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John McIntyre
By Dick McKenna

On July 6th 1898 John McIntyre discovered and staked the Copper King Claim located in the Whitehorse Copper Belt. The Copper King was not only the first claim staked in the mineral belt but it was also the first one to become a mine. It's first shipment of 9 tons of high grade making railhead as soon as the railway was finished to Whitehorse in 1900. Be it luck or good judgement (probably a little of both), it turned out that the Copper King lived up to it's name by becoming not the biggest, but the richest by far, of the early copper belt producers.

McIntyre was born in Pembroke Ontario and in 1895 he began his life in the northland, arriving at Saint Michael Alaska at the mouth of the Yukon River via ocean vessel out of San Francisco. From there he "prospected and worked" his way up river arriving in Circle Alaska in 1897. In 1898 oddly enough, while hordes of stampeders were pouring themselves down river towards Dawson, McIntyre was still working his way up river finally making Whitehorse in July of '98 whereupon he staked his Copper King.

Shortly after staking the Copper King, McIntyre sold half interest for \$1000 to Kentucky man William P. Grainger and together, using hand steels and dynamite, the two new partners began to develop the Yukon's first hardrock mine. McIntyre and Grainger's hard work, faith and perseverance in proving that hardrock mining in the Yukon could be a paying proposition encouraged others to develop their copper belt properties. Due to their ground breaking work both of these pioneers were looked upon with high esteem and honour by the locals of Whitehorse for their remaining years. Which were unfortunately too few.

In late 1902, intending to earn some much needed capitol, McIntyre hired on with the Northern Service as a mail carrier on the Atlin to Log Cabin run. On the 29th of November McIntyre and fellow carrier Joseph Abbey along with two dog teams and mail left Atlin for Log Cabin. When the two had not reached their destination within reasonable time a search party was sent out. The sled tracks were followed to Golden Gate Channel on Taku Inlet where Abbey's hat and later the two dog teams (frozen solid) and sleds were found under the ice. The exact fate of McIntyre and Abbey remained a mystery until the following May when their bodies were found in a nearby shallow bay.

It was said that "there was nothing in the known circumstances to explain the tragic results". "Mr. Abbey was on the run last year and was thoroughly familiar with the route." and "Mr, McIntyre was an old hat at this sort of work, but was new on this route....All that can certainly be known is that both men had many times previously been in worse difficulties and got themselves and their dogs out none the worse". McIntyre and Abbey's remains were laid to final rest in the Atlin B.C. Pioneer Cemetery. John McIntyre's only known relative

was a sister in San Bernedino California.

Shortly after his death local peak Mount McIntyre was named in his honour and later McIntyre residential subdivision in Whitehorse. See William Preston Grainger.

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