

Race to the Klondike

by Lester David

Robert Henderson had searched for it all his life, all over the world. Now, in 1896, he could hardly believe what he saw shining in the bottom of his miner's pan.

Gold!

5 Henderson scrambled back to the nearest settlement in the remote Klondike region of northwest Canada and staked a claim. He called the site Gold Bottom.

The Great Rush Begins

Henderson may have been the first to find gold. But soon, George Washington Carmack made a strike at nearby Rabbit Creek and found enough gold to make him wealthy.

10 The discoveries triggered history's greatest gold rush. People caught gold fever, then joined what became known as the "great stampede." There probably will never be another like it.

Lure of Quick Riches

The stunning news of gold flashed across the United States and Canada. Men left their homes and families, lured northward by dreams of quick riches. Never mind that the journey was dangerous, as was the Klondike itself.

15 Gold-seekers jammed ships from around the world. Thousands made the grueling trip around Cape Horn at the tip of South America and sailed up to the Gulf of Alaska.

20 An endless line of stampeders trudged over Alaska's rugged Chilkoot Pass and the somewhat easier White Pass. From Skagway and Dyea, in southeastern Alaska, they struggled inland more than 30 miles, then had to build boats that would take them to the goldfields near Dawson, more than 500 miles away. Today, a historic park and hiking trail mark the location of the Chilkoot Pass.

World's Roughest Place

Skagway was dubbed "the roughest place in the world" by Canadian North West Mounted Police. Thieves, pickpockets, gamblers and swindlers packed the town.

25 Within days of the first gold find, the area was in chaos. Towns sprung up. In six months, 500 new houses were built in Dawson, the Klondike's capital. Food and supplies became scarce, and prices shot sky high.

Sled dogs cost \$350 each and soon were unavailable. Miners were lucky to buy tired old horses. A breakfast of ham and eggs cost \$10, enough in those days to buy a fine dinner for eight back East.

Battling the Numbing Cold

30 With the risk of starvation increasing, Mounted Police ordered that every man heading for the trails must have a year's supply of provisions. This meant each had to carry hundreds of pounds of food and gear.

35 A gold-seeker who lacked a horse or sled would haul about 65 of pounds of supplies, set it down and go back for the rest. Then he'd have to dig out his first load from under the drifting snow. He'd eventually walk more than 2,500 miles to get his gear over the Chilkoot Pass.

Sometimes, the temperature plunged to 50 below, but the prospectors forged ahead. They huddled in caves during blizzards.

They Struck It Rich

Plenty of folks found pay dirt.

40 Louis Rhodes, a quiet, soft-spoken miner, recovered enough gold in just one year to enable him to live in luxury for the rest of his long life.

Charley Anderson did even better. A clever swindler convinced him to pay \$800 for a claim he said would be worth a fortune. Actually, it was considered to be a total dud. In a few months, though, Charley discovered his "worthless" claim was worth millions.

45 Then there was Alex McDonald, who took pity on a starving miner and traded a sack of flour for a claim neither thought was worth a cent. McDonald bought up several more claims like these and wound up with a bonanza of \$20 million.

Historians estimate that more than 100,000 men, as well as a large number of women, set out to find Klondike gold. Between 30,000 and 40,000 eventually got there.

50 Just two months after the first strikes, about \$5 million in gold was recovered. But by 1899, three years after it had started, the great stampede was over. All the streams had been claimed. People began leaving. Twenty years later, hastily built buildings were empty and crumbling, and machinery was rusting in the streets and canyons.

55 By 1904, \$100 million in gold had been wrested from the region. All that remains today is the memory of the last great rush for the elusive yellow metal.

A HEAVY LOAD

A gold prospector had to be well armed before heading into the Klondike. Harsh winters and scarce supplies made extra provisions valuable. Some miners carried up to 2,500 pounds of goods over the rugged trails. A typical year's supply of goods a Klondike miner might have carried:

<u>Food</u>	<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Clothing</u>
Bacon , 100 to 200 lbs.	Stove	1 heavy mackinaw coat
Flour , 400 lbs.	Miner's pan	3 suits heavy underwear
Dried fruits , 75 to 100 lbs.	Granite buckets	2 pairs heavy mackinaw trousers
Cornmeal , 50 lbs.	Tin cups and plates	12 pairs heavy wool socks
Rice , 20 to 40 lbs.	Knives, forks and spoons	6 pairs heavy wool mittens
Coffee , 10 to 25 lbs.	Coffee pot	2 heavy overshirts
Tea , 5 to 10 lbs.	Picks	2 pairs rubber boots
Sugar , 25 to 100 lbs.	Handles	2 pairs heavy shoes
Beans , 100 lbs.	Saws	6 heavy blankets
Condensed milk , 1 case	Chisels	2 rubber blankets
Salt , 10 to 15 lbs.	Hatchet	4 towels
Pepper , 1 lb.	Shovels	2 pairs overalls
Rolled oats , 25 to 50 lbs.	Drawknife	1 suit of oil clothing
Potatoes , 25 to 100 lbs.	Compass	Assorted summer clothing
Butter , 25 cans	Frying pan	
Evaporated meats	Matches	
Evaporated vegetables	Medicines	

All About the Klondyke Gold Mines

by J. Armoy Knox and J. G. Pratt

“The man who wants the Yukon gold should know what he is going to tackle before he starts. If there is an easy part of the trip I haven’t struck it yet.

“Eight of us made the trip from Juneau to Dyea, 100 miles, on the little steam launch *Alert*. The steamer *Mexico* reached Dyea the same morning with 423 men. As she drew so much water she had to stay about three miles off shore and land her passengers and freight as best she might in more or less inaccessible places on the rocky shores. Then up came the twenty-two foot tide and many poor fellows saw their entire outfits swept into the sea.

“We camped the first night at Dyea. It is a most enjoyable thing, this making camp in the snow. First you must shovel down from three to six feet to find a solid crust. Then you must go out in the snow up to your neck to find branches with which to make a bed, and then comes the hunt for a dead tree for firewood. Dinner is cooked on a small sheet-iron stove.

“Always keep an eye on the ‘grub,’ especially the bacon, for the dogs are like so many ravenous wolves, and it is not considered just the proper thing to be left without anything to eat in this frostbitten land. At night it is necessary to tie up the sacks of bacon in the trees or build trestles¹ for them. But to the trip.



“The second day we went up Dyea canon. It is only three miles long, but seems fully thirty. This is true of all distances in this country. About one hundred pounds is about all a man wants to pull in this canon, as the way is steep and the ice slippery. So camps must be made short distances apart, as you have to go over the trail several times in bringing up your outfit. Remember an ordinary outfit weighs from 500 to 800 pounds, and some of them much more.

¹**trestles:** a framework of horizontal and vertical bars used to raise something off the ground

30 “But the summit of Chilcoot Pass—that’s the place that puts the yellow fear into many
a man’s heart. Some took one look at it, sold their outfits for what they would bring and
turned back. This pass is over the ridge which skirts the coast. It is only about 1,200 feet
from base to tip, but it is almost straight up and down—a sheer steep of snow and ice.
35 There is a blizzard blowing there most of the time, and when it is at its height, no man
may cross. For days at a time the summit is impassable. An enterprising man named
Burns has rigged a windlass² and cable there, and with this he hoists up some freight at a
cent a pound.”



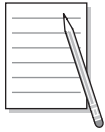
Map of the Yukon Gold Diggings

²windlass: a machine used for hoisting or hauling

Both articles, “Race to the Klondike” and “All About the Klondyke Gold Mines,” discuss the challenges faced during the Gold Rush. Compare the challenges portrayed in both articles. What were the causes of the challenges? What resulted from these challenges? Use details from **both** articles to support your answer.

In your response, be sure to

- discuss the challenges faced during the Gold Rush as portrayed in **both** articles
- explain the causes of these challenges
- explain the results of these challenges
- use details from **both** articles to support your answer



Check your writing for correct spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

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