vegetable gardens and green lawns.

Mostly it was the native population who kept the camps supplied with fresh game and fish; Boyle supplied the piano music; and the villagers supplied the songs.

Sometimes Robert Service came from Dawson, where he was employed with the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce. He would recite his iambic pentameter verses which Boyle memorized and would later recite to his relatives in Ireland and royalty in Rumania.

By now, Joe had bought out his friend and partner, Frank Slavin, who had left the fold for Vancouver. He was thought to have been in the ring at least one more time around 1907 when Boyle was embroiled in his court battles.

Soon, the Canadian Mint put in a special order with Boyle for \$50,000 worth of Klondike gold. The mint wanted to strike the first Canadian gold coins ever from genuine Canadian-produced metal.

Boyle obliged. In December, 1909, he loaded his demure wife and teen-age daughter onto the Overland Stage for Whitehorse, the first leg of the journey to Ottawa.

Boyle had commissioned an Indian at Moosehide village, downriver from Dawson, to sew two moosehide bags with shoulder straps, secured with heavy chains and padlocks. Inside each bag was \$25,000 worth of ingots. As further security, whenever the stage stopped at a roadhouse, Joe, the only person who could heft the heavy burdens, would lug the bags from the sleigh to the dining room. Flora remembered eating meals with her feet propped on the bags under the table.

From the earliest days in the Klondike, Joe Boyle had always been a community booster. A "puritan", he even chaired temperance meetings in saloon-infested Dawson City.

His Canadian Klondyke Mining Company retained a good rapport with the Dawsonites. The company had a policy of purchasing its supplies locally, an unwritten code that still rings true if a company wants to be in good standing with Yukoners.

The Canadian Klondyke Mining operation was a showpiece and a curiosity. It attracted many observers to the Klondike and to the creeks. People of all walks of life and professions came to Bear Creek for a tour.

Boyle did the honours. The really special guests were taken to the gold refinery and store room, where they were allowed to select a small nugget each to take home for a souvenir.

As Boyle amassed wealth from his placer empire, he sponsored more community events.

From 1913, he sponsored an annual picnic for children known as Joe Boyle's Day. In early July, Boyle's small steamer loaded the tykes at the Dawson dock and transported

them six miles to a shallow tributary where he frolicked with the small fry, waded in the water, led them in song and told them stories. He was even known to load the piano on the boat and serenade the guests along the way.

Come Christmastime, he sponsored a trip to the North Fork power plant for the high school students and their teachers. They were treated to a dance, a feast and a sleep over, returning by sleigh the next day.

It's no wonder Joe Boyle was popular, a man of heroic proportions with the community. He even retained a good rapport with individual miners who didn't like concessionaires although he had obtained large concessions of land from the federal government to carry out hydraulicking operations.

Bitter rivalries existed on the Klondike creeks between the concessionaires themselves. The most acrimonious was between Boyle and the Guggenheims' Yukon Gold Corporation. Yet Arthur Treadgold and Boyle were relatively amicable, gentlemanly and civil toward each other.

"(H)e fought his financial and legal wars without finesse or subterfuge but with a take-it-or-leave-it challenge, bluff, and bluntness that confused and disconcerted his adversaries but won their admiration even while it defeated them," submitted Kim Beattie in the book **Brother, Here's a Man!**

Regardless of disputes, inquiries and court trials, Boyle managed to hold onto friendships with most of his opponents.

It was about this time in history when his empire expanded and he took over control of Dawson City. He was bestowed with the title King of the Klondike.

As its zenith, his placer empire included four dredges--three of them among the largest in the world at the time. The efficient power plant that ran the dredges also enabled him to become the sole supplier of electricity to Dawson.

Much of the money backing the dredging enterprise as well as the power plant itself came from Granville Mining, of which Treadgold was managing director.

With subsequent financial backing from English interests, notably Granville Mining, Boyle consolidated his control over the whole works in 1911-12.

Boyle was a Klondiker as well as a Canadian nationalist and flew the flag to prove it. Canadian Klondyke Mining Company made it abundantly clear his empire was not an American enterprise. He named his enormous gold dredges Canadian Number One, Canadian Number Two, Canadian Number Three and Canadian Number Four.

From the mast of each ship, he raised the Red Ensign, just one more way of helping his American rivals, the Guggenheims, get the message.

Meanwhile, Boyle kept his rivals' heads spinning as he formed new companies and re-distributed holdings among them. The Rothschilds of the Detroit group had nothing on Boyle who proved himself a shrewd business shark.

On May 18, 1912, Boyle Concessions, Limited was incorporated. The directors were members of a legal firm based in Windsor, Ontario.

On June 28, 1912, Boyle Concessions bought the majority of assets belonging to Canadian Klondyke Mining Company.

On March 15, 1913, a new Canadian Klondyke Mining Company Limited was incorporated. The next day, the original Canadian Klondyke Mining Company that had been incorporated by the Detroit group back in 1904 suffered a name change to Yukon Exploration Limited.

While these changes were taking place, Boyle's companies were making agreements with other companies. Boyle often acted both as an individual and on behalf of one of the companies.

It became somewhat of a Soapy Smith shell game for Boyle's adversaries to guess which company the real assets lay under at the time of signing an agreement.

Eventually, the Yukon Gold Corporation was able to assemble the ground it needed for its dredging operation. But it didn't get #19 and #20 Bear Creek. Those claims were rolled in as part of the Boyle Concession.

The battle raged on for years between the two bullish opponents. Both were too headstrong and stubborn to settle. New differences continued to crop up between Canadian Klondyke Mining and Yukon Gold Corporation.

Occasionally, one or the other would grow weary and try to settle. Then, the other, realizing he had a temporary advantage, would balk spitefully. Negotiations would stall.

Boyle was impatient and always in a hurry. He was tired of messing around with YGC's resident manager, C.A. Thomas, a physically powerful man in his own right and used to having his way. He and Boyle clashed. Boyle turned to negotiating directly with Solomon Guggenheim in New York. That didn't advance much, either.

Boyle's confrontations with the Guggenheims dated back to July, 1909. It was ongoing simply because Boyle relished conflict. Much of the trouble was of his own doing to keep the pot boiling and keep his legal wits sharp.

The Dawsonites had a front-row seat. No doubt the squabbling made good gossip and sprinkled spice and splashed colour into an otherwise mundane existence.

Dawsonites rooted for Boyle because they weren't sympathetic towards the non-community-minded Guggenheims who refused to buy from the local merchants. They shipped their supplies in from Outside the territory, just as the company imported contract labour from Outside rather than hiring from the local pool. That was a good method for getting on the wrong side of Yukoners, even to this day.

Finally, the two rivals buried the hatchet, although the ill-defined boundary lines between Yukon Gold Corporation and the Boyle Concession were a constant thorn. But the lawsuits on which Boyle thrived had at least subsided.

Most men would have been satisfied with financial success and what he had acquired. Not Joe Boyle. He was keeping score. Bear Creek had become too darned orderly for a man who had a thirst for action.

It wasn't going to be a long wait before Boyle disrupted the Bear Creek household. The sabers of war were rattling in Europe. Despite his maturity he was eager to wade into the thick of the action.

On his 46th birthday in November, 1913, the Boyle family threw a party for Joe. A group of his younger employees presented him with a sterling silver cup, or a loving cup that symbolized they overflowed with appreciation for all Joe stood for.

One of the employees verbalized the feelings for the collective: "Mr. Boyle made history when he came here, and is still doing so, and the scope of his work is widening. He met difficulties in the beginning, and his genius then, as now, asserted itself when the occasion demanded, and only those associated with him closely ever will appreciate his broadmindedness, his capacity for long, laborious and efficient effort, drawing heavily on his marvelously rugged physique without apparent exhaustion.

"He always has a foundation of clear and logical thinking, and his mind works rapidly in the grasp of detail and general plans. He never fails in the keen appreciation of the human side of things, and he is ever an inspiration to the men under his direction.

"Covering hundreds of square miles in this particular field of operation, and handling investments of millions of dollars, he looks not only to the welfare of the vast material assets, but also to the comfort of the most modest of his employees, and indirectly to the welfare of the army who are supported by his enterprises.

"He has an abiding faith in young men as well as in the sourdoughs of the land, and scores of college men and school boys have done their first work under his direction. He believes ardently in young men of reliable character and ability, and recognizes talent quickly.

"Manly, frank and courageous, he sets a splendid example for the youth who join him. He is a true citizen, doing well his part in respect to public progress, in private walks and in every pursuit he undertakes."

Boyle was visibly touched with the accolades from the young set.

War Years

The year 1914 spelled change for Joe Boyle and everybody else. A state of war existed with Germany until August 4 when Britain officially declared war.

Even Dawson City, over 7,000 miles away was affected. The guns of August drew the young men into the war effort. They were the hardest working and most skilled. It would be difficult to replace them. The situation was grim and would slow production pace. But, really, everybody speculated optimistically that the war would be short-lived and soldiers would be home by Christmas.

Boyle wanted to be where the action was. But he was too old and too prominent to go to combat wearing a private soldier's uniform. Yet his son Joe Junior, nearing his 24th birthday, wanted nothing to do with a cause that wasn't his cause. The differences in opinion created a permanent rift between father and son.

Joe was an ultra-patriotic Canadian; Joe Junior was not. He was American-born and wanted nothing to do with any war unit--least of all the Klondike Motor Gun Machinery Brigade his father organized and sponsored.

Joe Boyle always had a grandiose scheme at the ready and was in a financial position to do something about carrying out plans. He had proposed to the Minister of Militia and Defence, Sam Hughes, that Boyle be permitted to equip and send a fifty-man Yukon machine-gun battery to the front.

Hughes wired his acceptance on a Thursday. By the following Tuesday prospective recruits were given medicals. Members of the Royal Canadian North West Mounted Police and the captain of the Dawson Rifle Association started the training exercises.

There was no money to pay the 50 volunteers, so Boyle put them on the payroll. They worked in the mornings for Canadian Klondyke Mining and were trained in the fine points of artillery all afternoon.

Boyle re-enforced his hero status in the eyes of Dawsonites and the Dawson press. "Unbounded credit is due to Joseph Whiteside Boyle for his more than generous contribution which makes it possible for Yukon to have a brigade in the great conflict," wrote the editor of the *Dawson Daily News*, September, 1914.

Boyle's unit was a specialist force, equipped with and specially trained in the use of machine guns. Machine guns were still a new and controversial weapon of war that some professionals felt would never replace controlled rapid fire by crack shots of the British Army.

Boyle knew minus 10 about military strategy. But he knew a 100 plus about weapons. As a visionary, he was convinced that machine guns would soon dominate the battlefields.

The departure date for his unit was scheduled for October 10, 1914. They were on one of the last steamers of the season before the winter ice choked the Yukon River closed for the next six months.

A few days before, Boyle had attended a reception and his wistful comments were recorded in the *Dawson Daily News*, October 7, 1914: "If I thought myself a better fighter than this bunch I would leave them home and go myself. But I am sure they will be a credit to the Yukon and am only too glad to do what I can to aid the cause."

Early on October 10, the day the contingent departed, Joe Boyle's Canadian Number Two dredge mysteriously began taking on water and quickly sank in some 20 feet of water opposite the Bear Creek bluff.



Boyle was always hands-on in any emergency. He spent most of the day at the accident scene ensuring that everything that could be done was done to prevent additional damage. But nothing more could be done.

He went to Dawson and was on the wharf to give a bittersweet send off to his boys in the khaki uniforms he had bought them.

It was a forlorn and sad man who wanted to be going to war with his brave volunteers--not stranded in the moribund Dawson and facing the accident of his super dredge, a production deficit and wrestling with the mounting financial obligations and legal frustrations

His machine-gun battery, however, did not go to Europe immediately but would be condemned to Vancouver's Hastings Park that had been converted into a military camp until the summer of 1915. The unit didn't see action until late 1916. Ultimately, the machine-gun section was broken up and its identity destroyed, which must have broken Joe's heart. His visions of a northern band of brothers fiercely attacking the hated enemy were shattered.

But the one consolation that made him proud was his battalion of Klondikers became the most heavily decorated group of fighters in the Canadian Army; over 60 percent of

the men received medals for bravery. By August, 1919, only three of the original volunteers had chosen to return to live in the Klondike.

Boyle was like a caged lion in his Bear Creek den, grubbing for gold when older and less fit men were off to war where he wanted to be.

The sinking of Canadian Number Two had cut gold production by more than 20 percent. The next summer, 1915, as crews attempted to right the overturned vessel, the machine inexplicably toppled again. The crew foreman was killed and three helpers were injured. A short while later, the plant generating steam power and heat for the Bear Creek operation and Dawson City burned down for no apparent reason.

To add insult to injury, he learned that George Black had been given leave from his duties as Commissioner of the Yukon to organize a Yukon infantry company to fight in France. The 43-year-old Black was no spring chicken.

One day in mid-July, 1916, Boyle shed his coat of responsibilities and slipped quietly away, never to return to the Klondike. He left under the pretense of a business trip to London regarding the building of a gold dredge for a Russian venture. He made a brief stopover in Woodstock and departed for Europe where he visited with the remnants of his machine-gun unit.

Boyle's contribution to the war effort in the form of a machine-gun battery paid off. In September, 1916, he was gazetted in Ottawa as an honorary lieutenant colonel in the Canadian military. But Boyle couldn't be supervised and the Canadians couldn't rein him in. He was finally denounced as a man operating independently and without Canadian authority.

He was nothing more than a civilian dashing around Europe in a costume, a role he played to the hilt.

Henceforth, he was never seen out of his uniform. The King of the Klondike spent the rest of his life living up to his reputation as a bold sourdough and entrepreneur who feared nothing, obeyed nobody and dared everything.

Among many incredible feats, he rescued and returned to Rumania its currency, bound archival material and perhaps the Crown jewels, all taken to Moscow during the upheaval of the Bolshevik Revolution.

Boyle became a confidant to Queen Marie of Rumania, granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Legend hints that Boyle and Queen Marie were romantically linked. But it is only speculation. It is conceivable that her adoration may simply have been an expression of love for a man who appeared out of nowhere when the allies were leaving her. He was her rock, the genie who emerged from the bottle in the nick of time and

magically saved the country, its belongings and a group of Rumanians held hostage by the enemy.

Boyle could be tender, compassionate and generous but he didn't suffer fools easily. Neither did he make time for personal intimacies. While he had the charisma to make friends out of business enemies following nasty court battles, he was aloof and often uncharitable with his own kith and kin.

He supposedly wrote one letter to his wife Elma Louise who tried repeatedly to communicate with him to no avail. Her fate is unknown.

Boyle had sent Flora on a world tour. Instead of returning to Dawson with her traveling escort, Flora landed in New York City where she had contacts through the Boyle family.

A cold relationship had developed between father and son. Joe Junior had to take over the active management of the Boyle affairs in the Klondike. He, like Elma Louise, met with silence once his father had plunged into his new wartime adventures and was hobnobbing with royalty.

Boyle had suffered a stroke in 1919 and died of heart failure in April, 1923. He was 55 years old. His candle burnt out at the home of his old Klondike chum, Ted Brendenberg in Hampton Hill, Middlesex, England. There he was buried. The family made no concentrated effort to bring his remains home.

In fact, Joe Junior's brusque directions to Brendenberg were basically, "throw him in a grave and send me the bill".

It was at the request of his daughter Flora Alexander Boyle Frisch, who had worshipped her father mostly from afar, and the efforts of Leonard Taylor, author of **The Sourdough and the Queen**, that Boyle's remains were removed from his English grave and moved to Woodstock for interment in 1983—sixty years after his death.

The Ontario city treasures the memory of the true Canadian hero. While he was ignored in his own land as so many "prophets" are, he was decorated in four other countries.

The Russians decorated him with the Order of St. Anne and the Order of St. Vladimir; France awarded him the Croix de Guerre; Britain gave him the Distinguished Service Order; and Romania went all out with the Crown, Grand Cross and Star.

Canada wouldn't decorate him in light of the fact that the Canadian army had tried taking away his uniform and his rank while bureaucrats were trying to order him home to Canada. Boyle went his own way doing what he believed was right and what he believed needed doing.

During his eclectic career he circulated comfortably at any level of society: sailor, racetrack bookie, gambler, entrepreneur, boxer, newspaper sports writer, dog musher, goldseeker, mining magnate, Stanley Cup challenger and a contender in the sedate boardrooms of the high-rolling, risky financial and political world.

Then he catapulted into the First World War at the advanced age of 49 as a de facto colonel in the Canadian militia. He was a loose cannon who couldn't be supervised. He turned into an unauthorized spy and a royal confidant and was tagged the Saviour of Rumania.

Joe Boyle lived hard and fast. He had presence to play the game to its fullest. He was a dominant personality and just as comfortable in a formal, dignified atmosphere of a courtroom full of black-robed judges and lawyers as he was chatting and telling tales with sourdoughs in a gold rush cabin or keeping the peace for his friend Swiftwater Bill in a rowdy Dawson City saloon.

It's amazing how one man could have accomplished so much in a short lifetime that spanned only 55 years.

War, for sure, was a chilling word, even in Dawson City located weeks of travel from the battle fronts. But war sparked Boyle's imagination. He needed new excitement in his life. While in Europe, Boyle found the new stimulation he sought to keep life interesting, meaningful. But that is the second half of Boyle's life story.

How much gold Joe Boyle personally gouged from the bed of the famous Klondike River Valley before fateful circumstances led him down another path is unknown. The belief is that he had already personally amassed a fortune of at least \$13 million when he left the Klondike and that he was only getting started. He was potentially one of the richest men in the world.

While Boyle always thought of himself as a Klondiker and longed to return to the Yukon, fate intervened again and prevented his homecoming.

Joe Boyle, the King of the Klondike, was inducted into the Yukon Prospectors' Association's Honour Roll in 1988. His name is engraved in the base of the bronze prospector statue that watches over downtown Whitehorse from Main Street and Third Avenue. His name is also inscribed on a brass plate attached to the Hall of Fame artpiece on display in the foyer of the Yukon government administration building.

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(Information for this article relied on *The Klondike's Boyle: A National Hero* by Les McLaughlin, *Whitehorse Star*, October 26, 2001; Joe Boyle Timeline, Woodstock (Ontario) Public Library on-line; **Brother, Here's a Man! The Saga of Klondike Boyle** by Kim Beattie, MacMillan of New York, 1940; **The Gold Hustlers** by Lewis Green, Alaska Northwest Publishing Co. 1977; *Klondike Boyle* by Thomas Ainsworth, *Western Miner & Oil Review*, October, 1962; Dictionary of Canadian Biography, on-line, Joe Boyle by William Rodney and Clifford Sifton by David Hall; **Klondike Joe Boyle: Heroic Adventures from Gold Fields to Battlefields** by Stan Suerwein, Altitude Green Tree Program, 2003; **Joe Boyle: King of the Klondike** by William Rodney, McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1974; **The Sourdough & the Queen: The Many Lives of Klondike Joe Boyle** by Leonard W. Taylor, Methuen, 1983; **Prisoners of the North** by Pierre Berton, Doubleday, 2004.)

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