

WILLIAM OGILVIE: DOMINION SURVEYOR MADE ORDER OUT OF CHAOS by Jane Gaffin

(Information for this piece relied on **Prelude to Bonanza** by Allen Wright, 1976, reprinted by Studio North, 1992; **Metals and Men** by Donat Marc LeBourdais, McClelland & Stewart, 1957; **Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush 1896-1899** by Pierre Berton, McClelland & Stewart, revised 1987; **Distant Justice: Policing the Alaskan Frontier** by William R. Hunt, University of Oklahoma Press, 1987; **North of 53: The Wild Days of the Alaska-Yukon Mining Frontier, 1870 to 1914** by William R. Hunt, Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974; **The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909** by David Morrison, University of Toronto Press, 1968; **The Boundary Hunters: Surveying the 141st Meridian and the Alaska Panhandle** by Lewis Green, University of British Columbia Press, 1982; **Early Days on the Yukon** by William Ogilvie, Thornburn & Abbott, 1913; **Information Respecting the Yukon District**, from reports of William Ogilvie and other sources, Government Printing Bureau, 1897; and Government of Canada Website www.ourroots.ca.)

William Ogilvie (Honour Roll) was as distinguished in his profession as a Dominion land surveyor as his government colleagues were in the field of geology. While his hard labour as a salaried government employee didn't garner much monetary wealth, he did earn a rich legacy as one of the most outstanding figures in early Yukon history.

In 1887, Ogilvie was chosen to travel into the Yukon District with George Mercer Dawson (Honour Roll) and Richard George McConnell (Honour Roll) with the expressed purpose of exploring the portion of Canada's Northwest Territories drained by the Yukon River.

Dr. Dawson devoted one whole field season to his prescribed assignment while Ogilvie spent nearly two years at his. They gathered geological, topographical and general information with respect to the land adjacent to the 141st meridian.

The imaginary line of longitude had been earlier designated by the Treaty of St. Petersburg, Russia, as the boundary line running from the vicinity of 18,000-foot Mount St. Elias to the Arctic Ocean and dividing Alaska from the British Yukon District.

In 1869--two years after the Alaska purchase--the San Francisco-based owners of the newly-formed Alaska Commercial Company exercised their influence through political connections in Washington, D.C., and the U.S. government was convinced to conduct another boundary survey of the lower Yukon River valley.

This spat was considered resolved between Great Britain and Russia in 1825. But 44 years later, calculations made by Captain Charles Raymond of the U.S. Corps of Engineers determined that Hudson's Bay Fur Company's Fort Yukon on the Arctic Circle was actually inside the American side of the border.

"As soon as practicable after this notice the post was moved up the Porcupine River far enough, it was thought, to place it in British territory," related Ogilvie in **Early Days in the Yukon**.

"(B)ut owing to some mistake somewhere it was not moved far enough, and when the position of the International Boundary Line was approximately determined on the Porcupine (River) in 1889, it was found to be still in American territory; following which (Rampart House) was abandoned and the Hudson's Bay Company withdrew altogether from the Yukon valley."

In 1877, the Canadian government delegated Joseph Hunter, a civil engineer based in Victoria, British Columbia, to make a partial survey of the Stikine River and mark the boundary line. His determination was only a small discrepancy favouring Canada when the line was eventually fixed.

In 1883, Lt. Frederick Schwatka of the U.S. cavalry was first to descend the Yukon River from head to its mouth. One of his duties was to roughly determine the position of the 141st meridian. His location was off by about 12 miles.

Then came Ogilvie in 1887 for the purpose of making as definite a location as possible. He was a first-class engineer and surveyor, fastidious in record-keeping, and renowned for his incorruptible honesty and integrity. He never tainted himself with any conflict of interest, or at least none anybody discerned.

The demarcation between the United States and Canada along the Alaska border proved to be the toughest and most controversial boundary drawn between the two countries. And the northern conditions were extremely brutal. It was nearly 100 years after the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1825 when the damned thing was finally settled. Until 1920, the two governments observed a "working arrangement between conflicting interests", known as a *modus vivendi*.

Ogilvie's survey would be the first direct attempt to fix the boundary line with any degree of precision and an extended reference to it, as well as provide a detailed account of the methods he used. But, at the relevant time, the only "reliable" information he had to work with on the upper Yukon basin was Schwatka's reports and maps.

Thomas White, Conservative Minister of the Interior, organized the heralded Dawson-McConnell-Ogilvie expedition from the nation's capital of Ottawa, Ontario.

Ogilvie was to determine the approximate location of the boundary between Alaska and the Canadian Territories eastward by conducting an instrumental-measured traverse of the route from the head of the Lynn Canal to the Lewes (Yukon) River and along the line of the river to the 141st meridian.

At that spot, he would make arrangement to winter. In the spring and summer of 1888 he would continue his surveys north and eastward to the Mackenzie and up that river toward southern Canada to connect with previously surveyed lines at Lake Athabasca.

The Yukon District--which did not become its own entity until June 13, 1898--is shaped like a slice of pie. Until losing land mass when measured in metric, the area was 207,076 square miles of territory, divided from Alaska on the west by the 141st meridian of west longitude, and from British Columbia on the south by the 60th parallel of north latitude, thus the phrase "North of 60".

To the east, the Mackenzie and Richardson mountain ranges separate the Yukon from the District of Mackenzie of the Northwest Territories. The land stretches north, narrowing to a crow-flying distance of 120 miles along the Arctic Ocean. Other than that remote bit of water, the Yukon is land-locked and reliant on Alaska or British Columbia for deep-sea ports.

The Yukon is cut diagonally by North America's fifth largest water basin. The Yukon River meanders through the girth of the Yukon Territory for over 720 miles in Canada and about 1,265 miles in Alaska before emptying into the Bering Sea at Norton Sound near the important native village of St. Michael's.

In Ogilvie's days, the main highway for travel in both the Yukon and Alaska territories was the 2,000-mile-long river. Its headwaters are inside Canadian jurisdiction but only 20 miles from tidewater. With Haines Mission and Dyea Inlet on the Lynn Canal in Alaska meant the Chilkoot Pass or the White Pass of the Coast Mountains had to be scaled to access the beginning of the "highway".

Ogilvie probably only intended to explore the Yukon and survey the International Boundary during the years 1887-88. But he was destined to return several times to take care of important matters because he was respected for a squeaky clean name that was equated with justice, fairness and common sense.

He was home in Ottawa in 1889, then returned north in 1893 to concentrate on the Alaska Panhandle region around Juneau. Bedraggled, he came out from one of his surveys in March, 1895, to hear his youngest son had died on January 20 after a lingering illness. He went home distressed, only to be convinced, against his will, to return to the Yukon in 1896. He departed the territory in 1897 via the St. Michael's route, arriving on July 14 in San Francisco

on Alaska Commercial Company's *Excelsior* that was carrying the first large shipment of Klondike gold.

In the last days of September, he was called to Vancouver to meet Clifford Sifton, the new Liberal Minister of the Interior. With him was Major James Morrow Walsh, the 53-year-old ex-Mountie and former military officer, who was newly appointed as first Commissioner of the Yukon Territory, and his entourage of officers hired to accompany him to Dawson City.

Ogilvie escorted them north as far as Tagish Lake, where the party had to winter. Freeze-up had closed the navigation system. Some say Walsh tarried too long before leaving Ottawa because he was terrified of what faced him in Dawson.

Ogilvie finally reached Ottawa in mid-December, 1897, wrote a Yukon guide book for amateur Klondike stampeders, and was ultimately sent back to Dawson City. He replaced Walsh as the Commissioner. Ogilvie waded around in a cesspool of politics and corruption from 1898 to 1901 in the onerous administrative role.

Despite a 1900 Citizens' Committee mass meeting calling for his dismissal, he managed to come out of the political muck with his reputation intact, partially due to a miracle and partially due to glossing his name with his own indisputable survey reports and memoirs.

Ogilvie, who spent the majority of his career as a civil servant with the department of the Interior, was born in Ottawa, Ontario, on April 7, 1846. His Irish father James Ogilvie was from Belfast and his mother Margaret Halliday Ogilvie was from Peebles, Scotland.

Young Ogilvie received his education in Ottawa public schools. At age 20, he was articling under prominent land surveyor Robert Sparks. On March 8, 1872, Ogilvie and his mentor's sister Mary Ann Sparks were married; the couple had at least three sons.

Ogilvie was admitted as a Provincial Land Surveyor on July 12, 1869, and practiced his profession in Ottawa. Then, on April 12, 1872, he obtained his commission as a Dominion Land Surveyor (DLS) and was employed by the Dominion government's department of the Interior in 1875.

In 1880-81, he was in the west assisting with subdividing prairie farmland and surveying the Saskatchewan-Alberta border. He also did some work in Alberta and British Columbia. By 1883, the prairie work had slackened, and the survey branch was reorganized. The men were offered opportunities to combine surveying with exploration.

When the Yukon Expedition was proposed for the far northwest, Ogilvie's track record and enthusiasm for the novel task made him a prime candidate to carry out topographical surveys that would provide scientists with an accurate base for their geological mapping. A completed survey would result in a vast repository of new knowledge about the area's geography, plus provide an invaluable set of detailed maps that would form a fairly accurate base for further surveys.

The party departed Ottawa on April 22, 1887. They journeyed to the province of British Columbia on the Canadian Pacific rail and on up the coast by Alaska mail steamship.

The two parties--one led by Dawson, the other by McConnell--disembarked at Wrangell, Alaska, at the mouth of the Stikine River on May 18; the Ogilvie-led party continued up the coast. On May 24, 1887, they landed at Haines Mission, an Indian village 16 miles southwest of Dyea Inlet on the Lynn Canal.

Ogilvie's main focus was getting over the 3,739-foot Chilkoot Pass with seven tons of *impedimentia* that consisted of two Peterborough canoes, instruments, baggage and provisions. Among his treasured paraphernalia was an Ideal camera and lenses worth \$72.

At Mission, he met with disturbing news about Indian trouble in the neck of the woods where he was headed. Ogilvie surmised from previous experience with natives that the story may be overblown and decided the only way to learn the truth was to forge ahead.

" *Happily the whole story proved to be untrue,*" said Ogilvie. He subsequently learned that the miner who spun the yarn was the troublemaker who had been sentenced to banishment from the Stewart River camp by a miners' meeting.

While waiting out foul weather, the Ogilvie party arranged transport of their 120 packs the 16 miles to Dyea Inlet. They secured the services of a trader's two boats that were towed by the U.S. Navy's gunboat *Pinta*, under command of Captain Newell who called at Mission a few days after the surveyors arrived.

On June 2, 1887, a survey was made to the head of Dyea Inlet. Then Commander Newell assisted in making arrangements to get the party's goods over Chilkoot Pass with Indian packers. They refused to carry for white men to Lindeman Lake for less than \$20 a hundred pounds.

" *These Indians are perfectly heartless,*" fumed Ogilvie, whose natural leadership instinct managed to bring some order to the formidable situation.

"They will not render even the smallest aid to each other without payment...much less to a white man."

The chief was reminded that Newell's presence was to ensure the party's safe passage through the country, otherwise, the commander threatened that punishment would befall the Indians. After much palaver, the Indians consented to a price of \$10 per hundred weight to the summit, which was about two-thirds of the distance. By far, this portion would prove to be the hardest part of the route because of the thick woods and steep, rocky climb.

Of the 138 inhabitants at Dyea, an Indian word signifying "carrying place", four were Caucasians. Mr. and Mrs. John Jerome Healy and George Dickson were merchants supplying miners entering the country with necessary goods which might constitute anything in view of Healy's illustrious background as a soldier, Indian scout, prospector, trapper and whiskey-trader when he ran Fort Whoop-Up in southern Alberta. He was heard to have sold a concoction of whiskey, red pepper, Jamaican ginger and water to the Indians in Montana near the Canadian border. The Healys and Dickson, who had a good deal of influence with the coast Indians, were quite helpful in getting the Ogilvie outfit in motion.

The fourth white person living among the natives was George Washington Carmack (Hall of Fame). He was closely associated with the interior Tagish Indians, often called Sticks because they were people living in the forests. However, the Sticks were afraid to do anything that might upset the coastal Chilkoots, who held a firm grip to trading rights and access over the Chilkoot Pass.

Ogilvie hired Carmack, who had nurtured a reputation for telling untruths. But he possessed a limited command of the Indians' language and held considerable influence over them. A good deal of assistance came forward from Carmack's friends Tagish Charlie (Hall of Fame) and his cousin Skookum Jim Mason (Hall of Fame), who proved reliable and handy. Skookum Jim knew the country and was helpful communicating in his mixture of Chinook and broken English.

Jim deserved his nickname, meaning "strong", said Ogilvie. He packed an impressive 156 pounds of bacon over the pass in a single carry. "This might be considered a heavy load anywhere on any road, but over the stony moraine of a glacier, as the first half of the distance is, and then up a steep pass, climbing more than 3,000 feet in six or seven miles...certainly is a stiff test of strength and endurance," contended the surveyor.

On June 6, 1887, while Ogilvie effected a survey, 120 men, women and children set out for the summit with the supplies. Each was given a ticket on which was inscribed the contents and weight of the burden and the information noted in a journal. Some claimed to have lost the ticket which had to be produced

to receive pay. They wanted a duplicate in hopes of duping the white men for double pay. Ogilvie's assistant was no dummy and quickly discovered their cunning.

"Of all the Indians who came to the summit with packs, only four or five could be induced to remain and pack down to the lake, although I was paying them at the rate of \$4 per hundred pounds," wrote Ogilvie, who credited Jim as aiding indirectly in influencing the Indians to come to his relief. *"After one trip down only two men remained, and they only in hopes of stealing something."*

Ogilvie had heard rumours about another pass, lower in elevation. While he was busy on the 35-mile-long Chilkoot Trail, he arranged for 65-year-old Captain Billy Moore to undertake an investigation of the other pass, which Ogilvie subsequently named "White" in honour of the Minister of the Interior who spearheaded the expedition.

Moore, a steamboat pilot, had supplied goods in the mid-1870s to gold miners on Cassiar creeks in northern British Columbia. He had followed gold stampedes across North and South America since the California gold rush of 1849.

His guide was Skookum Jim who had traipsed the pass before. He dared to go with Moore, knowing full well his actions would raise ire should the coastal Chilkoots get wind of an interior Indian showing a white man another entrance into the country.

The White Pass was found to be 45 miles long, or 10 miles longer than the Chilkoot. But White Pass was not nearly as steep. It was better suited for pack animals, despite its precipitous hillsides, rocky canyons and boggy ground.

It was late June before Ogilvie's goods were laid out on the shore of Bennett Lake and July 11 before they whip-sawed enough lumber to build a large boat in which to haul all their supplies down the Yukon River to the Alaska border. The 18-and-19-foot Peterboroughs, awkward to wrestle over the pass, could not be used for haulage as those craft had to be free for survey work.

Since Ogilvie's main purpose was to accurately locate the 141st meridian, it was imperative that he know his approximate position at all times in order to determine when he was close to the boundary. This required the survey to start at a well-defined point in latitude and longitude. Fortunately, such a point was available on the Chilkat River.

In 1869, a distinguished American astronomer, Professor George Davidson, had built an observatory from which to view a total eclipse of the sun. In the course of his work, the location of the observatory had been established with precision at Pyramid Island.

There, Ogilvie had begun his survey. He carried it over from the peninsula to Chilkoot Inlet at Haines Mission, across to the mouth of Dyea Inlet, up it, and through the Chilkoot Pass at its head to the summit, doing locations as he went around the noble peaks.

He surveyed his way downriver to the Stewart and to Fort Reliance, not a real "fortress" but rather a trading post, or general store, which was about six miles downriver from the mouth of the Klondike River. Reliance was the "Mile 0" point of reference on the Yukon River used for measuring distances to other locales.

On September 7, he reached Fortymile where Arthur Harper and Jack McQuesten had moved a trading station from the mouth of the Stewart River to be near where most of the miners had gone in 1886. Harper had pointed prospectors Henry Madison and Howard Franklin in the direction of Fortymile River where they made the first coarse gold discovery in the Yukon.

As soon as news of coarse gold spread to the other camps, where nothing but fine and flour gold had been found, the miners dashed off to Fortymile diggings.

Fortymile was so named because the distance was roughly 40 miles downstream from Fort Reliance; in turn, Sixtymile River was reckoned to be 60 miles upstream from Reliance.

Eight years later, in 1894, Arthur Harper and Joe Ladue, a New York-born French Canadian, would establish the Sixtymile Trading Post on the large island out in the Yukon River, opposite the mouth of Sixtymile River. They wanted to be nearer the ever-increasing droves of gold-fever lunatics who were flooding into the Sixtymile area.

Soon, the merchants renamed the place Ogilvie for the respected surveyor who was fixing the Yukon-Alaska boundary line in the Fortymile district. Ogilvie, the only government official visible with authority, was doing double-duty. He had to exercise his knack for making order out of madness by settling miners' beefs over gold properties the best he could in light of inadequate mining regulations.

About 300 men were working the Fortymile area when Ogilvie arrived in 1887. But there would only be sufficient provisions to enable one-third of the population to overwinter; the other 200 men would return to the coast, most converging on Juneau, Alaska.

Ogilvie arranged with Harper and McQuesten for his winter supplies and the hiring of Indian assistants to journey down the Yukon River to the confluence of the Porcupine River near Fort Yukon on the Arctic Circle and up the Porcupine

to its head. A member of Ogilvie's survey party, F.F. Sparks, found the source of the Porcupine to be a small hot spring.

When Ogilvie completed his lunar observations, a resultant position was marked by cutting a line through the woods north and south of the Yukon River for quite a distance, then he made a survey up the Fortymile River and marked the boundary line on it.

Ogilvie's task was finished. It was time to return to Ottawa and report to Thomas White, the Minister of the Interior. In early March, 1888, he started preparations for his journey and leaked out word that he required native guides.

His departure was bittersweet. He was glad to be homeward-bound, though it was still 2,500 miles to the nearest railroad that led to Ottawa. Conversely, he regretted leaving the country where he had made many fast friends, specifically the likes of the legendary Arthur Harper and Jack McQuesten. Unknown at the time, Ogilvie would be back.

When Ogilvie reported to the Minister of the Interior in 1889, he presented his survey results as well as copious pages of miners' complaints and the changes they felt should be implemented in the Yukon District.

Most of the notes were generated from impromptu discussions staged in Ogilvie's make-shift camp set up on the Alaska-Yukon boundary during the winter of 1887-88. Many miners called in hopes of getting the ear of the only government representative in the area.

In his inimitable fashion, Ogilvie meticulously recorded the oft-conflicting opinions of each visitor. "*The best I could do was to hear as patiently as possible the views of all,*" he commented.

The principal complaint Ogilvie heard was about the inadequacy of the mining regulations. Such as they were, the regs were formulated by the department of the Interior, housed in the far-away capital of Ottawa, and administered by civil servants who didn't give a whit nor have an understanding of conditions in the raw and faraway Yukon District.

A miner could only stake one mining claim which was limited to 100 square feet of area. All were united in opinion that the restricted dimensions could not be economically mined because of technical problems. The Yukon was a remote region, the field season short, mining costs high, and the working conditions arduous at the best of times.

But the rub was how to fix the problem. The miners differed widely in opinions about the approach to changing the mining laws. The great majority of

men who had worked previously in American mining camps pointed out that the laws in the United States were much more accommodating than in Canada.

The American contingent at Fortymile vociferously supported a system of local control for the Yukon creeks while the Canadians were more conditioned to listening to their distant masters and did not favour removing Dominion authority. They did, however, want an increase in the size of individual mining claims.

Ogilvie spent considerable time in discussions with the Minister of the Interior and his deputy minister, A.M. (Alexander Mackinnon) Burgess. But the government officials, insulated from the problem, deferred taking action.

The country was in a very unsettled state, and Canadian mining laws were unsatisfactory--even to the Canadians. Yet any attempt to take charge of affairs on the British side of the boundary line could hinder prospecting by driving most prospectors to the American side, advised Ogilvie.

He theorized that the prospectors would stay away until something very rich lured them back to Canada, where the chance of making an economic strike would be hindered if the government exercised authority too early.

Ogilvie's instructions were to maintain a watchful eye as events unfolded in the remote land and when he thought the time was ripe, he would advise Ottawa and the politicians would act accordingly.

Many of the American miners believed Ogilvie's boundary line should be confirmed. It didn't take long for their petition to bring results in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Congress approved President Grover Cleveland's request for \$20,000 to check Ogilvie's survey work on the Yukon River and determine the location of the boundary on the Porcupine River. Canada offered full co-operation. Ogilvie graciously prepared a full report of his work to guide the Americans.

The job was assigned to the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey. Two survey parties sailed from San Francisco to St. Michael's in June, 1889. One party was under direction of John E. McGrath, who was to camp on the Yukon River as close as possible to the intersection of the 141st meridian and repeat Ogilvie's operation; the other party was led by J. Henry Turner, who would make independent observations of the Porcupine River to locate the boundary there.

Due to some inexperienced surveyors, the expedition was fraught with casualties and sundry logistical snarls. The boundary dispute was destined to go on *ad nauseam*.

But Ogilvie came out on top. He was recognized for carrying out the first accurate survey from the Lynn Canal into the interior of the Yukon Territory and giving the Geological Survey of Canada an exact base for geological mapping.

The completion of the boundary survey caused another wrinkle. While it ended the uncertainty of claim locations along the border, after the line was run, some of the richest claims the Americans assumed were in Alaska actually belonged in Canada.

As soon as the North West Mounted Police arrived on the scene, they informed the effected American owners that their ground was subject to Canadian mining laws. A few argued on the basis the boundary survey was not a joint effort and a possibility of error still existed. The police didn't listen to the rubbish. The protesters had to adhere to Canadian laws or forfeit their mining claims. The majority paid their \$15 fees without grumbling and resumed digging.

Deputy minister Burgess wanted to appoint Ogilvie to an everything-rolled-into-one governor's position to administer laws and affairs in the Yukon. Ogilvie declined. He was grieving his son's death and wanted to spend time with the other two sons. There is no mention of what has happened to his wife, Mary, during Ogilvie's many prolonged absences from home.

In 1895, Inspector Charles Constantine was assigned the strenuous all-encompassing job that ultimately took its toll on his health. For some reason, Ottawa acted with abnormal haste on his recommendations to establish controls in the Yukon. Constantine, whose biography and family genealogy are curiously enigmatic secrets, was the special man assigned to be Commanding Officer in charge of 19 police, though he demanded a bigger force, and would represent the Canadian government as magistrate, gold commissioner, land agent and customs collector.

Ogilvie and Constantine harboured a mutual grudge against each other but were civil when they met again at Fortymile. Ogilvie, who had declined the agent's job, had trumped the argument over no need for more than 20 police into an area that wasn't plagued with trouble. It irked Constantine that Ogilvie had been so influential in his meddling.

Further, Ogilvie was still incensed about Constantine causing him to have to make a life-threatening winter trip for naught. Juneau prospectors were venturing inland up the Taku River and crossing the border into Canadian territory seeking veritable riches and fame. Overzealous miners had blown golden smoke into the ear of a naïve Constantine who was on a look-see foray up the coast in June, 1894. But he hadn't yet learned the psyche of the gold miners advanced every new area explored as the next Eldorado.

Constantine got even with Ogilvie. He reported back to Ottawa that great gobs of men were going to be crossing the border into Canadian territory. This time the Ottawa powers took Constantine's word and pulled the dedicated civil servant away from his sick son's bedside in December to go on the three-month Taku River wild goose chase in the winter of 1894-95. Ogilvie's quest to find a

practical route to the interior was futile. Battered by fierce storms, the party accomplished nothing more than a traverse survey of part of the Taku River. Gaunt from hunger, the men staggered out of the secluded coastal wilds back into Juneau on March 1, 1895. Ogilvie, devastated with the news his son had died six weeks before, never forgave Constantine.

Although Ogilvie had declined Constantine's job, he found himself bending to the silver tongue of T.M. (Thomas Mayne) Daly, Jr., the new Minister of the Interior. Reluctantly, Ogilvie agreed to return to the Yukon "for one season only" to carry out the urgent task of extending the boundary survey that would hopefully resolve the prickly predicament on the creeks.

In 1895, he and his eldest son, Morley, picked up five experienced hands from the boundary commission in Victoria and entered the Yukon over the Chilkoot Pass. But they ended up meeting the harsh physical conditions garbing up in their gauntlet fur mitts and Cossack-style beaver hats with earflaps as the "one season" stretched into winter.

It had been 10 years since Henry Madison and Howard Franklin had initiated a gold rush to Fortymile. The sprawling community of several thousand hummed with miners, trappers, merchants, a barber, doctors, saloon-keepers, seamstresses and a church. The town had taken on the look of a permanent settlement.

There were several hundred log-cabin homes. Women's presence was apparent. Some windows were decorated with lace curtains and neat vegetable gardens were out back, like the one Kate McQuesten tried tilling with a moose harnessed to a plough. Garden-fresh spuds and turnips were big hits with miners on the creeks.

Suddenly, life was interrupted. Fortymile was practically abandoned. Miners made a bee-line to a new goldfield called the Klondike. It was touted as such a rich geological phenomenon that the discovery bordered on mythology. The small circular focal point, defined as the Klondike, was only 800 square miles in area.

The valley is framed on the west by the Yukon River and the north by the famous Klondike River; on the east is Dominion Creek, a principal tributary to the significant Indian River on the south.

In the centre is The Dome, later tagged King Solomon's Dome. Much of the Klondike placer gold would be recovered from six principal creeks radiating out like spokes from a wheel from the 4,000-foot (1220 m) weathered prominence that Klondikers believed concealed the legendary Mother Lode.

While most Klondike creeks are gold-bearing, some are more gold-bearing than others. The highest ranking for the amount of gold recovered on a per-foot basis was Rabbit Creek, renamed Bonanza, and its tributary Eldorado. Next was Hunker Creek that flows into the Klondike River. Gold Run and Sulphur creeks are both tributaries of Dominion Creek which flows into the Indian River.

Since most of the claims were held by foreigners who were intent on taking gold out of the Yukon, the Canadian government levied a 10 percent royalty on all the gold mined.

"This almost unheard of regulation, which came into force on September 11, 1897, stuck in the craw of Canadians and Americans alike, especially as it was increased to twenty per cent if the output of any mine exceeded five hundred dollars a week," submitted Pierre Berton in his book **Klondike**.

"As a result, every kind of deception was used to falsify the amounts being mined, so that today no true record exists of the real value of gold taken from the Klondike, and all figures showing output during the peak years can be considered low."

The Discovery claims were staked on Rabbit Creek on August 17, 1896. The mining regulations at the time had improved somewhat. The size of a claim had increased from 100 feet of 500 feet along the course of the stream, measured from the base of the hills forming the valley on one side to the base of the hills on the other.

Still, staking was limited to one claim per individual, except for a new gold discovery, in which case the staker was allowed an adjoining claim.

So it was that George Washington Carmack's name was attached to the Discovery claim and No. 1 below discovery. He was the fellow who had helped Ogilvie over the Coast Mountains in 1887; his brother-in-law Skookum Jim, who staked No. 1 above Discovery, and Jim's cousin Tagish (Dawson) Charlie, who staked No. 1 below Discovery, had both packed for Ogilvie on the Chilkoot Trail.

The Bonanza strike was only two weeks old. Although Siwash George was reputed as a liar and Fortymile miners were leery about his announcement of a big strike, already 200 claims were staked on the tributary of the Klondike River. At least 1,000 claims were anticipated to be staked on the river which would oblige 2,000 men to do the work justice.

The gold hustlers claimed that from \$100 to \$500 a day could be made off the ground prospected so far. And the integrity of the ground was assured when men worked out \$75 worth in a few hours. To boot, they found a \$12 nugget, an indicator of coarse gold and plenty of it.

Fortuitously, Ogilvie was still in the Yukon at the time of discovery. He was annoyed by the hold-up, waiting to hear something respecting the boundary commission. The last word from Ottawa had come in early summer. Negotiations were underway with the United States to form a joint U.S.-Canada commission to mark the International Boundary. Ogilvie was told to stay put and await further developments, as he was being appointed as Canada's boundary commissioner.

Unknown to him, his boundary work was finished. As of September, 1896, the commission had cratered, and would drag on until 1920 before the matter was settled permanently. Meanwhile, Ogilvie was in a quandary. Stay or go? It was late in the season and the window of opportunity to get out of the country was narrowing everyday.

He did delight at the thought of sending an electric message that should jolt the troops out of their plush chairs in Ottawa. The masters had paid little heed when he prophesied in 1888 that government officials should be alert to hear of an important mineral discovery which would generate a large influx of people into the most distant reaches of the Yukon.

The time was here and the Klondike creeks soon would teem with a mob of 40,000 to 60,000 gold-crazed maniacs and camp followers of every nationality.

He happened to be in Cudahy, where Dyea merchant John Jerome Healy operated a postal service from the North American Trading and Transportation Company. Ogilvie's letter of September 6, 1896, went downriver on the next boat, which was Alaska Commercial's little steamer, *Alice*.

Fort Cudahy and Fort Constantine were on the north side of the Fortymile River at its junction with the Yukon River. Directly across the Fortymile was the bustling town of Fortymile, where McQuesten & Co. ran the rival post for Alaska Commercial.

While waiting, not knowing if his message was deemed to receive a reply, Ogilvie busied himself surveying mining claims and the townsite of Cudahy. Then he moved across the river to make order out of the gawd-awful jumble of Fortymile.

In the event he received no instructions, his tentative plans were to head home by way of the Panhandle route. He would accompany Jack Dalton, a Haines, Alaska-based visionary who had a commercial scheme for a toll-controlled route for moving livestock herds from the coast to the interior at Selkirk, then floating the animals down the Yukon River to Dawson on scows. On his way out, Ogilvie would map the 300-mile Dalton Trail from Selkirk to Chilkat Inlet.

Surprisingly, the last boat of the season brought news that the negotiations for a joint commission had folded. Ogilvie relished his instructions to come back to Ottawa as soon as possible.

Unfortunately, an early freeze-up and unseasonable snowstorms closed river navigation prematurely. The alternate option was the folly of overland travel. "*It would require a team of eight dogs to take my outfit and my man Fawcett with our provisions and the dogs' food as far as Taiya (Dyea),*" he decided.

Good sled dogs were scarce, therefore worth a premium of up to \$125 each. The men would have to battle hazardous conditions in dangerously-cold temperatures for nearly three months. Upon reaching the coast, the sled dogs would be rendered worthless unless somebody wanted to buy the team to come into the country. Most likely, the animals would have to be destroyed.

Regardless that Ogilvie was anxious to go home, he could spend the \$1,000 government purse more wisely. His decision to remain and survey Klondike claims swept him into the maelstrom and the gold rush's dynamic history.

Ogilvie had professionally patched up the layout of Fortymile, then left the townsite in January, 1897. He went to survey the place where Joe Ladue had laid out a townsite on the east bank of the Yukon River, below the mouth of the Klondike River. He operated a sawmill, kept a saloon, serving whisky-coloured river water for 50 cents a shot, and sold postage-sized building lots for extraordinary prices.

The American-born Frenchman, who had an indomitable enthusiasm for overblowing every strike as the next Eldorado, had hit the jackpot this time.

The father of the townsite was going to immortalize himself by calling the place Ladueland, or some such thing. Ogilvie and/or Harper were influential in having the town named after the eminent director of the Geological Survey of Canada with whom Ogilvie had entered the country in 1887.

The city-to-be was named Dawson after Dr. George Dawson who didn't live long enough to visit his namesake city that became the centre of the Klondike universe; neither did Ladue live long enough to enjoy the wealth he made from his city. A few years after the Klondike madness struck, he died of a lung disease.

As is normal in hyper times, more claims than usual are staked in an irregular manner. On Bonanza and Eldorado creeks, few claims were marked with staking posts of proper size. Only an occasional claim was identified with obligatory blaze lines.

To add to the misery, many claims were intentionally or unintentionally claim-jumped. Miners were frustrated to the point of rebellion.

Luckily, Ogilvie was present to bring peace from the chaos. "*A miners' committee had undertaken to straighten out the tangle but had increased rather than lessened the turmoil,*" explained Donat Marc LeBourdais, author of **Metals and Men**.

"Someone on the committee had measured off a piece of rope, said to be fifty feet in length, with which claims on Bonanza and Eldorado were re-measured and their boundaries readjusted.

"The rope was either incorrectly measured or dishonestly used, for some stakers' locations were given to claimants whose title seemed much less valid. Others were compelled to give up claims on one part of the creek in exchange for claims on another.

"Finally, a number of stakers went to Ogilvie and asked if he would undertake a proper survey of the creeks, which he offered to do if the majority were in favour of such a course. One hundred and thirty signatures were secured and Ogilvie undertook the job, surveying 120 claims on Bonanza and 50 on Eldorado before the break-up of 1897."

In the end, he succeeded in satisfying most of the claim-owners. Yet some of the decisions Ogilvie had to make would have taxed the patience of a saint.

Spring arrived and the ice released the river of winter bondage. In July, 1897, Ogilvie took a small steamer down the Yukon River to St. Michael's, where he transferred to Alaska Commercial's ocean-going *Excelsior*. The six-member McQuesten family, the very ill Arthur Harper and one of the company owners were among the 25 passengers aboard the less-than-luxurious vessel.

Besides furs, the ship's cargo was Klondike gold. The lion's share belonged to the company; a great deal of gold belonged to McQuesten, personally. Other passengers owned lesser gold in varying amounts.

All told, the loot was worth between \$600,000 to \$700,000. When the ship docked at the foot of Market Street on July 14, 1897, the rumoured gold value had increased exponentially to \$2.5 million.

However, the *Excelsior's* arrival didn't incite as much press play as did Pacific Whaling Company's rust bucket that docked three days later in Seattle, Washington. The arrival of the *Portland*, carrying a reported "ton of Klondike gold" under protection of Wells-Faro guards, ignited the Klondike Gold Rush in earnest.

After being called on to escort a group of government dignitaries and officials to Tagish Lake, Yukon, Ogilvie finally reached Ottawa in mid-December. He wrote **The Klondike Official Guide** for Klondike stampeders to offset the error-infested "unofficial" version written by a bureaucrat who'd never seen the country. Ogilvie was besieged with every conceivable--and some not so conceivable--questions about what gold hunters could expect when joining the social crusade.

Soon, he was on his way back to Dawson City. Commissioner James Walsh only lasted two months in his job, once he arrived there. He was recalled under a cloud of wrongdoings and playing favouritism.

In August, 1898, Ogilvie was appointed to cover the post. One of his first duties was to preside over a royal commission that was investigating charges of government graft and corruption. Most of the key witnesses had gone Outside for the winter, which may account somewhat but not entirely for the commission's failure.

Most likely, scandalous political shenanigans were responsible for the inconclusive hearings.

Ogilvie endured his commissionership from 1898 to 1901. He cited "ill health" as the excuse for resigning. The hidden translation could be deciphered to mean he was "sick and tired" of overseeing a place replete with chicanery, dishonesty, fraud, deceit, lying, cheating and thieving, all protected under an umbrella of shady politics. He had to get out before he too was labelled.

Freshly resigned, Ogilvie made his exit in the summer of 1901. His escape route was on one of the regular steamer runs down the Yukon River to off-load furs and take on winter provisions at St. Michael's on Norton Sound. Somewhere along the line Ogilvie met Miss O.P. Richardson, who supposedly had been sightseeing in Dawson as part of a travel itinerary. She was on her way to St. Michael's to visit her brother, Captain Miles P. Richardson, a well-known name in Alaska chronicles.

It seems likely that Ogilvie and Captain Richardson knew each other. The Captain, who came to Alaska in 1899, was an army engineer and surveyor based at Fort Seward at Haines. He was in the road-building business and very knowledgeable about the Yukon basin.

Details are sketchy, but apparently Ogilvie and Miss Richardson had to cross Norton Sound on a small boat maybe to catch an ocean-going ship from Nome for the voyage down the west coast.

Whatever the reason, the small boat capsized. Ogilvie prevented Miss Richardson from drowning, holding on to her until help finally arrived and rescued them both.

Nearly two years later, on April 15, 1903, the two married in her hometown of Paris, Texas. Her engineer brother rose to the rank of general and became the first president of the Alaska Road Commission. Under his supervision, the gold-rush trail from Valdez to Fairbanks was upgraded to a wagon road standard in 1910 and is now known as the Richardson Highway.

Ogilvie may never have intended to return north but did go back later as a private businessman during the summers spanning 1908 to 1912. He was president and his oldest son Morley the engineer for the Yukon Basin Gold Dredging Company that mined its extensive Stewart River leases with a fair amount of success.

Over the years, much tribute has been paid to Ogilvie for his remarkable survey and exploration career. His name is attached to many landmarks.

In 1966, the Government of Canada named a range of mountains north of Dawson to honour him. The Ogilvie Mountains (NTS map 116B) encompass the headwaters of the Ogilvie and Porcupine rivers.

Ogilvie River, the north branch of the Peel River (NTS map 116M), was named after him in 1888 by Dominion Geographer J. Johnston to honour Ogilvie's great exploratory work.

Ogilvie Valley, extending northwest from Lake Laberge to Coghlan Lake (NTS map 105E), was named by Dr. George Dawson in 1887 to recognize Ogilvie for carrying out the first precise survey that provided an accurate base for geological mapping.

Ogilvie Street in downtown Whitehorse bears the name of the bigger-than-life pioneer.

Ogilvie, elected a member of the Royal Geographical Society in 1891, died in Winnipeg on November 13, 1912. He was only 66 years old. Excerpts from the *Manitoba Free Press* praised his name as synonymous with justice, equality and fair dealing. "...with great opportunities to enrich himself, he came out of the Yukon as he had gone into it--poor in pocket but rich in reputation."

His popular book, **Early Days on the Yukon**, was posthumously published in 1913 and is still in print. The short preface was written by his second wife and signed simply O.P.R. Ogilvie, whose background is as mysterious as is Ogilvie's first wife.

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

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See related articles *The Trading Trio of Arthur Harper, Al Mayo and Jack McQuesten*; *George M. Dawson: The Little Giant*; *Early Government Surveyors Left a Permanent Mark on the Yukon*; *George Washington Carmack: Co-discoverer of Bonanza Creek Gold*; *The Discovery of Gold in the Klondike*; *George Black's Greatest Legacy Was His Strong Mining Law*.