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**A History of the Chisana Mining District, Alaska, 1890-1990**



**United States Department of the Interior**

**National Park Service  
Alaska Field Area**

**Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve**

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Alaska, 1890-1990**

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National Park Service  
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**ON MICROFILM**

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## PREFACE

Writing the history of a mining district is normally a rather straightforward process. Federal regulations stemming from the Mining Act of 1872 forced miners to document their claims in exhaustive detail. As these records are usually readily accessible, they provide an ideal basis for most studies.

The Chisana district, however, totally lacks such primary documentation. After its recording office closed in 1930, the district's papers were moved across the Wrangell Mountains to the community of Chitina. Due to that town's precipitous decline following the closure of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway in 1938, the records were subsequently transferred to Copper Center, where they were ultimately destroyed in a structural fire in the mid-1940s.

Fortunately, other research options remained available. Both the United States Geological Survey and Alaska's Territorial Department of Mines occasionally visited the area and recorded key facts about ownership and production. The district's mining activity was also thoroughly covered in local newspapers, including the *Dawson Daily News*, the *Whitehorse Weekly Star*, the *McCarthy Weekly News*, the *Chitina Leader*, and the *Cordova Daily Alaskan*. Several manuscript and oral sources were available as well.

This study is derived from those accounts.



## INTRODUCTION

Gold has always been an elusive mineral. This was especially true in Alaska, where persistent seekers followed its trail for decades. Beginning with a strike in the Silverbow Basin near Juneau in 1880, prospectors soon crossed the Coast Range and explored the upper reaches of the Yukon River. In 1886 they moved down the Yukon to the Fortymile River and, in 1893, on to Birch Creek, near Circle. Three years later, George Washington Carmack filed the first claims on Rabbit Creek, soon renamed Bonanza Creek, initiating the Yukon Territory's famed Klondike rush. Other stampedes followed, including ones to Nome in 1899 and 1900, Fairbanks in 1903, and the Iditarod in 1909. In 1913 discoveries along the northern margin of Alaska's Wrangell Mountains provoked the territory's last important rush: to the remote headwaters of the Chisana River.<sup>1</sup>

Although a relatively minor producer by world standards, the Chisana district remains interesting for several reasons. It typifies, for example, the development of placer mining in Alaska, advancing through a number of discrete stages and employing a broad range of technology and equipment. It is also unusually well preserved. A scarcity of water and an abundance of steep terrain limited hydraulic mining and prevented dredging. Its remote location helped to reduce pilfering as well. As a result, this district retains extensive evidence of its early use.<sup>2</sup>

Its rush was also quite distinctive. Unlike the stampede to Livengood, which occurred the following year, this one was widely publicized and contained a clearly international component, including members from throughout the Pacific Northwest. It was also larger. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, which had a correspondent on the scene, estimated that over eight thousand people joined the Chisana rush. Even more conservative government sources guessed that over two thousand prospectors participated. The Livengood stampede, in contrast, only attracted a few hundred individuals.<sup>3</sup>

Two ingredients contributed to the unique character of the Chisana rush. One was its timing. In 1913 most of the world was still at peace. Had the strike occurred the following year, the First World War would undoubtedly have interfered.

Transportation played an important part as well. The newly completed Copper River and Northwestern Railway and the vastly improved Valdez Trail greatly simplified the approach to the diggings. Unlike its predecessors, this strike occurred less than one hundred miles from the railhead.

To grasp the true nature of any stampede, however, it is first necessary to understand the needs and goals of the individuals who joined it. Historians, for example, have offered many explanations for the size and duration of the Klondike rush. Most have concentrated on the issues troubling American society during of the 1890s.<sup>4</sup>

The United States changed radically during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Although the nation successfully entered the modern age, it was a costly

transition, fostering the maldistribution of wealth, power, and prestige in a country that boasted egalitarian traditions.

The 1890s were a particularly trying time. The panic of 1893, for example, sharply curtailed industrial growth. It also caused thousands of bankruptcies and generated extensive unemployment. Serious differences now separated rural and urban constituencies, capital and labor, large and small manufacturers, and new immigrants from the older population.<sup>5</sup>

Farmers were probably the hardest hit. Once viewed as the standard-bearers of Jeffersonian democracy, they now received pathetic returns for their toil. They also enjoyed little protection from exploitation by the banks and railroads.<sup>6</sup>

Historian John Hicks, writing about the origins of the Populist insurgency of the 1890s, detailed the crux of the problem:

In an earlier age the hard-pressed farmers and laborers might have fled to free farms in the seemingly limitless lands of the West, but now the era of free land had passed. Where, then, might they look for help?<sup>7</sup>

Prevented from achieving prosperity at home, some of these individuals undoubtedly sought out new opportunities in the Klondike.

The Chisana stampede, however, occurred nearly a generation later under vastly different conditions. The interclass conflict which characterized the 1890s had largely dissipated by 1900. Most Americans were far more prosperous, and the agricultural sector had done especially well. Farm prices, for example, increased by nearly 50 percent between 1900 and 1910. Despite the short-lived panic of 1907, industrial workers had also benefitted. Unemployment levels had dropped and job opportunities appear to have grown. What then motivated this new generation of stampedeers?<sup>8</sup>

Many participants, both in and out of Alaska, were aging veterans of the Klondike rush. Some, like George C. Hazelet, by then a successful businessman living in Cordova, may have seen this stampede as a last grand adventure.<sup>9</sup>

The majority of stampedeers probably pursued more tangible objectives. Virtually all of the older Alaska-Yukon gold camps were now in decline. Most were also dominated by large industrial concerns, limiting the options available to individual miners. Although Alaska's gold production peaked in 1909, the day of the solitary prospector was ending.<sup>10</sup> In the Klondike it took outside investors more than ten years to capture control of the area.<sup>11</sup> The Morgan-Guggenheim Syndicate, however, dominated most of the Iditarod district after only two.<sup>12</sup>

Forced out of established diggings, prospectors sought new openings elsewhere. Some must have seen the Chisana area as their final opportunity to make a stake. That perception may also help explain the length of their stay there. All three discoverers and many early stampedeers spent the remainder of their lives in the district, eking out small but consistent incomes while continuously searching for that one last strike.

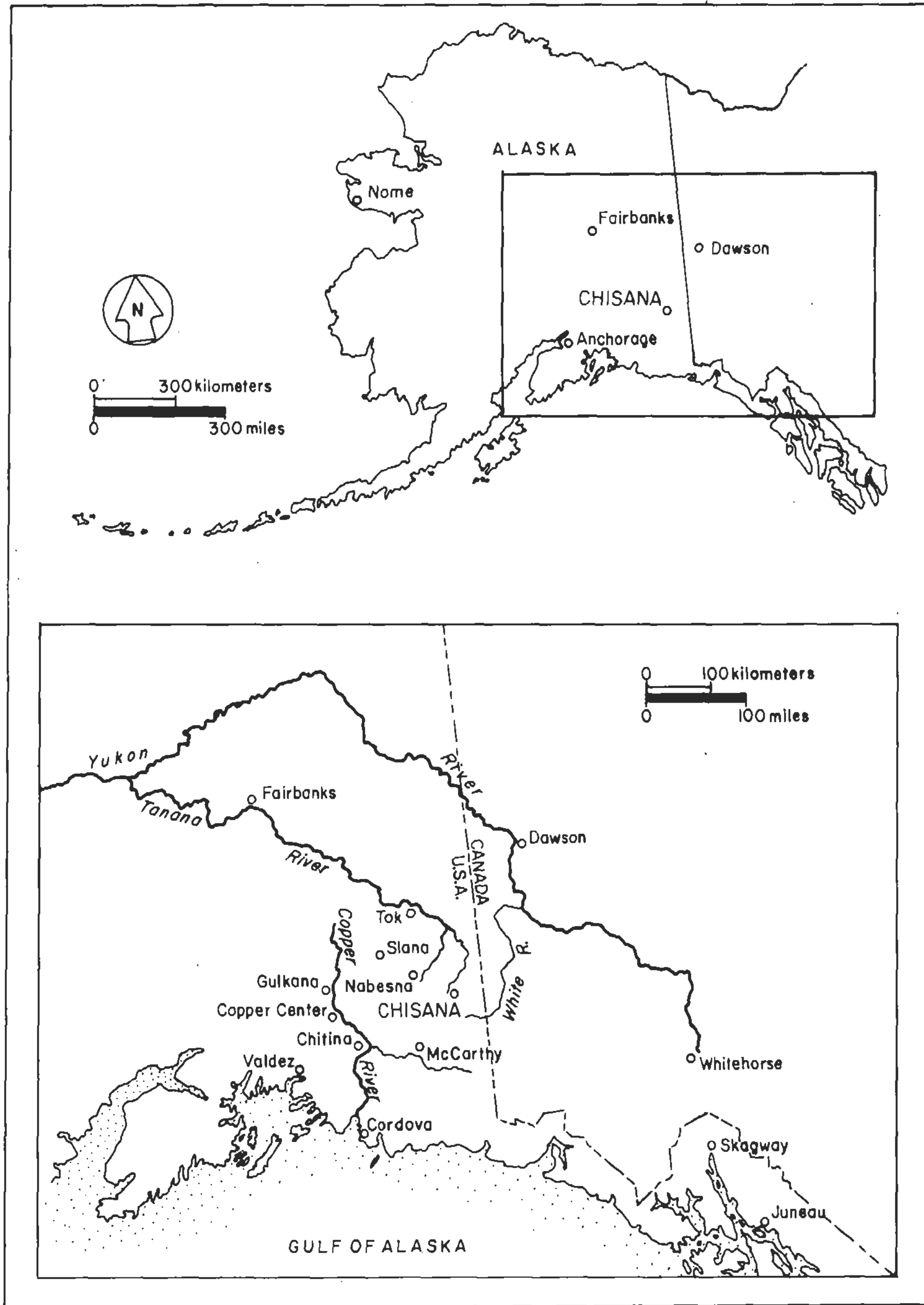


Fig. 1  
Alaska.

# CHAPTER ONE

## EXPLORATION

Prior to the arrival of white invaders, indigenous peoples held virtually all of Alaska. The greater Chisana region, for example, was shared by three Athabascan groups.<sup>1</sup> The Ahtna ranged east from the community of Batzulnetas, often reaching the Nabesna River; the Southern Tutchone held the lower and middle reaches of the White River, occasionally ascending Beaver Creek; and the Upper Tanana controlled the territory surrounding the Chisana River. The Tanana people also established the first village in the vicinity. Situated on Cross Creek, just opposite the mouth of Notch Creek, it was only about six miles northwest of the future site of Chisana City.<sup>2</sup>

Americans first penetrated the region in 1891, when a three-man exploring party, consisting of Frederick Schwatka, Charles W. Hayes, and Mark Russell, traversed from the White to the Nizina River through Skolai Pass. While not discovering any gold, Hayes reported finding copper nuggets on Kletsan Creek, located near the head of the White River.<sup>3</sup>

Seven years passed before prospectors regularly entered the area. One of the first was Henry Bratnober, who examined part of the White River country in 1898.<sup>4</sup> Jack Dalton arrived about the same time, building a cabin on upper Kletsan Creek. Although Dalton, like Hayes, found a considerable quantity of copper, the district's remoteness discouraged any thorough investigation.<sup>5</sup>

United States Geological Survey (USGS) parties also began scrutinizing the area in 1898. William J. Peters and Alfred H. Brooks, for example, inspected Beaver, Snag, and Mirror Creeks, passing about forty miles north of the Chisana district.<sup>6</sup> The two returned to the region the following year, tracing the northern edge of the Wrangell Mountains between the White and Nabesna Rivers.<sup>7</sup> Oscar Rohn also visited in 1899, crossing the mountains via the Nizina and Chisana Glaciers.<sup>8</sup>

Two other USGS geologists made a more significant contribution. Frank C. Schrader and David C. Witherspoon purchased several locally obtained copper nuggets from the Upper Tanana residents of Cross Creek Village. Later, they also detected gold traces in a quartz sample collected a few miles farther east. Reports about their finds circulated, significantly promoting local exploration.<sup>9</sup>

The area's first meaningful mineral discovery occurred in 1902 when prospector Jack Horsfeld found gold on Beaver Creek, just west of the Canadian border. Yukon miners stampeded to the area, but most failed to locate workable ground and soon returned to Dawson City.<sup>10</sup>

Bratnober and Dalton explored the upper Tanana River region in 1903, using a pack-train to search for copper prospects. At the conclusion of their journey, however, Bratnober downplayed the district's mineral potential. His pessimistic forecast infuriated supporters of Valdez, which heavily depended on the mining trade. "This pot-bellied old

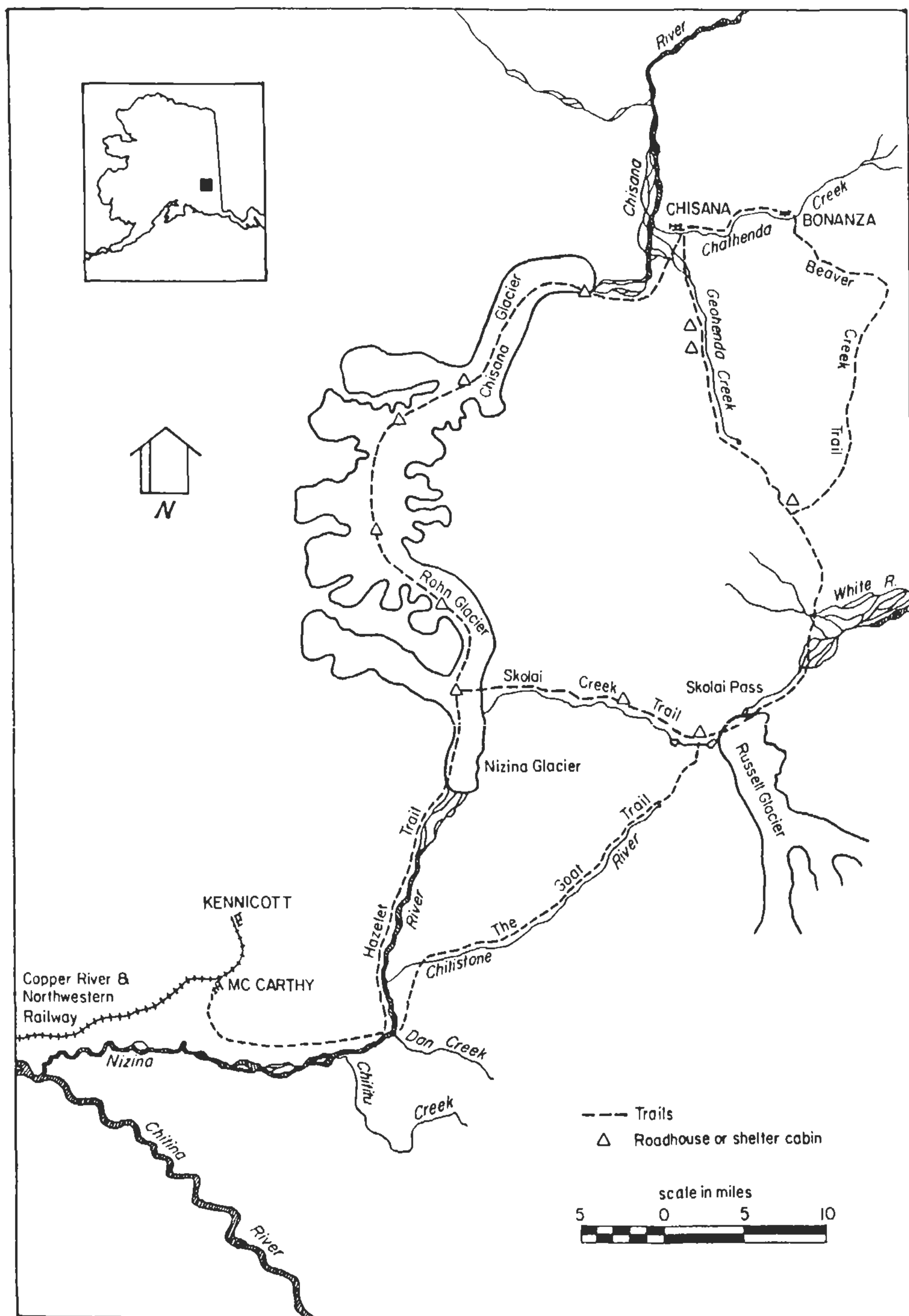


Fig. 2  
The Chisana region.

reprobate," declared the *Valdez News*, "has some object in spreading these slanderous reports aside from the mere pleasure that some people take in lying."<sup>11</sup>

The newspaper was apparently correct, as two years later Bratnobar resumed his examination of the region. Building a 120-foot, gas-powered sternwheeler, which he christened *Ella* in honor of his wife, he journeyed up the Nabesna River and established winter quarters for a small group of affiliated prospectors, including George C. Wilson, James L. Galen, Draper C. "Bud" Sargent, and Carl F. Whitham. Although they located numerous copper prospects, Bratnobar's crew discovered little gold. They did, however, find traces along Trail, Cooper, and Chavolda Creeks, all in or near the Chisana district.<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 3

Prospectors camping along an unidentified Chisana trail, c. 1913.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Exploration of the area continued, with several men examining lower Chathenda Creek the following year. Its prospects so impressed Aaron Johnson and his partners that they whipsawed lumber, built sluiceboxes, and shoveled-in for a week. Their results, however, were disappointing. Only netting about \$7.50 per day, the group soon abandoned its efforts.<sup>13</sup>

The USGS returned in 1908, when Fred H. Moffit, Adolf Knopf, and Stephen R. Capps surveyed the region. While failing to discover any important mineral deposits,

the trio located several small quartz veins and expressed confidence that placer gold would eventually be found.<sup>14</sup>

Although credit for that discovery must be divided among at least half a dozen individuals, three were especially important. In 1912 William E. "Billy" James, Nels P. Nelson, and Fred W. Best began a detailed examination of the upper White River basin. Hardly "cheechakos," each had originally come north before the turn of the century and had spent more than a decade fruitlessly exploring the Alaska-Yukon backcountry.<sup>15</sup>

Few details were ever recorded about Nelson's background. It is believed, however, that he had served in the military before coming to Alaska in the 1890s. Although he was prospecting in the Fortymile country when Carmack made his Klondike discovery in 1896, Nelson failed to join the initial wave of stampedeurs up the Yukon River and therefore missed his first and greatest opportunity to strike it rich.<sup>16</sup>

Best's history is better known. Born in the small industrial town of Stoneham, Massachusetts, in 1866, he was working as a mate on a cargo ship when his older brother convinced him to quit the sea and join the Klondike rush. Travelling to Forty Mile, a Canadian community located near Dawson City, Best tried prospecting, but generally supported himself by working for wages. Although he purchased the Cassiar Roadhouse in 1903, he soon gave up that business and spent the remainder of the decade hauling freight in the upper Yukon Basin.<sup>17</sup>

James, like Nelson, possessed extensive prospecting experience. A hard-rock miner in California before joining the Klondike stampede, he had subsequently worked in both the Fortymile and Fairbanks districts. He was also extremely familiar with the White River country, having visited it regularly since about 1908.<sup>18</sup> As Best reported to his parents:

Billy has been in there before and has some good prospects and picked Nels and me to go back with him. . . . We have a fine outfit and a good boat and hope to have a successful trip. . . . There is no regular mail up there so you must not be worried if you do not hear from me very often, for I shall be in good company and now know how to survive in any kind of country.<sup>19</sup>

Late that summer the trio established a base camp near the mouth of Beaver Creek and began investigating the adjoining region. Although their primary route ascended that drainage only as far as Flat Creek, they established hunting and trapping trails in all directions. One, for example, reached Chathenda Creek, about ten miles farther west.<sup>20</sup>

While there, an Upper Tanana acquaintance, then known to the prospectors only as "Indian Joe," showed James a quartz prospect situated on the Chathenda's middle reaches. The lode intrigued the miner, but he was much more interested in the area's placer potential. Recognizing that it was too late in the season for any detailed examination, James conducted some preliminary panning and vowed to return to the area the following year.<sup>21</sup>

James and Nelson came back in the spring of 1913, accompanied this time by James's long-time companion, Matilda Wales.<sup>22</sup> Reaching Chathenda Creek on May 3, James concentrated on the lode. Nelson, however, decided to try his luck on a nearby tributary. Walking about a hundred yards upstream, he reached a low bench where he proceeded to remove some of the overburden and to test the underlying gravel. To his surprise, his first pan yielded a dollar's worth of gold. Staking a discovery claim, Nelson, in the tradition of placer miners everywhere, christened the stream "Bonanza" Creek.<sup>23</sup>



**Fig. 4**  
**Billy James and Matilda Wales at their camp**  
**near the mouth of Little Eldorado Creek, 1913.**  
**Best Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.**

Shortly after making his strike, Nelson and Andrew M. "Andy" Taylor, a long time acquaintance who was also prospecting in the area, started for Dawson City to obtain additional materials and supplies. After they left, James and Wales traced the gold-bearing gravels farther up Bonanza.<sup>24</sup> Sampling a western branch, the pair made an even bigger discovery. Wales later recounted her version of the find:

When we got to a strange creek running into Bonanza, we followed it up and looked for the rim. At one place Billy spoke to me, saying, 'Let me have the pan; here's a little bedrock cropping out.' He took the pan, and to our surprise



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got five to ten dollars in bright gold. . . . We then prospected a little further up, and found gold and staked a discovery. The claims where we got the rich pans we staked as No. 1 and named the creek Little Eldorado.<sup>25</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE STAMPEDE

Upon reaching the Yukon River, Nelson and Taylor informed local residents about the Chisana strike. The Dawson City community reacted enthusiastically and by June 6 several parties were already preparing to leave for the diggings. Excitement waned, however, when no other prospectors arrived to confirm the pair's report.<sup>1</sup>

For their part, Nelson and Taylor required no further inducement. Finishing their business, they returned to Bonanza Creek heavily laden with food and equipment. They also brought several friends, including James and Nelson's former partner, Fred Best.<sup>2</sup>

The group's arrival was timely, as James and Wales had very nearly exhausted their supplies.

For days we were on Little Eldorado eating the handful of rough food, with no sugar, no flour, no salt. We had wild meat and, as we chewed on it, we had visions of other good things which gold would buy.<sup>3</sup>

James, Nelson, Wales, Taylor, Best, and their Dawson friends staked most of the property on Bonanza, Big Eldorado, and Little Eldorado Creeks. A rival, however, obtained one of the richer claims. At the time of James's strike, Carl Whitham was also prospecting around the mouth of Bonanza. One of the earliest on the scene, he acquired the second claim on Little Eldorado.<sup>4</sup>

Little Eldorado Creek was well suited for hand-mining methods, as its gravel was less than six feet thick and one hundred feet wide. Classic "poor man's diggings," such deposits required a minimal expense of equipment and labor to produce paying quantities of gold.<sup>5</sup>

As was the case in many placer areas, its gold was quite distinctive. Coarse and dark, it possessed a peculiar bronze-like cast, which miners attributed to a slight coating of iron oxide. Most particles were flat, indicating that they had originated in narrow seams, and ranged in value from one to ten cents. Nuggets worth from one to two dollars, however, were common, and larger ones were also occasionally found. One viewed by visiting Canadian geologist DeLorme D. Cairnes, for example, weighed a full eight ounces.<sup>6</sup>

Billy James and N. P. Nelson began sluicing Little Eldorado No. 1 on July 4, 1913. Assisted by Andy Taylor and former Dawson City bartender Tommy Doyle, the pair recovered nearly two hundred ounces in just two days. By August 2 they had already garnered \$9,000, or an average of about \$300 per day.<sup>7</sup>

While less productive than Little Eldorado No. 1, several other claims also yielded significant quantities of gold. Bonanza No. 6, for example, produced some four- and

five-dollar pans, and even samples taken from Bonanza No. 3 averaged more than a dollar.<sup>8</sup>

Needing additional gear, Best returned to Dawson City about the middle of July. While there, he provided the local newspaper with a current description of the strike. Best related that both Bonanza and Little Eldorado were claimed "from end to end," and noted that when he left, stakers were also "planting poles on Coarse Money Gulch, Gold Run, Wilson, and other creeks in the immediate vicinity."<sup>9</sup>

Best's account electrified the Yukon, Alaska, and eventually much of the Pacific Northwest.<sup>10</sup> The *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, for example, proclaimed the strike as "the richest" since the Klondike, provoking defections which virtually emptied the Nizina gold camps and even briefly jeopardized the operation of Kennecott's copper complex.<sup>11</sup>



Fig. 5

A typical stamper on the trail to Chisana, 1913.

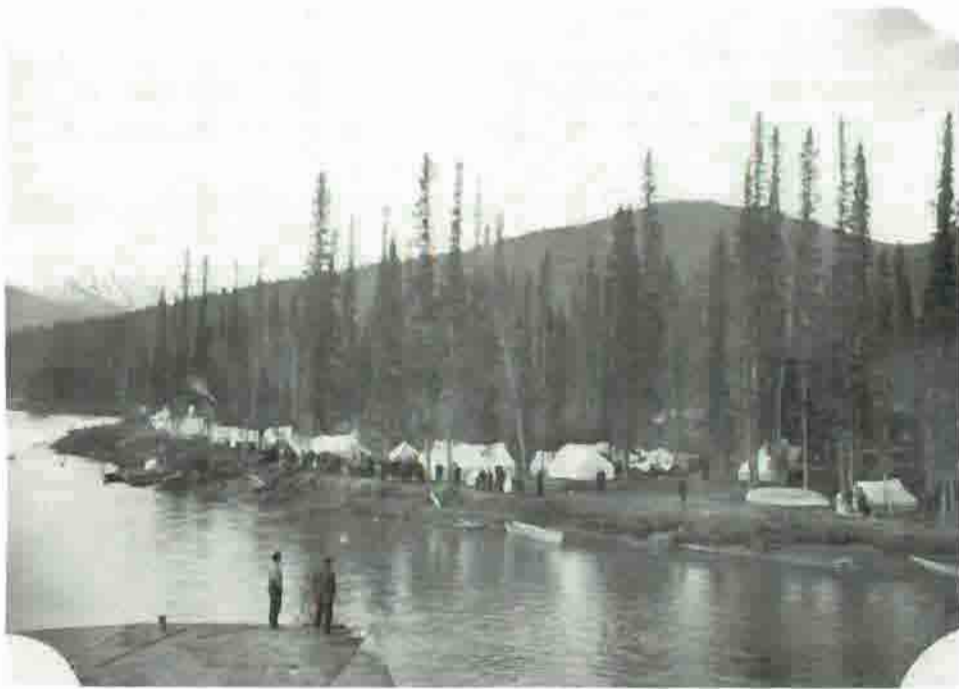
Note crosscut saw for whipsawing lumber.

Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

The *Dawson Daily News* confirmed the Cordova newspaper's story, adding that "at Blackburn and McCarthy none who could get away remained. . . . [T]his morning word came from Chitina that more than half the population of the town had left or would leave Monday for the Shushanna."<sup>12</sup>

Blackburn, McCarthy, and Chitina were not the only local communities affected. The find impacted Cordova as well.<sup>13</sup> The *Daily Alaskan* reported that public interest

was intense and that scores of residents were preparing to go: "They are only awaiting further details as to the extent of the richness of the strike."<sup>14</sup> Many must have eventually left, for one witness claimed that after the departure of the northbound train, "you could fire a cannon down the main street . . . and not hit a soul."<sup>15</sup>



**Fig. 6**  
**Staging area along the lower White River.**  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

When news of the discovery reached the outside world, it soon elicited a similar response. As in the case of the Klondike find, Seattle was particularly affected.

Gossip of the Shushanna strike was to be heard on all sides yesterday in the hotels and resorts [where] Alaskans are wont to congregate. Plans for hasty embarkation were being made and staid gold hunters of former days, who had not felt the call of the north in years, did not attempt to conceal their interest and enthusiasm. The 'fever' was very much in evidence.<sup>16</sup>

The liner *Northwestern* was one of the first to leave for the north. Friends of the departing gold seekers thronged the dock and automobiles lined the pier for more than a block in each direction. The *Seattle Times* noted the excitement, reporting that the waterfront had not experienced such activity since the Klondike days.<sup>17</sup>

Vancouver's boosters soon began a campaign to wrest some of the traffic away from Seattle. Their "Progress Club" initiated a "Chisana Day," and offered free maps to all interested stampedeers. It also began a subscription drive to pay for advertising Canadian routes and promoting the benefits of local outfitting. By early August, their efforts seemed to have been at least partially successful. Ticket agents reported "a tremendous inquiry" and speculated that "several hundred northerners will leave this city and Victoria before the end of the month."<sup>18</sup>



**Fig. 7**  
**Stampedeers poling their boat up Beaver Creek, August 1913.**  
Cairnes Collection, courtesy Earth Sciences Sector,  
Natural Resources Canada.

Like their counterparts in Vancouver, Whitehorse residents also promoted the Chisana district. They, however, championed their own route into the region.

From the head of the Tanana [River] it will be something like one hundred and twenty-five miles overland to the discovery. On the White River light draught steamers can proceed about fourteen miles above the mouth of the Klutasin and to the mouth of [Beaver Creek]. On the latter it is said poling boats can be taken within ten miles of the scene of the strike.<sup>19</sup>

Fairbanks boosters, of course, disputed the superiority of this Yukon passage. "The [White] River at best is only navigable to the head of the Donjek," they cautioned, "and that point is 105 miles from the scene of the strike." While they admitted that Dawson City was closer to the strike than Fairbanks, they warned that goods shipped through Canada were subject to customs duty at the border. The Tanana River, in contrast, was an "all-American" route.<sup>20</sup>

Most interior residents viewed the Tanana as the logical route to the diggings. Healy Lake trader William H. Newton, for example, claimed that from Tanana Crossing to the Chisana the water was "so slack that the wind will blow a boat upstream." Newton warned, however, that swift water between Fairbanks and Tanana Crossing could inhibit travel: "The best way then would be to mush to Tanana Crossing, build a boat there, and pole to the near field."<sup>21</sup>



**Fig. 8**

**Horses fording a shallow channel of the Nizina River.**

**Note that one horse is carrying an extra passenger.**

**Stanley-Mason Collection, Tacoma Public Library.**

W. H. Merritt also believed it would be relatively easy to ascend the Tanana.<sup>22</sup> Hoping to capture some of the stampede's business, Merritt tried to establish a trading post on the Chisana River. Although he chartered the 101-ton *Dusty Diamond* to transport his freight, he failed to get anywhere near the Chisana district.<sup>23</sup>

Large boats, however, continued trying to reach the goldfield. Most, including the *Tana*, the *Shushana*, the *White Seal*, the *Martha Clow*, the *Florence S.*, and the *Samson*, failed to reach even the Nabesna River.<sup>24</sup> The Northern Navigation Company's steamer *Reliance* got a little further, attaining the mouth of the Chisana and establishing the townsite of Reliance City.<sup>25</sup> Only a few smaller craft went up the Chisana River. The *Marathon* and the *Mabel* probably ascended the furthest, reaching a spot about six miles below the mouth of Scotty Creek where they founded Gasoline City.<sup>26</sup>

Prospectors approached the Chisana from every possible direction. Most were poorly equipped and many lacked a clear concept of where they were headed. Consequently, many failed to arrive, and of those who did, few remained for more than a few days.<sup>27</sup>

The experiences related by Gus Lepart and Tony Grisko were fairly typical of those approaching from the north. According to Lepart, he and Grisko

left Dawson with three others on July 27, and took a boat to the mouth of the White, whence we poled to the Donjek. Three of the boys left us there, and we bought their outfit, and continued with five dogs. Grisko and I then poled up to near the canyon, and struck across country with each dog carrying thirty pounds and each man fifty pounds, with rifles and blankets on top. We cached goods on the river bank for our return, and, with the dogs, carried in enough on the one trip to keep us going for seven weeks that we were in the diggings, with the exception of about seventy-five dollars worth of grub which we bought at Chisana City. We got to Wilson Creek August 25.<sup>28</sup>

For those coming from the south, the route up the Chitistone River was fast, but particularly risky. George Hazelet, who traversed it in mid-July 1913, described this so-called "goat trail" as

an extremely dangerous place for horses, . . . being simply a sheep trail widened to about two feet. The drop to the bottom is as much as two thousand feet in places and should horse or man lose his footing he could not stop till he reached the bottom.<sup>29</sup>

Ruben Lindblom, who passed that way with his brother Hugo about the same time as Hazelet, recorded another commonly encountered peril:

Broke camp this morning intending to ford the river on foot as no parties with horses have shown up yet. We made our packs snug, tied our rifles to the packs so as to have our hands free, then cut a long pole and started abreast into the water . . . . The stream at this point was not very wide, about sixty yards or so. We had gotten half way over, with the water well above our waists when I went down, but the others kept their feet so I managed to get up again by holding onto the pole. The water was running swift, a great deal more so than it seemed to be when standing on the bank, and the gravel on the bottom was moving which

made it well nigh impossible to keep ones feet from being washed from under him. We got straightened out once more . . . [but] had not taken but a few steps forward when we all seemed to go under at about the same time. I know I was under water some little distance before I saw daylight again but whenever I got partly straightened up the water would hit my pack and roll me over and over. But I kept kicking whenever my feet touched bottom and soon I stopped and found that I had ahold of Hugo and he was hanging onto me, both spitting out water and blowing like a porpoise. I glanced hurriedly down stream and saw Jacques with his arms around a block of ice which had stranded close to shore in shallow water. Mardi was just crawling out of the water on the opposite side of the river from the rest of us, and was so excited that he grabbed the hat off his head and threw it back into the water. Jacques and I lost our hats but Hugo saved his. We also lost a shovel. But we congratulated ourselves on getting thru with such a slight loss.<sup>30</sup>

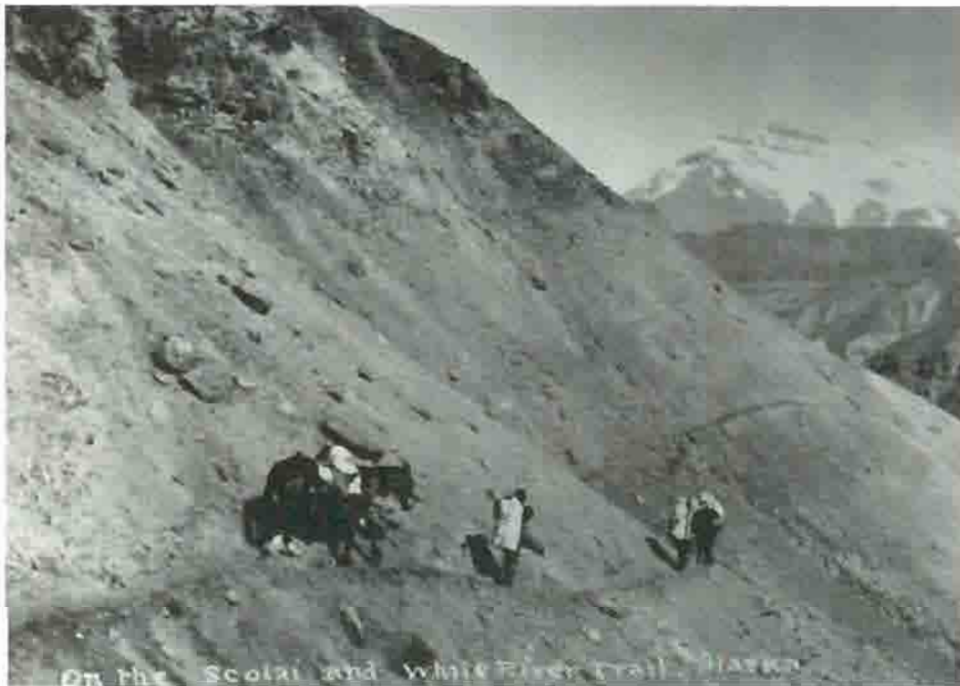


Fig. 9  
Negotiating the treacherous "goat trail" through Chitistone Canyon.  
Zacharias Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

A government survey party, then employed in locating the international boundary between the United States and Canada, had the opportunity to observe many Chisana stampedeers as they crossed Skolai Pass.



About 75 percent . . . were very inadequately equipped for a trip of this description, and as they seemed to consider a government survey party a sort of general supply depot, it became the duty of the survey to provide meals for them, to sell them what provisions could be spared, and even to provide clothing and shoes, in addition to furnishing minute directions as to how to get to the diggings.<sup>31</sup>

On his return to Seattle, survey chief Thomas Riggs, Jr. noted that his party had met one man

going into the interior with a horse on which he had packed ten pounds of raisins, having been informed that raisins were unusually efficacious in sustaining life in that country. We found scores of persons who had absolutely no idea how to pack their horses and who were carrying in supplies that could not possibly sustain them.<sup>32</sup>

Canadian geologist Delorme D. Cairnes, who visited the Chisana district in late July, provided a similar account. He related meeting many stampeders "who had been three weeks on the way, wandering all over the country and living principally on gophers."<sup>33</sup>

We met stampeders all through the woods while on our way back to Dawson. The men seemed to be unable to follow the trail up [Beaver Creek]. Forty miles this side of [the Chisana district], we met a man in a gulch who shouted over to us and asked if he had reached the 'diggings.' It seems a good many have absolutely no knowledge of traveling though a wild open country.<sup>34</sup>

Considering the above descriptions, it is not surprising that approximately a dozen stampeders perished trying to reach the goldfield. Most drowned crossing glacial torrents, but some undoubtedly died from exposure and a few may actually have starved to death.<sup>35</sup>

Even after reaching the diggings, provisions remained practically unprocurable. According to Ruben Lindblom, one party purchased

three pounds of flour for twenty dollars and had a hard time to get it at all, as the man who sold it would rather have kept the flour than part with it at any price, but merely did so to help the other fellow out who was entirely out of provisions.<sup>36</sup>

Neil Finnesand faced a similar situation. While the district's cheapest food cost \$1.00 a pound, rice and sugar fetched \$1.25 a cup.

If a sack of flour was brought in, no one was allowed to buy a whole sack. They could just get two or three pounds. However, lots of meat was available--sheep and caribou--and the prospectors lived on that.<sup>37</sup>

Despite such hardships, several thousand stampeders reached the Chisana district between July and October 1913. Fletcher T. Hamshaw, for example, was one of the earliest arrivals. The well known mineral developer and his sixteen-man crew were prospecting for copper on the upper White River when they first heard news of the strike. An aggressive entrepreneur, Hamshaw used whatever means were necessary to acquire such potentially valuable ground, including employing members of his "former" crew to locate claims.<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 10

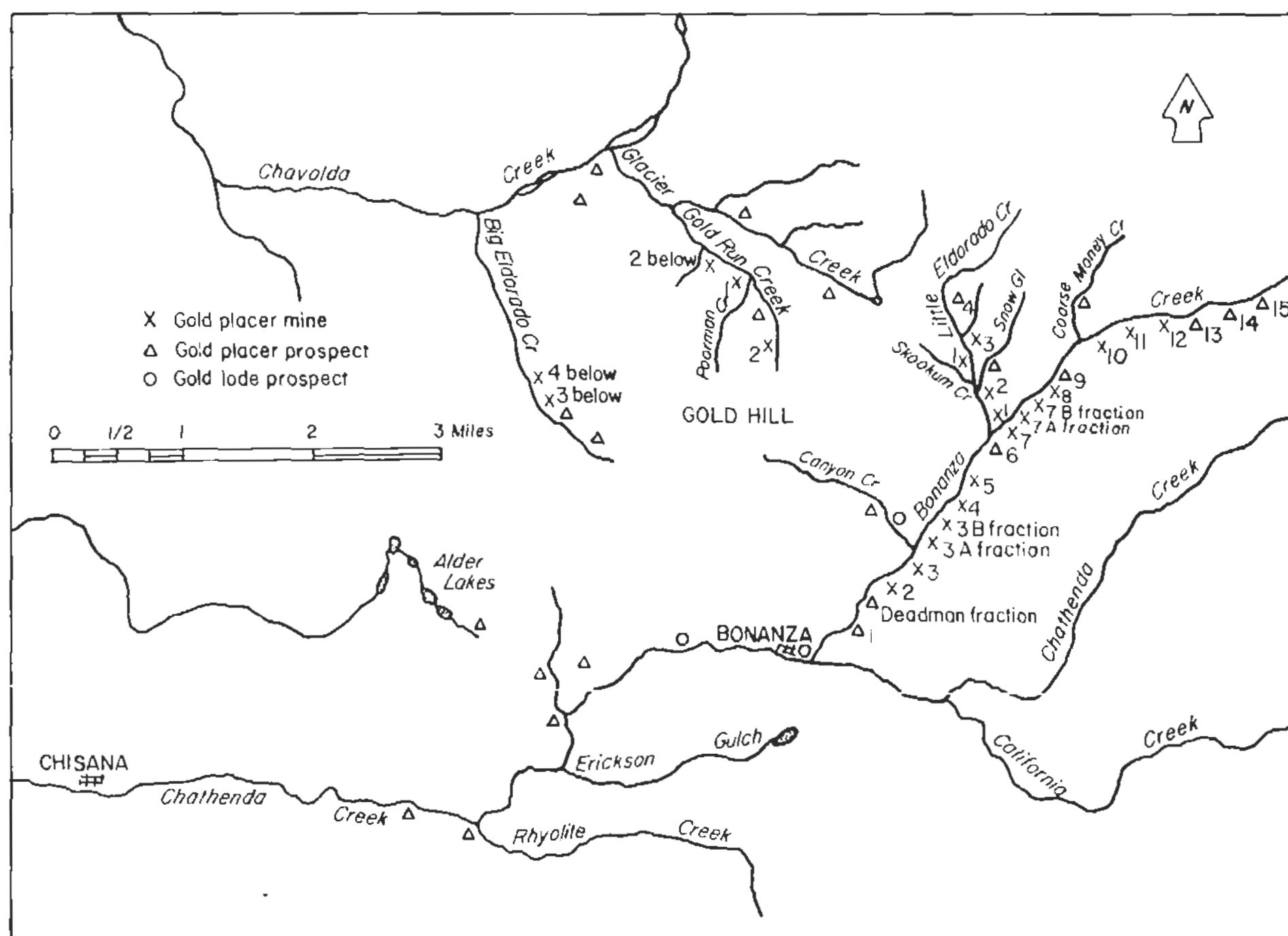
Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher Hamshaw in camp.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Local prospectors objected to the practice, arguing that Hamshaw was attempting to monopolize the area by evading the spirit, if not the letter, of the law. Hamshaw, however, denied any wrongdoing:

When we left North Fork Island to go to the strike, all of my men were discharged and paid off, and all went to the diggings and staked for themselves, except my engineers, packers, and cooks. Anyone of these whose claims were

purchased by me was paid for his claims the same as though I had bought them from any other person.<sup>39</sup>

Hamshaw initially staked the mouth of Bonanza Creek, but abandoned the site when he failed to locate any productive ground. Moving his outfit down Chathenda Creek, he next tried a bench claim where he was equally unsuccessful. Hamshaw also prospected Chavolda Creek, ground-slucing near the mouth of Big Eldorado Creek.<sup>40</sup>



**Fig. 11**  
**Mining claims in the Gold Hill area, 1914.**

Most of Big Eldorado, however, was already taken. Billy James had located a discovery claim on the upper creek, while W. D. "Dud" McKinney and Anthony McGettigan had selected much of the rest. None of the three, however, actually mined Big Eldorado that first season. Leasing their claims to others, the trio worked more promising property on Bonanza Creek.<sup>41</sup>

By the middle of July, prospectors had selected virtually all available sites. Those arriving later either turned around at once, staked "wildcats," jumped someone else's claim, or continued into adjoining districts. Even those who obtained a favorable tract usually left immediately, returning later with a sufficiently large outfit to complete their assessments.<sup>42</sup>

George Hazelet and his two sons were typical late arrivals. Reaching Bonanza Creek on July 30, they found about 175 prospectors and signs of frenzied activity. Stakes were

everywhere, not just along the creek but also far up the hillsides.<sup>43</sup> Hazelet puzzled over how to proceed. Before he had made a decision, however, one of his sons heard about some outlying property that was still available. Setting out late in the evening, the family visited the spot and eventually staked two wildcat claims on Chicken Creek, a tributary of Glacier Creek lying just over the divide from Little Eldorado.<sup>44</sup>

They began their required assessment work after only a few days' rest. On August 10 they completed a forty-five-foot-long ditch on Chicken No. 4, which Hazelet had located by power-of-attorney for Cordova Judge John Y. Ostrander. Two days later they finished a similar trench on Chicken No. 3. Neither claim, however, ever yielded any gold.<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 12

A well-dressed Chisana prospector, c. 1914  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Ruben Lindblom also located a claim. Reaching Chathenda Creek on July 31, he and a frenchman named Jacques explored the surrounding countryside:

We had gone perhaps a mile from camp keeping a lookout for signs of new mining or works of any kind, when we found a sort of sign . . . [marked] 'Diggings on Johnson Creek.' We started up the mountain and soon struck a trail which showed fresh men tracks. Had gone a couple of miles when it commenced raining but we kept going, and after a while came to where some parties had

located mining claims, dated the same day we came to Johnson Creek. Found a number of claims located on a small creek which we followed about two miles where we each located a claim, numbers 4 and 5 above discovery claim. It rained incessantly so we were wet as could be before we were ready to hit back to camp which was some four or five miles from where we located our claims.<sup>46</sup>

The following day, Lindblom and his associates remained in camp

too tired and footsore to go anywhere. A man came in about noon whom we had seen on the trail coming to the diggings. . . . This fellow reported having been on, and prospected the streams where rumor had it gold had been found in paying quantities, but he said the reported strike was a fake and he could not find any gold on but one claim, the first discovery on Little Eldorado, all of which did not tend to raise our spirits or encourage us any.<sup>47</sup>

Disheartened by such reports, on August 2 the group decided to return to McCarthy.

Have decided to hit the back trail to-morrow because our grub is very low and no chance to get any more in here. . . . We did not do any work on our locations, nor did we record them so they are open for some one else to jump but fear no one will find much on them.<sup>48</sup>

While Lindblom's ground could legitimately be re-staked, recorded claims were supposed to be immune from seizure. Jealous prospectors, however, soon coveted those properties as well.

Predictably, one major dispute focused on James's holdings. On September 23, Dawson residents Hugh Brady and Henry Dubois sued the miner, claiming that an outdated grubstake agreement entitled them to a share of his discovery. Although they obtained an injunction that temporarily halted mining on his claims, the matter was ultimately settled out of court, and most of the property was returned to James.<sup>49</sup>

Frank Purdy, Fred Best's former partner in the Cassiar Roadhouse, occupied Dan Sutherland's fraction on Big Eldorado Creek and ignored all demands to leave.<sup>50</sup> Hoping to avoid violence, Sutherland, too, sought his recourse in the courts. A Cordova jury, however, inexplicably awarded the ground to Purdy. Sutherland appealed the decision and eventually prevailed, but it was January 1919 before he finally regained possession.<sup>51</sup>

Dud McKinney, seemingly less sophisticated than the others, employed a more traditional approach. When a claimjumper tried to take his property, he merely removed the offending party at gun-point.<sup>52</sup>

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE BRIEF BOOM

The Chisana district's first recording office opened on July 22, 1913, in a tent at the mouth of Bonanza Creek, with Horatio E. Morgan serving as U.S. commissioner and recorder. Business at the office was brisk. By mid-August, Morgan had already registered about 250 claims.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, problems quickly developed. Not only were new arrivals accused of jumping claims but there were also widespread complaints about Morgan's bookkeeping methods. The recorder tried to defend his actions. While he admitted that his books--a hotel register and accounts ledger--were crude, he claimed that they were scrupulously honest. Faced with growing criticism, however, Morgan soon resigned.<sup>2</sup>

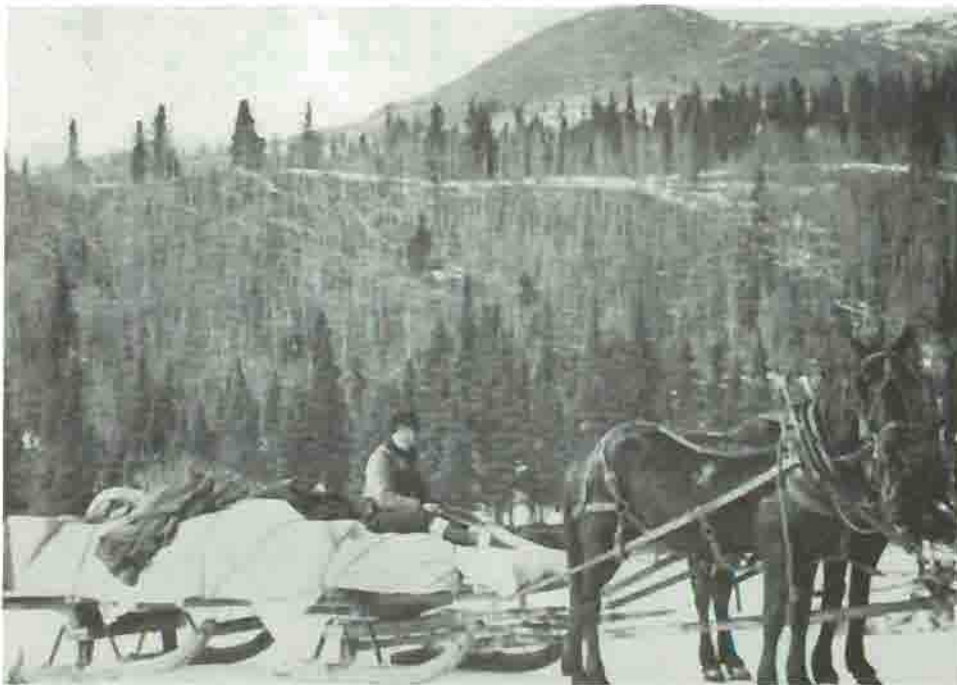


Fig. 13  
Bonanza City, c. 1914.  
Stanley Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

Meanwhile, George Hazelet was also busy. A consummate speculator, the Cordova businessman began seeking an appropriate location for a townsite. Hazelet selected two

160-acre parcels, "just below Johnson, east of Chisana and south of Wilson."<sup>3</sup> Named "Woodrow," this community became the site of the district's second recording office, managed by acting U.S. Commissioner J. J. Finnegan.<sup>4</sup>

Local prospectors soon objected to the location of Finnegan's office. By placing it in Woodrow, the commissioner forced them to walk nearly eight miles every time they wished to conduct business. Despite their complaints, however, Finnegan refused to move.<sup>5</sup>



**Fig. 14**  
**Freight headed up Chathenda Creek, c. 1914.**  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

On September 9, 1913, seventy-five miners met near the mouth of Chathenda Creek to address some of their common problems. Before the day ended, the group organized the Chathenda Mining District and established a new townsite, which they christened "Johnson City." They also removed Finnegan as acting commissioner and selected George E. "Ned" Hill as his temporary replacement.<sup>6</sup>

The district's first cold weather provoked an exodus of stampeders, with some bartering their entire outfits to finance their transportation home. Even James, Wales, and Nelson deserted the region. Having accumulated a hefty nest egg before shutting down for the season, the three headed south to enjoy a relaxing winter.<sup>7</sup>

Although mining activity dwindled, Johnson City continued to grow. By the middle of October, nearly all townsite lots had been staked and the village contained about two

hundred cabins.<sup>8</sup> Among other amenities, it boasted two streets, two grocery stores, and the district's third recording office.<sup>9</sup> It also possessed a post office, run by former steamboat captain Theodore Kettleon. Despite the wishes of most local residents, however, postal officials insisted on redesignating the site "Chisana City."<sup>10</sup>

Word soon reached the town that federal authorities had chosen Anthony J. "Tony" Dimond of Valdez as its new commissioner.<sup>11</sup> A former gold miner on Young Creek in the Nizina district, Dimond was widely known and believed to be scrupulously honest. The *Chitina Leader* applauded the selection, suggesting that it marked an end to the capricious practices of the past: "There will be no juggling with records, no over charges and no connivance with big interests to the detriment of the hardy son of toil."<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 15

Grant Reed's store in Bonanza City, 1914.

Zacharias Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

Despite such support, Dimond hesitated to accept the position. The post was a gamble because the commissioner had to depend on fees for his salary. If mining activity declined, the recording business would slow, and fee opportunities would diminish. "If the camp is good," Dimond told a friend, "I will make a lot of money, if it's a failure, I'll lose a thousand dollars, which it will cost me to get in there." In the end, however, Dimond agreed to serve.<sup>13</sup>

During the fall of 1913, George Hazelet decided to increase Cordova's share of the market by creating a safer and more direct route to the diggings. That September he



blazed a path across the Nizina, Rohn, and Chisana Glaciers. Designed to be utilized either winter or summer, his trail was short and possessed practically no grades over 12 percent.<sup>14</sup> Skagway boosters, who logically championed Canadian routes to the goldfield, questioned the viability of this glacier trail. They maintained that Hazelet was suffering from delusions, "produced no doubt by a sight of gold in the Chisana."<sup>15</sup>

Others appeared far more optimistic. Seattle resident and former Klondike stamper T. G. Jones, for example, believed that Hazelet's route would be suitable for his specially made automobile, which he bragged could carry "about a ton of supplies" while retaining "ample power to run up hill." Although he transported his machine to McCarthy, a brush fire then raging along the trail a few miles to the south probably precluded any further progress.<sup>16</sup>



Fig. 16

A roadhouse on the Hazelet trail, 1914.

Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Tony Dimond was one of the first to utilize Hazelet's trail, reaching Chisana City in late November. To his dismay, he found the district's records badly organized and food scarce. Writing to his friend and former partner Joseph H. Murray, he dismissed the area's prospects, speculating that if local miners found as much pay as the two of them had discovered on Young Creek, "they would go wild."<sup>17</sup>

December brought profound changes to Chisana City. Dimond assumed his office at the beginning of the month, becoming the area's fourth commissioner. As one of his

first official duties, he officiated at the marriage of O. J. Wheatly to Berta Cochrane, the head of the local Red Cross hospital. Later, Frank Miller opened the town's first saloon, appropriately calling his establishment the "Miner's Home."<sup>18</sup> The growing community now included about four hundred cabins and boasted four stores, two meat markets, two barber shops, two restaurants, a hotel, and a boarding house.<sup>19</sup>



Fig. 17

The Miner's Home Bar in Chisana City, c. 1914.

Zacharias Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

Near the close of the year, the district's miners received some other exciting news. A financial consortium of pioneer Alaskans, including John J. "Jack" Price, Frank Manley, and E. J. Ives offered the widely reported sum of \$500,000 to lease the property belonging to James, Wales, Nelson, and their silent partner, William A. "Billy" Johnson. The four accepted the syndicate's bid and transferred thirteen claims, including the richest one of all on Little Eldorado.<sup>20</sup>

The first year's production in the Chisana district was surprisingly low. Prospectors only recovered about 1,935 ounces of gold, worth approximately \$40,000. Despite the low return, most prospectors still believed in the area's potential and predicted that the following summer would bring important new discoveries.<sup>21</sup>

Many operators, in fact, continued to work throughout the winter, thawing the frozen ground as they slowly progressed toward bedrock. Fred Best and various lessees mined on Bonanza Nos. 3, 3A, 7, 7A, 8, 8A, and 18.<sup>22</sup> James E. Hagen and his partners

prospected Big Eldorado Creek, reportedly recovering some gravel that yielded thirty cents to the pan.<sup>23</sup> Charles Bush and three colleagues even worked Gold Run, sinking drift holes at the mouth of Discovery Pup.<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 18

The Gambling House in Chisana City, c. 1914.  
Zacharias Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

Still expanding, Chisana City began to assume an air of permanence. Structures were more elaborate and some, like Sam Shucklin's clothing store, even sported glass windows. Many buildings were also larger. W. H. Simpson and Louie Belney, for example, constructed a two-story cabin, which they rented to the government. The biggest building in town, it was shared by Dimond, his assistant Tony McGettigan, and the newly appointed deputy marshal, Frank H. Hoffman.<sup>25</sup> Chisana City was now a major Alaskan community, described by one newspaper as the "largest log cabin town in the world."<sup>26</sup>

Seattle reporter Grace G. Bostwick spent that first winter at Chisana City. In March she related that

the camp is fast assuming the airs and ways of a town. Men mostly shave now, where formerly they were rough and bearded. They are also more particular about their clothing. The most interesting period of the camp . . . the pioneer days . . . when one after another of the first cabins were built, when delicacies

of any sort were absolutely unknown, and when magazines and books were prizes eagerly longed for are past. . . . There are by this time two bath tubs in the place, as there are brooms, tea kettles, and many other luxuries formerly unknown. It only remains for the eagerly anticipated strike to materialize, in which event the camp will become a bona fide town with great rapidity, even though it is said to be the most inaccessible camp yet started in Alaska.<sup>27</sup>

The camp at the mouth of Bonanza Creek was also beginning to look more like a "town." Commonly called Bonanza City, it had grown throughout the winter, and by spring even included several women. Although still made up mostly of tents, it now possessed a few cabins, as well as four stores, two hotels, and a restaurant.<sup>28</sup>

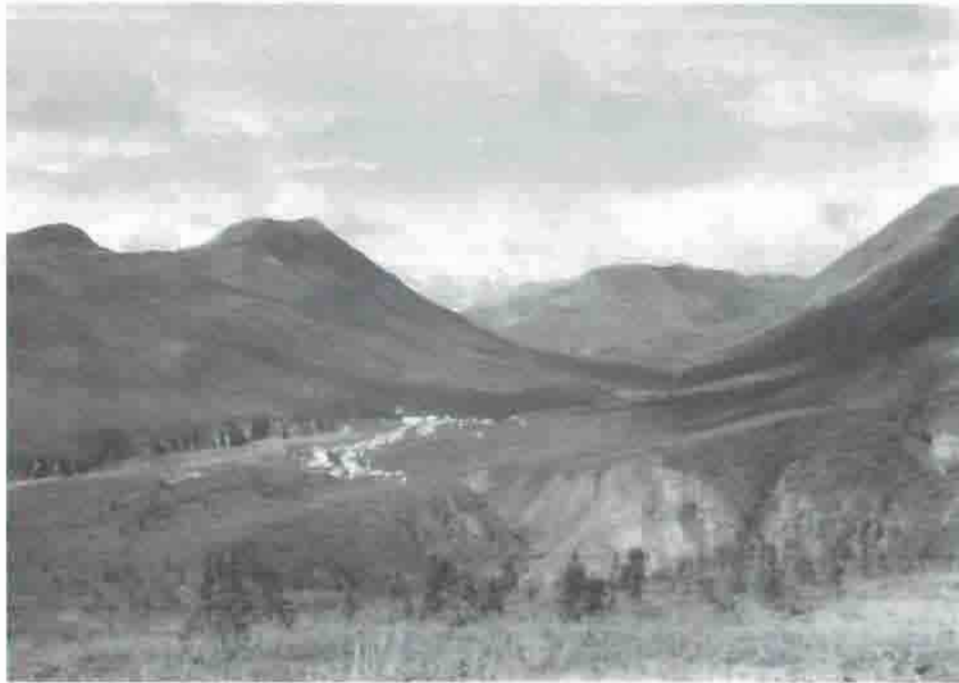


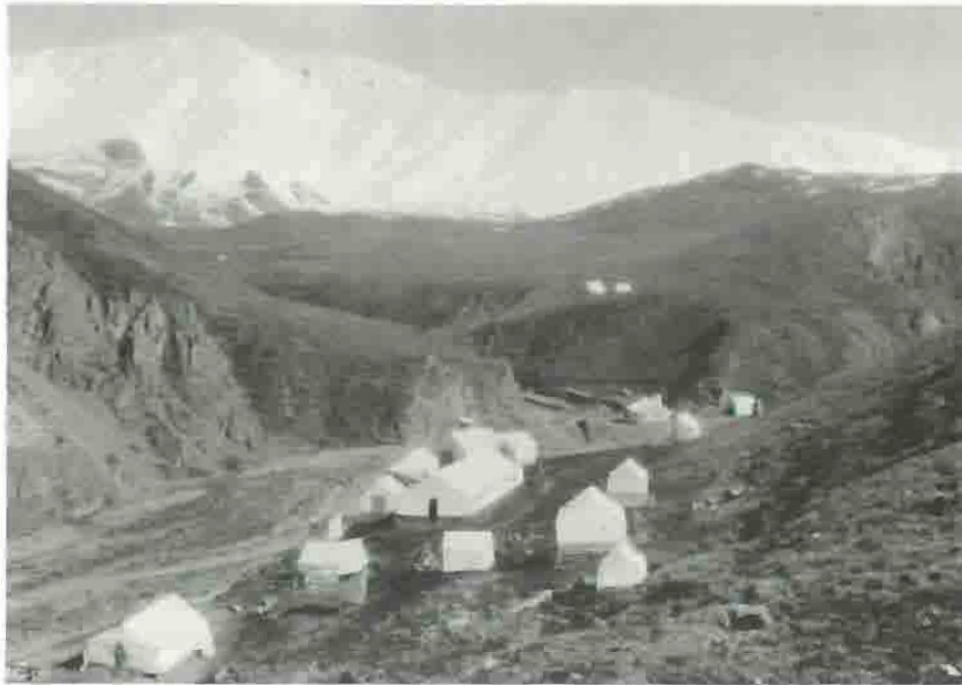
Fig. 19  
Bonanza City from the northeast.  
Capps Collection, courtesy of United States Geological Survey.

The increasing activity, while welcomed by the miners, soon devastated the Native community of Cross Creek Village. Their subsistence opportunities, for example, substantially declined. Hungry prospectors rapidly depleted small game populations. Cairnes, for example, claimed that many Chisana stampeders lived entirely on ptarmigan "for days or even weeks at a time."<sup>29</sup> Grant Reed confirmed Cairnes report, noting that one man with a willow stick could easily harvest a flour sack full of the birds.<sup>30</sup>

Big game populations also dwindled. As early as August 1913, George Hazelet warned that while game remained plentiful, it was "being rapidly driven back. . . . The game law should be rigidly enforced in that country at once."<sup>31</sup> Territorial officials however, seem to have ignored Hazelet's warning. By spring 1914, local prospectors and market hunters had killed about 2,000 dall sheep, virtually eliminating them from the vicinity.<sup>32</sup>

Some of Cross Creek Village's twenty-five or so residents moved north or west to escape the unwelcome impact of the gold discovery. Others, attracted by the stores and promise of cash labor, abandoned their traditional locale and moved to Chisana City.<sup>33</sup>

At the beginning of 1914, Manley, Price, and Ives assigned their newly acquired property to Fletcher Hamshaw. Anticipating a busy summer, the operator moved eight steam boilers and a portable sawmill into the district. Crews soon set up the sawmill and began cutting the lumber necessary for large-scale sluicing operations.<sup>34</sup>



**Fig. 20**  
**Hamshaw's Camp on Bonanza No. 6, 1914.**  
Capps Collection, courtesy United States Geological Survey.

Hamshaw situated his main camp on the south side of Bonanza Creek at the mouth of Little Eldorado. Nearly a community of its own, it consisted of about sixteen tents, including offices, a mess hall, a commissary, and sleeping quarters. While somewhat isolated, both a trail and a telephone line linked the camp with Hamshaw's warehouse in Bonanza City.<sup>35</sup>

Other Chisana operations were far less elaborate. Only one man, for example, worked the fraction lying above Bonanza No. 1.<sup>36</sup>

Bonanza No. 2 was a more typical example. Here, seven men mined for most of the season. In order to work the canyon floor, they diverted the creek first to one side and then the other, bringing water to their sluice boxes through a canvas hose. Although the operators recovered approximately \$12,000 worth of gold, nuggets were rare. Even the largest was only valued at around four dollars.<sup>37</sup>

Ten men worked Bonanza No. 3. Beginning operations about six hundred feet below the claim's upper limit, they built a three-hundred-foot-long flume to carry the creek past their "open-cut." To recover the gold, they employed a dump box and about a hundred feet of sluice box equipped with pole riffles. The mining, however, was still done entirely by hand, utilizing a technique known as "shoveling-in."<sup>38</sup>

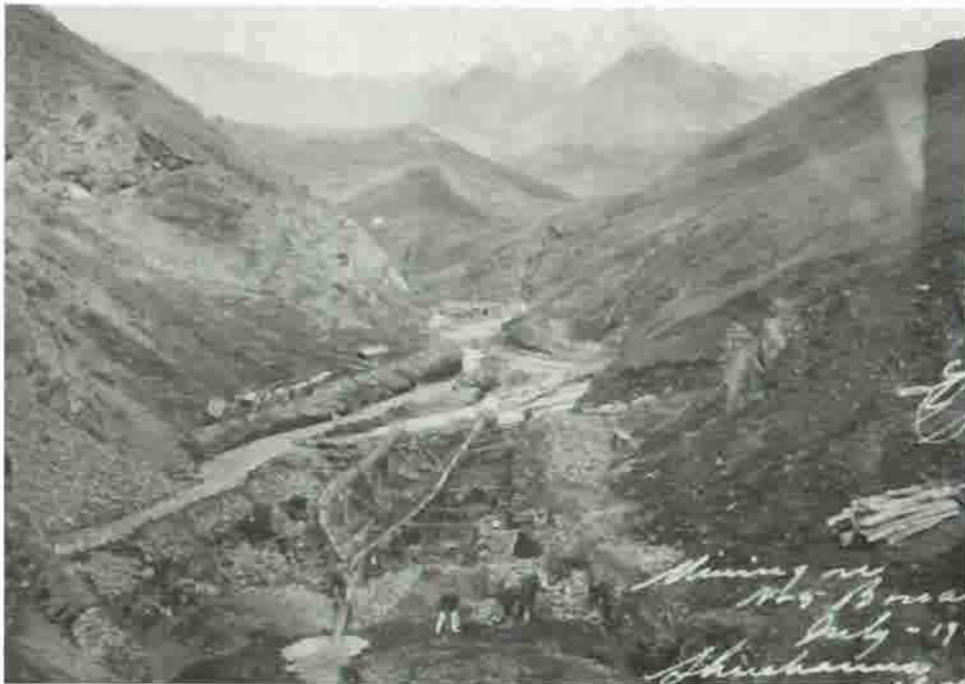


Fig. 21

Mining on Bonanza No. 5, 1914.

Note boomer dam in middle background.

Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Fred Best and five employees worked Bonanza No. 3A Fraction. The group utilized a 120-foot flume to carry the stream past their cut, and employed a dozen, 12-foot sluice boxes to wash their paydirt. This claim produced much coarser gold than Bonanza No. 2. More than half was composed of nuggets valued in excess of \$5.00, including one worth \$61.80.<sup>39</sup>

Mining also resumed on Bonanza No. 3B Fraction, where Joe P. McClellan had recovered several thousand dollars worth of gold the previous summer.<sup>40</sup> Ten men constructed a 350-foot flume to divert the creek past their diggings and employed a set of sixteen sluice boxes to clean their gravel.<sup>41</sup>

Hamshaw concentrated his efforts on Bonanza Nos. 4 and 5 and No. 1 on Little Eldorado, engaging a crew which sometimes approached one hundred men. Like most miners in the district, he generally ground-sluiced to remove the overburden, leaving the lower foot or two of gravel to be shoveled into the sluice boxes by hand. Hamshaw, however, employed a horse team and scraper to remove the tailings from the lower end of his line.<sup>42</sup>



*Fig. 22*

Mining on Bonanza No. 7, July 1914.

Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

The operator's efforts were quite successful. At Bonanza No. 4, for example, his crews excavated 974 linear feet of creek bottom, recovering about \$21,100 on a \$14,800 investment, or a net profit of around 42 percent. He also mined Bonanza No. 5, moving 5,620 cubic yards of gravel from 833 linear feet of the stream. This site, however, was less productive, returning only around \$20,500 on his \$15,500 investment.<sup>43</sup>

Fred Best operated Bonanza No. 7.<sup>44</sup> His men did not build a flume, but instead employed the method used on Bonanza No. 2: they alternately moved the creek from one side of its canyon to the other. Here, however, the miners constructed an automatic

"boomer" dam to eliminate most the surface gravel before they began to shovel.<sup>45</sup> Best utilized similar techniques on No. 7A, an approximately five-hundred-foot-long fraction lying above Bonanza No. 7.<sup>46</sup>

Hamshaw worked Bonanza No. 8 for part of the summer, briefly employing sixteen men. By late July, however, they had encountered so little gold that the miner suspended further operations. Later in the season Jim Hagen mined the claim, but he only made about six hundred dollars.<sup>47</sup>

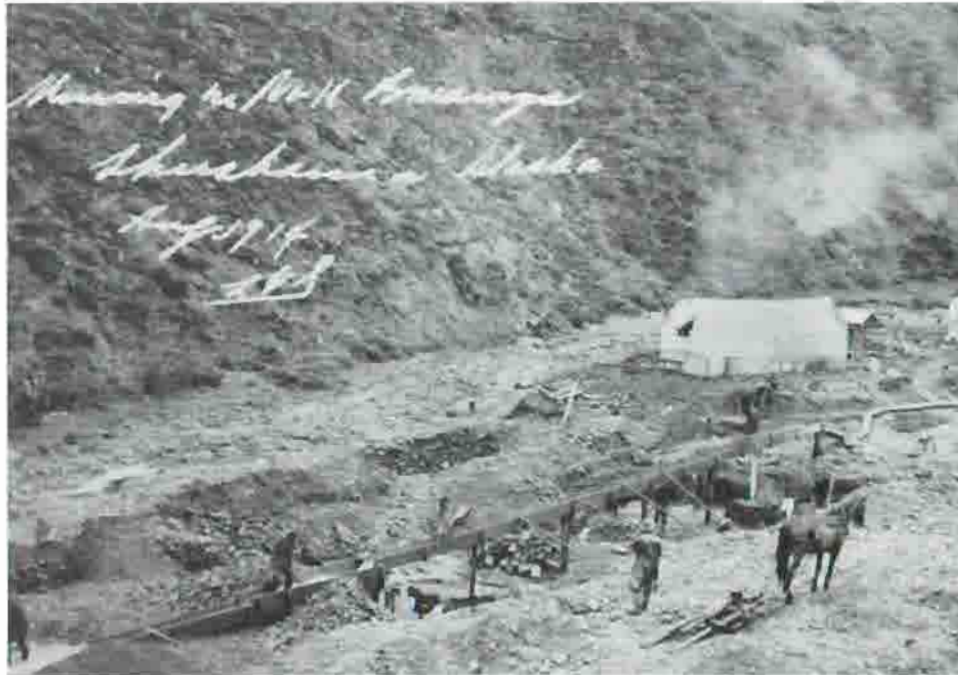


Fig. 23

Mining on Bonanza No. 11, c. 1914.

Note use of horse scraper.

Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Lem Gates and Dud McKinney did far better on Bonanza No. 8 Fraction. Leasing the claim from Fred Best, they reportedly recovered six thousand dollars in gold. Further up Bonanza, the returns were more modest. On No. 9, for example, Henry Dubois made little more than wages.<sup>48</sup>

Two parties examined Bonanza No. 10. While a lessee explored the lower half, Carl Whitham worked the upper. Like Hamshaw's, his crew utilized a horse-drawn scraper to remove the surface gravel.<sup>49</sup>

Miners named McKay and Clinton prospected the lower end of claim No. 11, but found no productive ground. Dud McKinney and Lem Gates achieved better results on the other half. Late in the season they located a patch of bedrock which yielded six



dollars to the square foot and reportedly recovered close to five thousand dollars.<sup>50</sup> Gates, however, never got to enjoy his newfound wealth. Following a prolonged illness, he died that August and was buried in Chisana City.<sup>51</sup>

Three men leased the lower portion of claim No. 12 in 1914, using wheelbarrows to remove the overburden. Another three worked the property's upper half, where they located sufficient water to clean about 1,500 square feet of bedrock. Neither, however, found much gold.<sup>52</sup>



**Fig. 24**  
**Billy James (second from left) shoveling-in**  
**on Little Eldorado No. 1, August 1913.**  
Cairnes Collection, courtesy Earth Sciences Sector,  
Natural Resources Canada.

Of all the claims in the district, Little Eldorado No. 1 remained the most productive. Moving 9,220 cubic yards of gravel from 1,029 linear feet of the creek bottom, Fletcher Hamshaw recovered \$51,952 worth of gold.<sup>53</sup>

Carl Whitham spent the entire summer working Little Eldorado No. 2. Starting with about fifteen lengths of sluice box, his seven employees gradually added more as their mining progressed upstream. They also employed pressurized water to keep tailings from blocking the lower end of their line.<sup>54</sup>

Little Eldorado No. 3 was far less productive. Although Waggoner and Johnson operated the claim throughout the season, they only cleared about five thousand dollars.<sup>55</sup>

Charles Range, George Stone, and four associates leased Skookum Creek No. 1 from owner Bud Sargent. Beginning at its mouth, which lies on Little Eldorado No. 2, they worked their way upstream until, by the end of July, they had excavated 224 linear feet of the creek bottom. The miners experienced difficulties, however, acquiring sufficient water with which to wash their gravel. Although they increased their supply by constructing a ditch to the head of Little Eldorado, they failed to muster a sufficient head. Consequently, they had to accumulate water and to sluice only intermittently. Nevertheless, their efforts were successful. They recovered substantial gold, including many \$10 and \$20 nuggets and one worth \$52.<sup>56</sup>



**Fig. 25**  
**The Hamshaws at home**  
**on Little Eldorado Creek, June 1915.**  
 Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Several prospectors, including Whitehorse resident J. E. McGuire, examined Snow Gulch, another tributary of Little Eldorado. Although they found workable gravel in both the stream bed and on the benches, they had to delay their work. Until mining stopped on Little Eldorado No. 2, there was nowhere to dispose of the tailings.<sup>57</sup>

Miners working Big Eldorado Creek were at least moderately successful. The stream produced five thousand dollars in gold during the 1914 season, with one operator named Mike O'Malley recovering nearly half of that amount. Upper Discovery, part of the block held by Hamshaw, was leased to two men who seem to have only prospected the

property. Two others worked No. 1 Below, but it yielded little more than wages. More vigorous activity occurred on claim No. 3 Below. Here, ten men mined about 250 linear feet of creek bottom.<sup>58</sup>

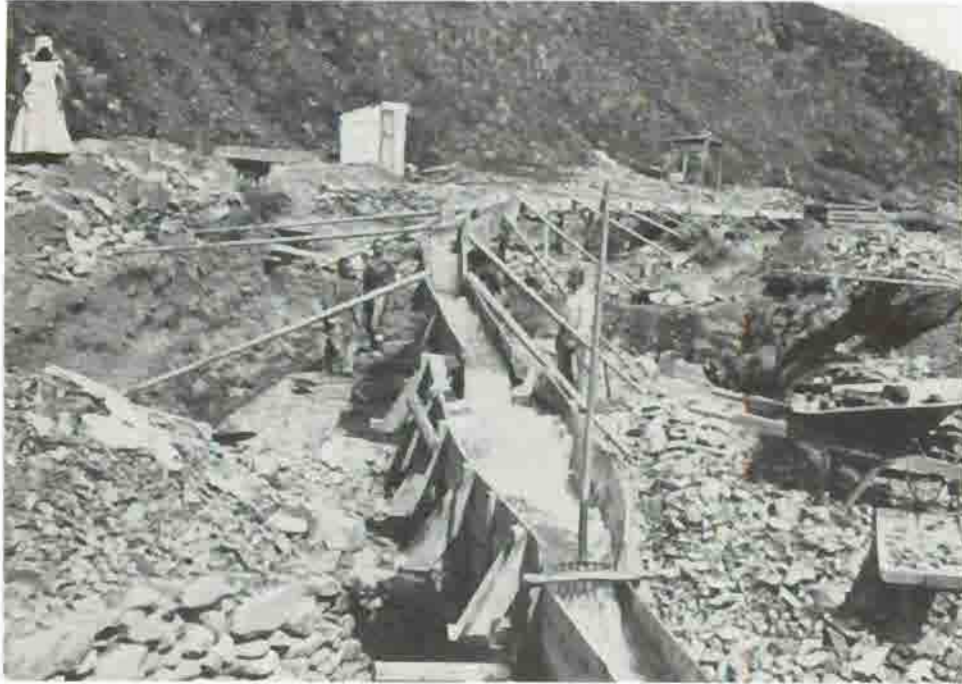


Fig. 26

Mining on Glacier Creek, c. 1914.

Note use of sluice fork to catch larger stones.

Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

No. 4 Below was also worked intensively. Two men ground-sluced off about four feet of surface gravel before beginning to shovel-in. By the end of the summer, they had excavated six hundred linear feet. Their profits, however, were disappointing, with the operators reporting "only a fair return."<sup>59</sup>

Gold Run experienced a similar level of activity. Six men operated No. 2 Below, located just above its junction with Glacier Creek. Although they eventually worked about 150 linear feet of creek bottom, this claim barely paid its expenses.<sup>60</sup>

Four men mined Gold Run No. 1 Above, where winter drift shafts had encountered an encouraging amount of gold. Unfortunately, Gold Run's water supply proved to be too meager for efficient mining. To alleviate this deficiency, its operators constructed a one-half-mile-long ditch to tap the upper part of Discovery Pup, and a dam with which to consolidate the resulting water. Their strategy succeeded and they eventually excavated about five hundred linear feet.<sup>61</sup>

No. 2 Above, located near the head of the Gold Run basin, got far less attention. Here, one man prospected the benches throughout the summer.<sup>62</sup>

Poorman Creek, Gold Run's largest tributary, also received some limited action on claim No. 1. As the stream was much too small to furnish an adequate head of water, its operators built two dams to impound a sufficient supply. They also assembled nine, twelve-foot-long sluice box segments. Their efforts were in vain, however, as they recovered insufficient gold to justify further mining.<sup>63</sup>



Fig. 27

A typical miner's residence above Bonanza Creek.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Other creeks were also examined. Dawson resident William Steinberger, for example, reported finding good prospects on Canyon Creek during 1914. Prospectors claimed to have discovered pay on the benches of Coarse Money Creek as well. Those working Chathenda and Chavolda Creeks had far poorer luck. None recovered any appreciable quantity of gold.<sup>64</sup>

While most miners concentrated on mining surface placers, a few sunk shafts. Some were even rather extensive. One dug near the mouth of Dry Gulch by Anthony McGuire, for example, was ninety-six-feet deep. All, however, were wasted efforts.<sup>65</sup>

By mid-summer opinions regarding the promise of the Chisana district varied widely. Most acknowledged some of the region's drawbacks. The gold bearing area, for example, was relatively small:

Exclusive of a few claims from which some gold was taken during prospecting operations, all the gravels which have been profitably mined can be included within a circle only five miles in diameter, with Gold Hill as its center. . . . In the whole district mining was actively carried on during the summer of 1914 on about twenty-one claims. . . .<sup>66</sup>



Fig. 28

Sidney "Too Much" Johnson's pack train  
leaving Bonanza City for McCarthy, 1915.

Stanley Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

It was also a expensive place to mine. Labor was prohibitively high, generally costing around six dollars per day, plus board. Stephen R. Capps believed that conditions in the district justified the expense. He cautioned, however, that it would eventually curtail development, as "much ground can not now be worked that would yield a profit if the labor cost were less."<sup>67</sup>

Apparently agreeing with Capps, Hamshaw offered his workers only five dollars per day, to be paid by draft on a Seattle bank. On June 16, the 115-man Shushanna Miners Association rejected his proposal, insisting that they be paid in gold at the six-dollar rate. Faced with a strike, Hamshaw eventually acceded to the group's demands.<sup>68</sup>

Fred Best also experienced some labor problems on Bonanza No. 7. His, however, were far less serious than Hamshaw's. After complaining about their wages for nearly a week, Best's men cooled down and returned to work at their original rate of pay.<sup>69</sup>

The district weathered some other difficulties as well. As no timber occurred near the mines, wood was in short supply. While the area now possessed two sawmills, lumber still cost between \$125 and \$150 per thousand board feet at the mill, and transportation charges were high. Even firewood brought forty dollars a cord when delivered to the mouth of Little Eldorado.<sup>70</sup>



Fig. 29  
Sledding logs up Chathenda Creek, c. 1915.  
Stanley-Mason Collection,  
courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Food also remained expensive. Fred Best noted that

... with the storekeepers arriving daily and hoping to 'get rich quick,' prices which are already too high, are increasing. Flour--forty cents per pound; sugar--fifty cents per pound; beans--twenty-five cents; other things in proportion--no 'luxury items' included here!<sup>71</sup>

Despite such obvious drawbacks, some individuals continued to promote the district. Harold H. Waller, a young mining engineer from Seattle, for example, assured newsmen that Chisana was far from being "a fizzle." Predicting that the season's production would reach \$400,000, he described it as "... a sporting proposition."<sup>72</sup>

When the anticipated discoveries failed to materialize, many residents left the region. Some, like postmaster Theodore Kettleton, went to Fairbanks, in route to the new diggings along the Tolovana River. Others moved to the Nizina district. A few even headed for the coast. Tony Dimond was one of the latter. Failing to make any money, Dimond resigned his position as commissioner and returned to Valdez.<sup>73</sup>

Both individuals, however, were soon replaced. The government appointed George R. Goshaw as postmaster and George E. Hill as commissioner. Hill, however, served only briefly before being succeeded by J. J. Finnegan.<sup>74</sup>

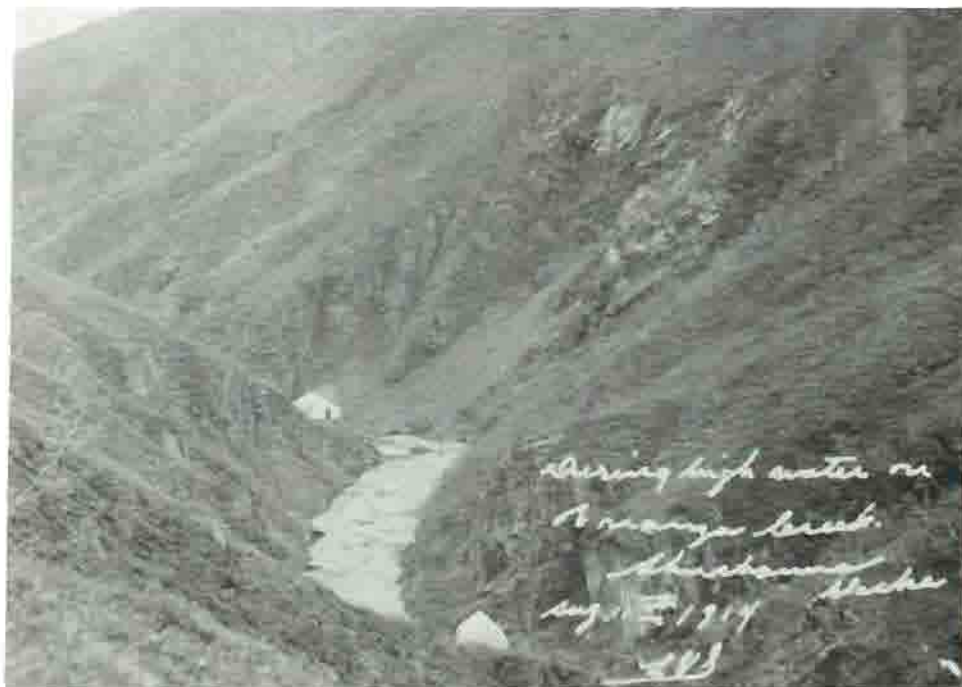


Fig. 30

A flood on lower Bonanza Creek, August 1914.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

In August heavy rains disrupted mining activity throughout the region. Due to its more extensive development, Bonanza Creek was hardest hit. Flood waters destroyed one of Hamshaw's dams, and damaged flume sections or sluice boxes belonging to virtually every other outfit. Best, for example, reported that "it looked like a hurricane struck No. 7, with flumes, sluice boxes, [and] lumber . . . scattered everywhere." Lacking sufficient time and materials to rebuild, many operators were forced to prematurely end their 1914 season.<sup>75</sup>

Despite such setbacks, 1914 was a very successful year. The area's miners recovered 12,094 ounces of gold, or about a quarter of a million dollars. Eagerly anticipating the

coming season, around two hundred chose to winter in the district. Most stayed in Chisana City.<sup>76</sup>

One such resident was fifty-year-old Louis K. Schonborn, a well known Dawson City hotel operator during the Klondike rush. Reaching the Chisana district too late to locate a productive claim, Schonborn instead established a second-hand business, reselling outfits purchased from busted stampeders. While he located his first shop in Bonanza City, he soon moved eight miles down Chathenda Creek to the larger community of Chisana City.<sup>77</sup>



Fig. 31

Louis Schonborn's store in Bonanza City, 1914.

Zacharias Collection, courtesy Alaska State Library and Archives.

On December 26, 1914, Schonborn disappeared. When local authorities finally organized a search, they found his body in a vacant cabin about a quarter of a mile west of town. He had been shot twice and robbed, the district's only recorded murder.<sup>78</sup>

Area residents were predictably outraged. Puzzled by the fact that Schonborn had failed to lock his store, many believed that he had left with a friend or at least an acquaintance. Circumstantial evidence suggested that a popular prospector named Jimmy Kingston had committed the crime and he was duly arrested. Deputy Marshal Frank Hoffman and George R. Goshaw transported Kingston to Valdez, where he was held until the Grand Jury convened the following September. The Grand Jury, however, ultimately cleared Kingston, and Schonborn's murder was never solved.<sup>79</sup>



Chisana City remained viable for another year. During the summer of 1915, it still contained at least eighteen businesses, including lodging houses, saloons, and stores. The turnover of federal officials, however, continued. Resigning as U.S. commissioner, J. J. Finnegan was replaced by Tony Dimond's former assistant, Tony McGettigan.<sup>80</sup>



Fig. 32  
Mining near the head of an unidentified creek  
in the Chisana district, c. 1914.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

As in previous years, most mining occurred on Bonanza Creek. Fred Best and Don L. Greene reported a fair return from their operation on No. 3; Joe McClellan, Robert W. Wiley, and a crew of five sluiced the upper end of No. 3 Fraction; Fletcher Hamshaw's twelve-man crew finished mining No. 4 and moved up to the lower end of No. 5; Max Altman and a nine man crew made several cuts on the lower end of No. 6; Edward "Shorty" Briggen, a miner named Hocker, and five employees mined No. 7; John Ludwig and his partner sluiced on No. 7 Fraction, which had been successfully worked by Andy Taylor the previous year; Jim Hagen and a man named Smedley mined No. 8; Robert M. Clark mined the lower end on No. 10; and James H. Murie worked eleven employees on upper No. 10.<sup>81</sup>

Billy James experienced a busy season. He and a crew of seven constructed a one-thousand-foot-long flume to transport water from Coarse Money Creek for hydraulic mining on Bonanza No. 9. Then he and N. P. Nelson began the process of extending

the ditch, crossing from the right to the left limit of the creek at Bonanza No. 6 and continuing downstream all the way to Bonanza No. 4.<sup>82</sup>

Dud McKinney also enjoyed a productive year. Two laymen, named Huntley and Moore, leased the lower part of his No. 11 claim, while McKinney and his crew mined the upper. Although his lessees experienced a disappointing season, McKinney found good pay, including some fifty-dollar pans. McKinney, however, suffered tragedy as well. On July 4, his old friend George Myers collapsed and died while visiting Bonanza No. 10. After the funeral, Myers was buried on the adjoining bench.<sup>83</sup>

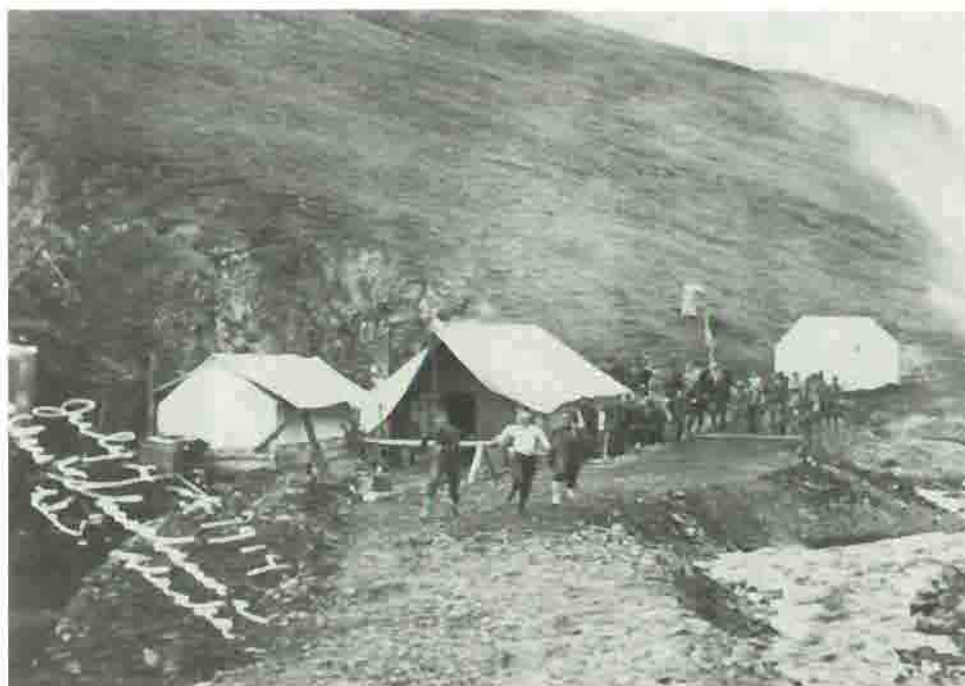


Fig. 33

A Fourth of July footrace at Hamshaw's camp, 1914.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Miners also worked claims further up Bonanza Creek. Alfred T. Wright and a miner named Anderson, for example, worked the upper end of No. 11 Fraction; George Bittner and a partner operated No. 12; James, Eagan, and Ryan examined No. 13; and John Nichols prospected Bonanza No. 17 for Chisana City store owner Sam Shucklin.<sup>84</sup>

Little Eldorado Creek and its tributaries were mined just as intensively as Bonanza. Two of Hamshaw's laymen, Andy Johnson and a miner named McGovern, worked the upper left limit of No. 1; Carl Whitham and ten employees operated No. 2; William "Billy" McLennan and six men mined No. 3; Charles Range and George Stone worked Bud Sargent's claim at Skookum Creek No. 1; George Woodman and a partner named

Deffinbaugh mined Skookum Creek No. 2; and W. E. Nelson examined Nos. 3 and 4 on Snow Gulch.<sup>85</sup>

Other area creeks received some attention. At least three miners worked parts of Big Eldorado-Creek: Montgomery and Ketching sluiced No. 4 Below Upper Discovery while Richard Bell mined No. 3 Below. Eagan and company worked No. 1 on Coarse Money Creek; Louis McCallum, a miner named McNutt, and George Tweedale sluiced Shamrock Creek; Aaron Nelson prospected Canyon Creek; E. J. "Jack" Costello examined Lucky Pup; Bastell, Lewis, and Munsell mined No. 3 Below on Gold Run Creek; Dan Ryan sluiced Poorman Creek; and Wagner and Hill prospected Sargent Creek.<sup>86</sup>



Fig. 34

Splitting firewood at Hamshaw's bunkhouse, July 1914.  
Stanley-Mason Collection, courtesy Tacoma Public Library.

Despite all this activity, by season's end it was clear that the Chisana was a declining district. Its gold production, for example, had fallen well below 1914 levels, with miners recovering only 7,740 ounces or about \$160,000. Employment was also down. Chisana's seventeen active mines only fielded about 110 men. Having experienced a discouraging year, most miners left that fall, with only about fifty choosing to winter in Chisana City.<sup>87</sup>

These miners, however, remained committed to the district. Some contracted with freighter Sidney "Too Much" Johnson that October to reestablish the Hazelet trail. Billy

James made the largest contribution, donating \$500 cash and one man's labor, estimated to be worth an additional \$300. The Alaska Road Commission supported the project as well, granting \$500 toward the effort. Even McCarthy merchants participated, adding another \$250. Anxious to see the job completed, James promised that any additional costs would be paid by "the people in the Shushanna."<sup>88</sup>

Some local residents would have been smart to leave. Fred Best's diary records the death of a friend in March 1916:

Heard today that little Fritz, who went to North Fork [of the White River] with Carl [Whitham] and I, was found frozen to death over on North Fork Island. He was over there when I came in from hunting and got caught out and froze.<sup>89</sup>

Fritz's death was not the only excitement that spring. On April 10, Robert K. Hover's store in Bonanza City caught fire, but quick action by local residents managed to save it.<sup>90</sup> Billy James experienced some difficulties as well, losing one of his horses down a glacial crevasse.<sup>91</sup>

The district's miners received more welcome news the following month. Louis McCallum, Edward McMullen, George Tweedale, W. A. Biglow, L. McAllister, Tony McGettigan, and Fred Nelson reported making a new discovery on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek about twenty miles west of Chisana City. The men extracted over four feet of paydirt from the bottom of their ninety-foot shaft before striking water and being driven out. The strike generated a great deal of excitement, but Foley Creek proved to be another bust. Although prospectors blanketed the area with over a hundred claims, it never produced any significant amount of gold.<sup>92</sup>

That summer, the area's mining activity dwindled even further. Now it contained only twelve mines, employing a total of forty men. While approximately thirty-five others continued to prospect in the vicinity, conditions deteriorated. A draught, for example, seriously hampered their sluicing operations. Gold production consequently fell to just \$40,000, a 75 percent decline.<sup>93</sup>

As in past years, most activity focused on Bonanza Creek. Having retrieved their claims from Fletcher Hamshaw, Billy James and N. P. Nelson attempted to increase their output by installing a thirty-five-ton hydraulic plant. It, unfortunately, remained unable to operate due to the lack of water.<sup>94</sup>

Other claims on Bonanza were also active: Andy Taylor and Joe McClellan reported a good cleanup from No. 3; Fred Best and Don Greene worked No. 7; Jim Murie and Jack Costello mined No. 10; Al Wright and a miner named McNutt operated No. 11; and Lewis V. Stanley prospected on the stream as well.<sup>95</sup>

Several miners worked property on Little Eldorado. Billy James and N. P. Nelson operated No. 1; Carl Whitham mined both No. 2 and No. 2 Fraction, as well as an adjoining claim on Snow Gulch, one of Little Eldorado's northern tributaries; and Joe McClellan and Charles Fogelberg worked a claim on Bug Gulch, another branch of Little Eldorado.<sup>96</sup>

A tributary of Glacier Creek also received some attention, with Ned Hill and a man named Jensey operating a claim on Sargent Creek.<sup>97</sup>

Miners excavated two deep pits during the previous winter, on Skookum and Gold Run Creeks. The one on Gold Run appears to have been at least partially successful, for in March, the reports of a strike precipitated a small rush from McCarthy, Dawson City, and Whitehorse. Oscar Erickson began digging near Dry Gulch as well, but with tragic results. That fall, his friends found him dead in his shaft.<sup>98</sup>

Like many of his fellow miners, Fred Best usually wintered in the district, passing his time by trapping and hunting. He also frequently visited Bonanza City, where he spent many pleasant evenings visiting friends and playing cards. Only once or twice a year did he bother to travel across the Wrangell Mountains to the more urban community of McCarthy, and such journeys were never easy:

At dawn it was still snowing and blowing so hard that it was impossible to see more than a few yards ahead, but we started for the summit anyway. We all knew the trail, and knew there would be crevasses, some of them hundreds of feet deep, to cross. The men struggled on, the dogs worked valiantly, and we got over safely, so we kept going the thirty-five miles to town. I fell in one crack, but the dogs pulled me out. It was a long, hard day, and we were all four tired out--but glad to get over the summit.<sup>99</sup>

Best was not always quite so lucky. That November, for example, he barely survived a local jaunt.

I started back to get the other sled. Snow deep. Could not get to it and started back. Got lost. Could not see my trail. Dark. Hitched myself up to dogs and late at night got to little tent all in. No grub or ax. I broke wood with my hands and kept fire going all night. The dogs saved me. About 9 feet of snow. I was all in and it was the narrowest I ever came to perishing. I laid down several times but would get up and stagger on behind the dogs. God bless them. It was a narrow call I tell you.<sup>100</sup>

The conditions during 1917 were very similar to the previous year, with both the population and mineral production continuing to decline. Eleven mines now employed forty-four men, producing 1,935 ounces, or about \$40,000 in gold.<sup>101</sup>

Most of the mining activity occurred on Bonanza Creek. Andy Taylor and Joe McClellan mined No. 2; Tony McGettigan and Bob Hover worked No. 2 Bench; Fred Best and Don Greene mined Nos. 3 and 7; a partnership composed of Billy James, Matilda Wales, N. P. Nelson, and Billy Johnson operated Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 9; Dud McKinney worked No. 8; Ed McMullen and Nelson mined No. 10; and Al Wright worked Nos. 11 and 11 Fraction.<sup>102</sup>

Several other claims were also active. Billy James's syndicate operated Little Eldorado No. 1; Carl Whitham mined Little Eldorado No. 2; Bud Sargent and D. Percy

Thornton worked Skookum Creek; J. E. McCabe, E. R. Behling, and Blas Joseph "Joe" Davis operated Big Eldorado No. 3 Below; Shorty Briggen mined Big Eldorado No. 2 Below; James "Windy Jim" McDonald worked Gold Run No. 2; and Virgil and Lee Catching mined Gold Run No. 3.<sup>103</sup>

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE LONG BUST

The First World War curtailed mining throughout Alaska, and the Chisana was no exception. Its output plummeted in 1918, with prospectors recovering only 726 ounces, or \$15,000 worth of gold.<sup>1</sup>

A war-related boom swept the United States, attracting a considerable number of Alaska residents. The territory's population, in fact, declined by nearly 15 percent between 1910 and 1920. Moreover, an accompanying increase in the cost of labor, mining machinery, and supplies made working low grade placer deposits far less profitable.<sup>2</sup>

Several long-term residents left the district. Fred Best, for example, joined the navy, while Percy Thornton, Harry Boyden, and Carl Whitham all entered the army.<sup>3</sup>

Others remained. Writing to Best early that summer, Linnie Nelson mentioned seeing many prominent members of the Chisana community, including Andy Taylor, Jim Murie, Don Greene, Fred Nelson, Jack Carroll, Dud McKinney, Al Wright, and Charles Simons.<sup>4</sup>

As in previous years, most mining occurred on Bonanza Creek. James and Nelson, for example, divided their joint holdings, with the latter acquiring Bonanza No. 4. Although seemingly happy with the deal, it meant added work for Nelson, who was forced to build a new camp on the claim.<sup>5</sup>

Ketching and Carden also worked Bonanza Creek. Their operation, however, generated some genuine excitement. One day while they were laboring below their dam, its gate failed, causing a flood which caught the pair completely by surprise. Ketching quickly struggled out of the torrent, but Carden was swept far downstream and nearly drowned.<sup>6</sup>

While still low, production nearly doubled in 1919. Local miners increased their recovery to 1,306 ounces or about \$27,000.<sup>7</sup> The district, however, soon resumed its long-term cycle of decline. In 1920 the Chisana's eight mines together employed only eighteen men. While failing to find any new deposits, these operators recovered an average of \$2.08 for each cubic yard of gravel worked. Nevertheless, their total output fell to 968 ounces, or approximately \$20,000.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the district's overall decline, some traffic still utilized Hazelet's old trail over the Nizina and Chisana Glaciers. In May 1920, for example, census taker George Walker employed that route in traveling from McCarthy to Chisana City. He experienced an especially harrowing trip. Encountering a fierce storm, Walker and companion Joe McClellan eventually lost the trail and were forced to bivouac.

With a snowshoe and a frying pan they dug out in the snow a hole big enough for both to get into the glacier. This they roofed over with snowshoes and canvas,

but in spite of this precaution the hole kept filling up with drifting snow, and the men were constantly besieged with a desire to sleep. After passing forty hours in this snowy tomb, they scrambled out to find the storm over and a bright sun shining.<sup>9</sup>

Upon reaching Chisana City, Walker found that the population had substantially declined. He reported only 148 residents in the vicinity, 105 of whom were Alaska Natives. The forty-three white residents included the U.S. commissioner, a merchant, a trader, a blacksmith, a cook, two trappers, three freighters, ten prospectors, seventeen placer miners, and six wives or children, recorded as being without occupation.<sup>10</sup>

Six mines still operated in 1921, employing a total of sixteen men. Most utilized fairly primitive technology. While many employed automatic dams to remove the overburden, all still hand-worked the underlying gravel. Despite such labor intensive methods, gold production increased slightly. Local miners recovered 1,113 ounces or about \$23,000.<sup>11</sup>

Several claims experienced renewed activity that year. Pete Eikland and Jack Carroll, for example, purchased Bonanza No. 4 from N. P. Nelson, and Hans Running and John Swanson leased Bonanza No. 6 from Billy James and Percy Thornton. Both pairs worked open-cuts that summer and drift-mined the following winter.<sup>12</sup>

Big Eldorado Creek also received some attention. In about 1921, Red Stevens noticed that no recent assessment work had been done on Big Eldorado Nos. 3 and 4 Below Upper Discovery. After checking the recording books, he re-staked the property. According to Knut Peterson,

nobody paid much attention . . . until the next spring when it was noted that he had a big tent camp set up on #3. He had hired six men, all good workers, and he was ground sluicing to beat the band.<sup>13</sup>

Although Tony McGettigan and Dud McKinney insisted that Stevens had jumped their claims, the prospector was never arrested and the original owners eventually let the matter drop. No one knows for sure just how much gold Stevens ultimately took out of Big Eldorado Creek. It was rumored, however, that when he left the Chisana, he paid \$100,000 in cash for a farm he purchased in Washington state.<sup>14</sup>

In 1922 only nine mines operated in the district. Employment, however, increased to twenty-five men. In total, these mines moved about 10,600 cubic yards of gravel during the course of the season, producing 1,403 ounces, or \$29,000 worth of gold.<sup>14</sup>

There were few changes the following year: nine operations employed twenty-two men and recovered approximately \$23,000. Billy James and Percy Thornton boasted the largest camp, employing six men on Little Eldorado No. 1 and Bonanza No. 6. Two other partnerships also worked Bonanza Creek that season. One consisted of Miles Atkinson and Pete Eikland and the other included Don Greene and Joe Davis. Tony McGettigan mined Bonanza Creek as well.<sup>16</sup>



Three other creeks received less attention: Carl Whitham continued to mine Little Eldorado No. 2; Shorty Briggen, Aaron Nelson and Jack O'Hara operated on Big Eldorado; and Dud McKinney and Jack Carroll worked property on Gold Run.<sup>17</sup>

Transportation remained the district's most enduring problem. In the summer, most supplies arrived via pack horse from McCarthy, a six-day trip of approximately eighty miles. Freighters charged twenty-five cents per pound to Chisana and usually required an additional nickel for delivery to the creeks. In the winter, cargo travelled by dogsled. Rates by this method, however, were somewhat lower, averaging about twenty cents per pound.<sup>18</sup> Bill Berry and Sid Johnson did much of the hauling, although neither carried the mail.<sup>19</sup> That important contract went to Harry Boyden.<sup>20</sup>

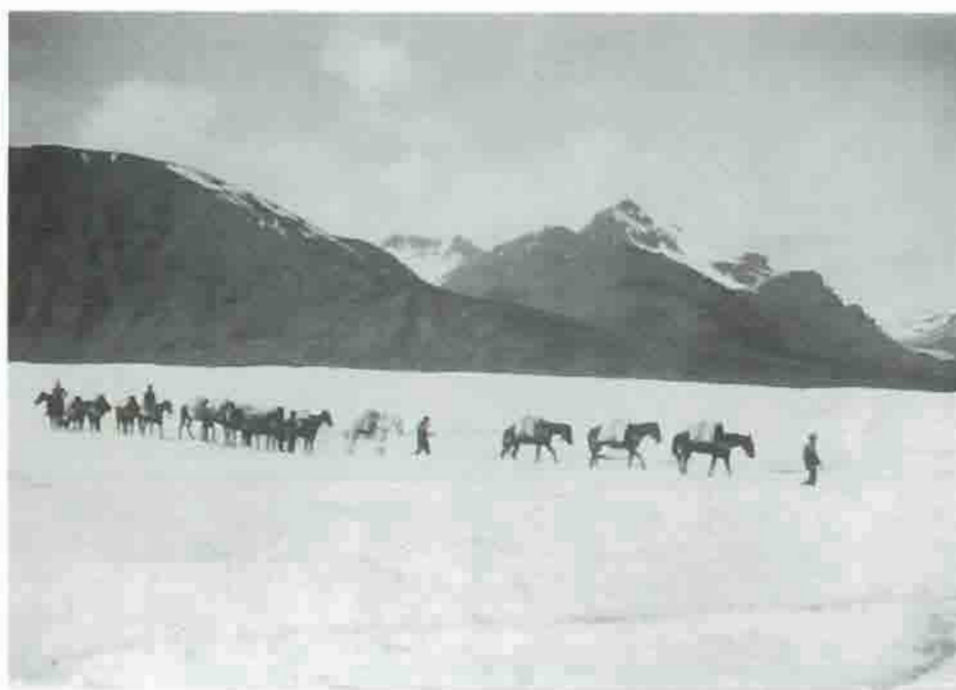


Fig. 35

A pack train crossing the Russell Glacier in Skolai Pass, 1915.  
Capps Collection, courtesy Alaska and Polar Regions Department,  
Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The district's decline continued in 1924, when eight mines produced \$23,400 worth of gold.<sup>21</sup> By now, Chisana City was largely abandoned. According to Milton B. Medary, a member of a Smithsonian expedition which visited that summer, the town consisted of "452 log cabins in which one man lives alone."<sup>22</sup>

Six mines operated in 1925, producing \$24,000 worth of gold. The following year, the district was down to only five. Gold production also fell, now barely reaching

\$18,000. A. S. Johnson fielded the largest crew. His three employees worked Little Eldorado Creek, employing a small hydraulic plant on the adjoining benches.<sup>23</sup>

Two other creeks received more limited attention. Jack Carroll worked Gold Run and three other men operated claims on Bonanza: Pete Eikland mined No. 3; Tony McGettigan and Don Greene operated No. 5; and Aaron Nelson worked an unidentified claim, probably No. 4. Miles Atkinson, who had consistently worked Bonanza Creek in the past, did not return for the 1926 season.<sup>24</sup>

Local miners, who blamed much of the area's decline on its high transportation costs, began lobbying the Alaska Road Commission to improve their access. Most favored establishing a new trail via Gulkana, "the only safe and feasible way to get supplies into camp." A. S. Johnson was especially persistent, arguing that "if half the energy that was wasted [in building and maintaining the glacier trail] was used on the Gulkana route . . . we would be getting freight landed here at a reasonable rate." Genuine improvements, however, remained far in the future.<sup>25</sup>

Production continued to fall for the remainder of the decade. In 1927, for example, a few small camps recovered about \$15,000 worth of gold.<sup>26</sup>

In 1928 about twelve men worked five separate claims, but were greatly hampered by a lack of water. Although several operators attempted to alleviate the problem by constructing automatic dams, none were completed in time to salvage the season. Miners hydraulicking on Bonanza Creek discovered a rich new channel, however, and as a result the district's total gold production rose to \$16,000.<sup>27</sup>

Although the water supply increased in 1929, production plummeted to only \$7,000. Miners now worked less accessible areas which had been passed over during the district's boom. Only five operations were even moderately active: Miles Atkinson, Aaron Nelson, and a partnership consisting of Tony McGettigan and Don Greene worked Bonanza Creek; Joe Davis mined Carl Whitham's ground on Little Eldorado; and Barney McKinney sluiced Gold Run.<sup>28</sup>

Chisana City experienced a more eventful year. Death took Charles Simons, the community's postmaster and sole remaining merchant, bringing genuine hardship to the region. Robert McKennan reported that local residents were forced "to trade at the posts on the Copper River," the nearest, that at the mouth of the Slana River, being about one hundred miles away.<sup>29</sup>

Fortunately, this problem was somewhat ameliorated by the addition of another travel option. In 1929 the Alaska Road Commission hired Gus Johnson to build an airstrip in Chisana City. Placed in an abandoned channel of Chathenda Creek, Johnson's 1,500-foot-long by 150-foot-wide strip was relatively level, possessing a grade of only 2 percent. Few pilots, however, risked using the strip, despite government claims that it was "comparatively safe to land on."<sup>30</sup>

The area's gold production consequently continued to decline. In 1930 it amounted to only \$5,800. Although some mining occurred on at least six properties, none reported any significant new discoveries.<sup>31</sup> Most of the district's gold came from Carl Whitham's claims on Little Eldorado, still leased by Joe Davis.<sup>32</sup> Billy James concentrated on

Bonanza Creek, building an automatic dam on his Discovery claim. A persistent drought, however, limited its effectiveness.<sup>33</sup>

Barney McKinney worked Gold Run, employing a "boomer" dam on No. 1 Above Discovery. Although he eventually cleaned about 6,000 square feet of bedrock, he, like James, was hampered by a lack of water.<sup>34</sup>

Conditions worsened in 1931 with only about a dozen men continuing to mine. Production totalled about \$3,000.<sup>35</sup> Billy James worked his Bonanza Discovery, still employing his automatic dam to ground-sluice. A. S. Johnson reworked Bonanza No. 8, cleaning around 20,000 square feet. Tony McGettigan operated Bonanza No. 11. Installing a new splash-dam, he ground-sluiced about 4,000 square feet of bedrock. On Little Eldorado, Jack Carroll mined No. 1 and Joe Davis again operated No. 2. Louis McCallum even reported an encouraging lode discovery, finding three gold-bearing veins on the right limit of Alder Gulch.<sup>36</sup>



Fig. 36

Earl Hirst's workings at Bonanza No. 2, June 1940.  
Wayland Collection, courtesy United States Geological Survey.

The next year brought some recovery. Chisana City finally began receiving regular airplane service and pioneer Alaska aviators like Bob Reeve flew several loads of passengers and supplies into the district. This improved transportation probably helped to rekindle interest in the area, doubling its gold production to about \$7,000.<sup>37</sup>

Substantial changes occurred in 1933. The Alaska Road Commission built a road from the community of Gulkana to the Nabesna River, greatly facilitating local transportation.<sup>38</sup> As a result, twenty men mined in the district, the most in a decade.<sup>39</sup>

Tony McGettigan continued to operate on upper Bonanza Creek, and other creeks received some attention as well. Knut and Ulrich Peterson, for example, began working Big Eldorado Creek, and a new company opened a tract on Little Eldorado Creek which yielded especially heavy gold. One nugget, in fact, weighed seven ounces.<sup>40</sup>



**Fig. 37**

**Detail of Earl Hirst's hydraulic pit, 1940.  
Wayland Collection, courtesy United States Geological Survey.**

In 1934 some seven camps operated in the district, together employing about twenty men. The government's increase in the price of gold from \$20.67 to \$35.00 per ounce and the improvements in transportation had created incentives that encouraged mining. These factors prompted operators to explore deposits which had previously been ignored. N. P. Nelson, for example, built an elaborate ditch and flume system to Bonanza No. 5, starting about a half mile below the confluence with Coarse Money Creek and extending downstream past the mouth of Little Eldorado Creek.<sup>41</sup>

The next year the number of active operations increased to ten and the Chisana gold production jumped to \$21,000. N. P. Nelson continued to field the largest crew, engaging six men for most of the season. Earl Hirst headed the second largest outfit,

where four men were employed. Mining also continued on Little Eldorado, Big Eldorado, and Gold Run Creeks.<sup>42</sup>

The boom expanded in 1936. Although the district still only utilized about twenty men, total gold production jumped to \$37,500. As usual, most attention focused on Bonanza Creek.<sup>43</sup>



Fig. 38  
Don Greene's operation at  
Bonanza No. 3, June 1940.  
Wayland Collection, courtesy  
United States Geological  
Survey.

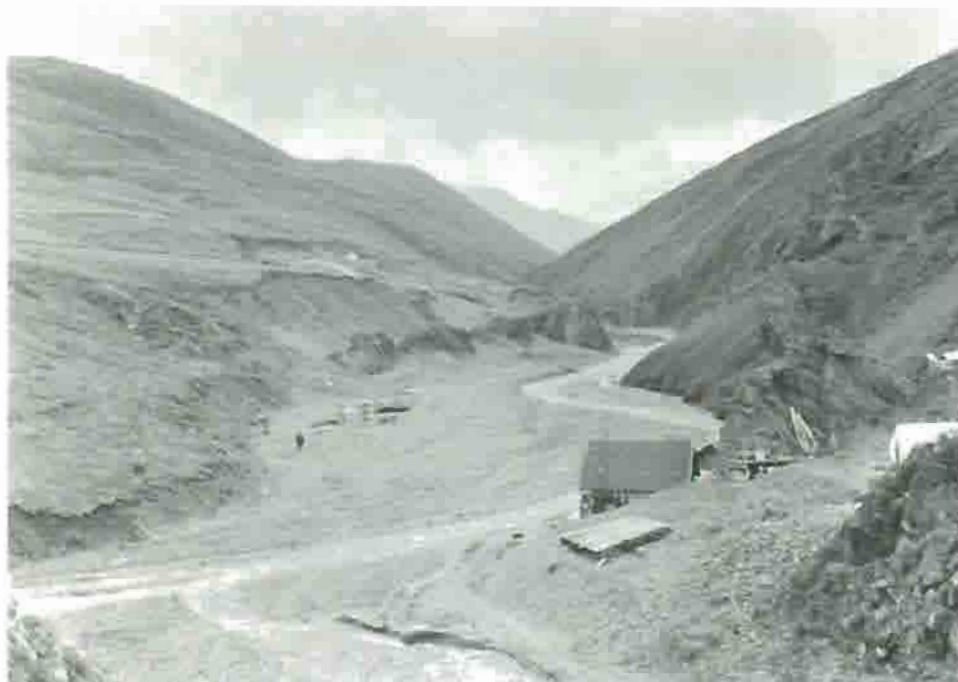
Billy James, for example, employed two men on his Discovery claim. Although they cleaned an abundance of bedrock that season, their returns were poor.<sup>44</sup>

Earl Hirst and his crew had a more productive year. Locating an old creek channel on Bonanza No. 2, they used a giant to remove the overburden. By fall, Hirst had cleaned 3,000 square feet of bedrock, recovering an average of three dollars per foot.<sup>44</sup>

Don Greene and two employees hydraulically mined the left bench of Bonanza No. 4. They cleaned 2,000 square feet of bedrock and pocketed one hundred ounces of gold.<sup>46</sup>

The N. P. Nelson Mining Company hydraulically mined Bonanza No. 6, like Greene working the left limit of the bench. Utilizing a giant to remove the overburden, its six man crew cleaned 9,000 square feet of bedrock and reportedly recovered a substantial quantity of gold.

Other claims were equally active. A. S. Johnson drift mined a bench on the left limit of Bonanza No. 9, though he only recovered a few ounces of gold. Tony McGettigan did better working Bonanza Nos. 11 and 12, which produced nearly twenty ounces in just ten days. Joe Davis continued operating both Little Eldorado No. 2 and the adjoining claim on Skookum Creek, though apparently his returns were substantially less.<sup>47</sup>



**Fig. 39**

**N. P. Nelson's bench workings at Bonanza No. 6, June 1940.  
Wayland Collection, courtesy United States Geological Survey.**

The Peterson brothers operated a "boomer" dam on Big Eldorado No. 1 Below Discovery, recovering forty-two ounces of gold. They also discovered a sulfide deposit, which they optimistically called the Monte Carlo Lode.<sup>48</sup>

As the 1930s ended, the Chisana's gold production slowly began to fall. In 1937 it equalled \$30,000, and in 1938 it totalled \$29,000. Otherwise, conditions remained much the same, with most operators concentrating on Bonanza Creek.<sup>49</sup>

Earl Hirst hydraulicked on Bonanza No. 2, working an old channel on the canyon's left limit. Don Greene mined a similar bench opposite Bonanza No. 3. An Upper Tanana Indian called "Shushanna Joe" worked the fraction between claim Nos. 3 and 4.

The Nelson Mining Company remained the largest operator in the drainage, employing five men on claim Nos. 5 and 6. Tony McGettigan operated on the creek as well, shoveling-in on Bonanza No. 12.<sup>50</sup>

Operators also worked three other creeks. An unidentified Native man worked the upper portion of Little Eldorado, Joe Davis hydraulicked on Skookum Creek, and Al Wright ground-sluced on Gold Run.<sup>51</sup>

The closure of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway in the fall of 1938 complicated operations in the Chisana district. That winter, however, Cordova Air contracted to deliver all the miners' freight. Both the terms and the service must have been satisfactory, for the parties continued the arrangement for several years.<sup>52</sup>

Gold production continued to decline. In 1939 it barely totalled \$20,000 and in 1940 it fell even further, reaching only \$14,000. Nelson remained the largest operator, though other miners worked Little Eldorado, Big Eldorado, and Gold Run Creeks.<sup>53</sup>

Earl Hirst still mined Bonanza No. 2, working an old channel located on the east side of the valley about twenty-five feet above the existing stream. To sluice at this location, Hirst diverted water from the upper end of the claim, transporting it to the site via an elaborate wooden flume.<sup>54</sup>

Don Greene worked Bonanza No. 3, operating on the east side of the canyon about one hundred feet above the creek. Greene obtained water from a gulch to the west of Bonanza, using an inverted siphon to bring it to his pit.<sup>55</sup>

The Nelson Mining Company conducted the district's most extensive placer operation on Bonanza No. 6. It employed hydraulic pressure to mine a low bench located approximately a hundred yards east of the stream, and roughly fifty feet above it.<sup>56</sup>

Several other miners also operated claims on Bonanza Creek in 1940. Tony McGettigan worked Bonanza No. 12 and a group of unidentified Native men mined Bonanza No. 3B Fraction and No. 4. Like everyone else in the district, both outfits were hindered by a lack of water.<sup>57</sup>

Other properties received more limited attention. Al Peterson and Charlie Hawkins prospected on Coarse Money Creek and Earl Hirst and Sam Gamblin even started a tunnel on their Eire group, a cluster of sixteen quartz lode claims located above Chathenda Creek.<sup>58</sup>

By now, Chisana City contained a substantial Native community, with several cabins grouped just northeast of the airstrip.<sup>59</sup> Its residents during this period included Shushanna Joe, Jack John Justin, Charley Toby, Sherry Nickolai, Bessie Joe, Suzie Joe, and Martha Mark.<sup>60</sup> According to Holly Reckord, Chisana City's Natives remained extremely mobile:

Using tents, they went hunting, trapping, or fishing during the times of each year when these activities were productive and undertook cash labor at Chisana during the summer. Thus they combined their traditional subsistence way of life with the new opportunities offered by mining activity.<sup>61</sup>

Gold production was stable in 1941, still totalling some \$14,000.<sup>62</sup> That winter, however, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor forever altered Chisana mining.

It continued in 1942, but total production fell to \$8,000. In October America's War Production Board issued Limitation Order L-208, which closed all but the smallest mines. Like most western states, Alaska fought the order. As a result, the federal government permitted some mines to operate, including those in Alaska employing five or fewer men.<sup>63</sup>

Although legally allowed to function, many operators closed their mines for the duration of the war. Most miners were now too old to work their claims without the help of younger labor. Seventy-five-year-old Tony McGettigan was one exception. He continued operating Bonanza No. 12 until he disappeared one spring while hiking in from Chisana City. The probable victim of a bear attack, McGettigan's body was never found.<sup>64</sup>

By 1944 things were grim in the Chisana district. Due to the necessities of war, Cordova Air had discontinued its service, and local residents had not received a shipment for eight long months. Although most were over sixty-five years old, they realized that they must soon attempt to hike the eighty or so miles back to civilization. Fortunately, only two days before they were due to start, Merle "Mudhole" Smith landed in the community, bringing their long awaited food and supplies.<sup>65</sup>

Mining resumed in 1945, though on a scale far smaller than in the immediate pre-war years. Only five outfits operated in 1945 and 1946, four of them on Bonanza Creek. Louis E. "Lou" Anderton, the Bonanza Mining Company, and the partnership of Earl Hirst and Harry Sutherland utilized hydraulic methods, while N. P. Nelson shoveled-in. Nelson's return was predictably meager. He reportedly recovered only three ounces in 1946.<sup>66</sup>

Davis performed his annual assessment work on Little Eldorado Nos. 2 and 2 Fraction, Snow Gulch No. 1, Skookum Creek No. 1, Blue Fox Claim on Skookum Creek, and two claims in Caribou Pass in 1946.<sup>67</sup> He also retained Gold Run Creek No. 1 and No. 1 Fraction.<sup>68</sup>

Although Billy James failed to complete his assessment work in 1945, he continued to control much of the district's most promising ground. In July 1946 he and his wife Agnes deeded their claims to the Nutzotin Placer Company, which they founded with the help of Almer J. Peterson. Reflecting their respective contributions, the new corporation selected Billy as president, Agnes as vice president, and Peterson as secretary.<sup>69</sup>

John Hodel mined Gold Run Creek in the late 1940s. Operating alone, he conducted that drainage's first reported hydraulic operation.<sup>70</sup> Al Wright held claims on Gold Run Creek as well, although he failed to work them in 1947.<sup>71</sup>

Both the Bonanza Mining Company and the Hirst/Sutherland partnership returned to Bonanza Creek in 1947.<sup>71</sup> Lou Anderton, however, moved on. Although he ran a hydraulic plant on Nugget and Thumb Creeks that summer, he seems to have devoted more effort to managing his Chisana City general store.<sup>73</sup>

Only one other miner worked in the district. Joe Davis resumed his hydraulic operation on Skookum Creek.<sup>74</sup>



## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE AFTERMATH

Starting in the late 1940s, hunting guides established headquarters in Chisana City, and its population slowly began to grow. Donald O. Spaulding, for example, was operating out of the community in 1947.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the influx of new residents, one pioneer remained a full time inhabitant. Occupying a small cabin at the southwest corner of the airstrip, N. P. Nelson ended the decade distributing the mail delivered by Cordova Air.<sup>2</sup>

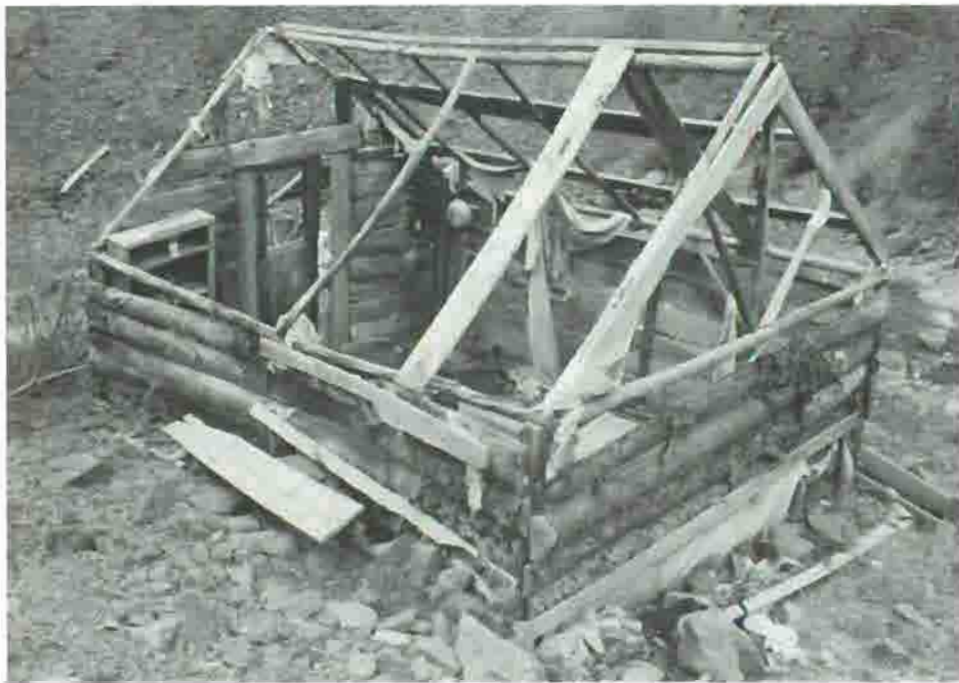


Fig. 40  
The remains of a tentframe, 1987.  
NPS photo.

Mining continued during the 1950s, though on an increasingly smaller scale. By the middle of the decade virtually all of the district's original claims had lapsed. Many, however, were eventually restaked by new operators employing mechanized equipment.

Several of the district's earliest residents still frequented Chisana City. Billy and Agnes James, for example, continued to spend much of their time in the community.<sup>3</sup> So did Shushanna Joe, who lived there until his death in about 1960.<sup>4</sup>

N. P. Nelson finally left Alaska in the mid-1950s, although he visited briefly in 1959. When the 96-year-old Nelson died in the mid-1960s, friends Ivan Thorall and Iver Johnson arranged to have his body cremated and his ashes returned to the district. Fittingly, the pair buried them on a prominent point above upper Bonanza Creek.<sup>5</sup>

Local residents submitted their first homestead applications about this same time, roughly dividing the Chisana townsite between two groups. Billy James filed on the eastern half in 1955, but died in Anchorage in 1960 before acquiring title. In 1962 guide Kenneth L. Folger sought the same spot, but never completed the necessary paperwork. Paul Jovich applied in 1968. He completed the process, receiving patent to the 18.5-acre site in 1979. Most of this property now belongs to guide Raymond A. McNutt.<sup>6</sup>



Fig. 41

A surviving section of an elaborate Bonanza flume, 1987.  
NPS photo.

In 1957 Lou Anderton filed on the western half of the townsite. Unfortunately, Anderton, like James, died before his paperwork was approved. Herbert H. "Bud" Hickathier staked the site in 1964, but he also suffered an untimely death.<sup>7</sup>

Two other residents also claimed local land. Elizabeth Hickathier filled on an 80-acre trade and manufacturing site about two miles west of the Chisana townsite in 1964; and Ivan Thorall applied for a 130-acre homestead south of Chathenda Creek in 1967. Both were ultimately approved.<sup>8</sup>

Conflicting provisions contained in Alaska's Statehood Act eventually stifled the growing demand for Chisana land. The act allowed Alaska to select 103.5 million acres from the public domain, but forbid it from choosing any land claimed by the state's indigenous population. Alaska maintained that the provision only applied to land which the Natives had physically occupied. The Natives, however, insisted that it also included the land they traditionally used for subsistence activities. Predictably, these opposing interpretations soon clashed.<sup>9</sup>



**Fig. 42**  
**An abandoned mining boiler, 1987.**  
**NPS photo.**

When Alaska refused to modify its stand, the Natives asked the Interior Department to withdraw its tentative approval of the state's land selections.<sup>10</sup> Ultimately, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall went even further. On January 17, 1969, he closed entry on all of Alaska's federal lands until the Native claims question had been satisfactorily resolved.<sup>11</sup> Congress eventually settled the issue on December 18, 1971, with its passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA).<sup>12</sup>

Alaska's Native communities were not the only group to profit from the land claims struggle. Environmental organizations benefited as well. ANCSA authorized the interior secretary to withdraw up to eighty million acres in Alaska, for study toward their potential inclusion in national parks or forests, wildlife refuges, or wild and scenic river corridors.<sup>13</sup>

This provision eventually led to enactment of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA), placing 104.3 million acres of the state under permanent federal protection. Among those selected were the 13.2 million acres now contained in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Therefore, the western half of Chisana City townsite, like most of the adjoining district, still remains in federal hands.<sup>14</sup>

Some mining, however, continues. ANILCA did not invalidate existing claims and many remain in effect. Not surprisingly, persistent operators like James A. Moody and Mark A. Fales still work Bonanza and Big Eldorado Creeks. The psychological heirs of Billy James and N. P. Nelson, these miners continue their predecessors' quest, ever searching for that one rich strike.

## ENDNOTES

### INTRODUCTION

<sup>1</sup> David Wharton, *The Alaska Gold Rush* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 3-5; William R. Hunt, *North of 53°: The Wild Days of the Alaska-Yukon Mining Frontier 1870-1914* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, Inc., 1974), *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Gold Hill alone retains over two hundred historically significant mining features. For a specific breakdown, see Geoffrey Bleakley, "Gold Hill Historic Mining District," draft National Register Nomination, historic files, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Copper Center, Alaska (hereafter cited WRST).

<sup>3</sup> Mark J. Kirchhoff, "Shushanna: Alaska's Last Great Rush," *Alaska Geographic* 16, no. 3 (1989): 68.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Pierre Berton, *The Klondike Fever. The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1958), 101-04.

<sup>5</sup> John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt. A History of the Farmers' Alliance and the People's Party* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), 322.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Hofstadter, ed., *The Progressive Movement, 1900-1915* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), 2.

<sup>7</sup> John D. Hicks, "Populist Origins," in Arthur Mann, ed., *The Progressive Era. Liberal Renaissance or Liberal Failure?* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 18.

<sup>8</sup> George E. Mowry, *The Era of Theodore Roosevelt and the Birth of Modern America* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1958), 3.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth A. Tower, "Hazelet's High Road to Chisana: Tapping a Gold Mine for Cordova," *Alaska History* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1991): 2. Hazelet was widely recognized as the discoverer of gold in the Chistochina district. In 1905 he had helped organize the Copper River and Northwestern Railway. He had helped found Cordova in 1908, later serving as the community's first mayor. Evangeline Atwood and Robert N. DeArmond, *Who's Who in Alaska Politics* (Anchorage: Alaska Historical Commission, 1977), 42; Ed Ferrell, *Biographies of Alaska-Yukon Pioneers, 1850-1950* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 1994), 134.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Gruening, *The State of Alaska. A Definitive History of America's Northernmost Frontier* (New York: Random House, 1954), 208.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis Green, *The Gold Hustlers. Dredging the Klondike, 1898-1966* (Vancouver: Dacher Printing Ltd., 1994), 99.

<sup>12</sup> Hudson Stuck, *Voyages on the Yukon and Its Tributaries* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917), 383; Clarence C. Hulley, *Alaska, 1741-1953* (Portland: Binfords and Mort, Publishers, 1953), 282.

## CHAPTER ONE

<sup>1</sup> The Upper Tanana word "Chisana" is usually translated as "red river." Donald J. Orth, *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*, USGS Professional Paper 567 (Washington: GPO, 1971), 213. For the arguments over its pronunciation, see Appendix One.

<sup>2</sup> Fred John, "Mendaes Nenn' Shallows Lake Country," in James Kari, ed., *Tatl'ahwt'-aenn Nenn' The Headwaters People's Country* (Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, 1986), 200-01; Jack John Justin, "Naabia Tl'aat Upper Nabesna River," in *ibid*, 208-11; Frederica de Laguna and Catharine McClellan, "Ahtna," in June Helm, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 6, Subarctic* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), 641; Catharine McClellan, "Tutchone," in *ibid*, 494; Robert A. McKennan, "Tanana," in *ibid*, 564; Holly Reckord, *Where Raven Stood: Cultural Resources of the Ahtna Region*, Occasional Paper No. 35 (Fairbanks: Cooperative Park Studies Unit, 1983), 238-39.

<sup>3</sup> Charles W. Hayes, "An Expedition through the Yukon District," *National Geographic Magazine* 4 (May 1892): 143-45.

<sup>4</sup> S. E. Harrison, "Great Copper Zone in Alaska," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine* 3, no. 4 (1907): 339; *Ibid*, "Alaskan Copper," *Alaska-Yukon Magazine* 4, no. 6 (1908): 452. It was Bratnober who later convinced the Guggenheim brothers to finance the Copper River and Northwestern Railway. Elizabeth A. Tower, ed., "Railroad Fever in Valdez, 1898-1907: An Account by George C. Hazelet," *Alaska History* 9, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 34.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen R. Capps, *The Chisana-White River District Alaska*, USGS Bulletin No. 630 (Washington: GPO, 1916), 90; Dalton's cabin still stood in August 1918, when it was visited by a big-game hunting party sponsored by the Colorado Museum of Natural History. J. A. McGuire, *In the Alaska-Yukon Gamelands* (Cincinnati: Stewart Kidd Company, 1921), 106. One of Alaska's foremost pathfinders, Dalton established a trading post in the Yukon Territory in 1894, eventually building his famous "Dalton Trail" over Chilkat Pass to connect it with the coast. In 1905 Dalton guided the surveyors locating the route for the Copper River and Northwestern Railway. Tower, "Railroad Fever in Valdez," 34.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "A Reconnaissance in the White and Tanana River Basins, Alaska, in 1898," in U.S. Geological Survey, *Twentieth Annual Report . . . 1898-1899, Part 7* (Washington: GPO, 1900), 433-34. For the details of Brooks's later career, see Allen Johnston, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. 3* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), 72-74.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "A Reconnaissance from Pyramid Harbor to Eagle City, Alaska, including a Description of the Copper Deposits of the Upper White and Tanana Rivers," in U.S. Geological Survey, *Twenty-first Annual Report . . . 1899-1900, Part 2* (Washington: GPO, 1900), 339.

<sup>8</sup> Oscar Rohn, "Report of Oscar Rohn on Exploration in Wrangell Mountain District," in Capt. William R. Abercrombie, ed., *Alaska, 1899. Copper River Exploring Expedition* (Washington: GPO, 1900), 119-27.

<sup>9</sup> Walter C. Mendenhall and Frank C. Schrader, "Copper Deposits of the Mount Wrangell Region, Alaska," in S. F. Emmons and Charles W. Hayes, eds., *Contributions to Economic Geology, 1902*, USGS Bulletin No. 213 (Washington: GPO, 1903), 148; Walter C. Mendenhall and Frank C. Schrader, *The Mineral Resources of the Mount Wrangell District, Alaska*, USGS Professional Paper No. 15 (Washington: GPO, 1903), 45.

<sup>10</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "Placer Mining in Alaska in 1903," in S. F. Emmons and Charles W. Hayes, eds., *Contributions to Economic Geology, 1903*, USGS Bulletin No. 225 (Washington: GPO, 1904), 58-59; Capps, *The Chisana-White River District, Alaska*, 22.

<sup>11</sup> *Valdez News*, June 20, 1903; October 3, 1903.

<sup>12</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, June 22, 1905; July 24, 1905; October 3, 1905; August 6, 1913; *Alaska Prospector*, August 10, 1905; *Fairbanks Times*, September 6, 1913; *Chitina Leader*, January 21, 1918.

<sup>13</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, August 6, 1913.

<sup>14</sup> Fred H. Moffit and Adolph Knopf, *Mineral Resources of the Nabesna-White River District, Alaska*, USGS Bulletin No. 417 (Washington: GPO, 1910), 62. Placer gold is found in alluvial gravel and extracted by removing the detrital material with running water.

<sup>15</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, July 29, 1913; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 6, 1960; April 9, 1960. Experienced northerners called inexperienced newcomers "cheechakos," a term borrowed from Chinook jargon, the Pacific Northwest trade language.

<sup>16</sup> Ivan R. Thorall, personal communication with Geoffrey Bleakley, August 8, 1996, Chisana, Alaska, notes in author's files.

<sup>17</sup> Dorothy H. M. Prescott, "The Alaska Story of Fred W. Best, Vol. II," *passim*, Best Collection, Alaska State Library and Archives, Juneau, Alaska (hereafter cited ASL).

<sup>18</sup> *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 6, 1960; April 9, 1960.

<sup>19</sup> Fred W. Best to his parents, August 27, 1914, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>20</sup> Fred Best diary, September 19-December 15, 1912, *passim*, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>21</sup> Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 92. Some controversy surrounds Joe's true role in the Chisana discovery. Joe maintained that, in addition to the lode deposit, he also showed James a small quantity of placer gold, which he had earlier taken from Bonanza Creek. Several prospectors corroborated parts of Joe's story, confirming, for example, that Joe had shown them similar nuggets several months before the Chisana strike was made. James, Nelson, and Wales, however, denied Joe's claim, and provided the version of the story included here. DeLorme D. Cairnes, *Upper White River District, Yukon*, Geological Survey Memoir 50 (Ottawa: Canadian Department of Mines, 1915), 128.

<sup>22</sup> Matilda Wales must have been an accomplished prospector in her own right, as she was authorized by one Dawson City miner to act in his name. Utilizing his power-of-attorney, she staked No. 1 Chicken Creek for Edward Erikson on June 30, 1913. *Woodman v. Erikson*, case C74, R.G. 21, Alaska District Court Records, National Archives-Alaska Region, Anchorage, Alaska.

<sup>23</sup> Kirchhoff, "Shushanna: Alaska's Last Great Gold Rush," 48. According to Tappan Adney, the "pan" was the miner's basic measurement: two "shovelfuls" made one pan and 103 "pans" equalled one cubic yard of earth. Tappan Adney, *The Klondike Stampede of 1897-1898* (New York and London: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1900), 231.

<sup>24</sup> Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 92. Andy Taylor, sometimes called the "pathfinder of the White," had led International Boundary Commission parties when they surveyed the U.S.-Canadian border in 1912. In 1925 he also guided the first expedition to climb Mt. Logan, Canada's highest peak. "High Peaks of the Wrangell and Saint Elias," *Alaska Geographic* 8, no. 1 (1981): 103. For more on Taylor's mountaineering career, see Walter A. Wood, *A History of Mountaineering in the Saint Elias Mountains* (No city: Yukon Alpine Centennial Expedition, [1967]).

<sup>25</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, October 9, 1913.



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**CHAPTER TWO**

<sup>1</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, June 6, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 27, 1913; Kirchhoff, "Shushanna," 49.

<sup>3</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, October 9, 1913.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. In the late 1920s, Whitham shifted his attention to the west, where he developed a gold lode in the Nabesna district. That operation is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Kirk W. Stanley, "Nabesna Gold Mine Historic District," National Register Nomination, 1978, copy in WRST files; David and William Tewkesbury, *Tewkesbury's Who's Who in Alaska and Alaska Business Index, Vol. 1947 I* (Seattle: Tewkesbury Publishers, 1947), 87.

<sup>5</sup> Cairnes, *Upper White River District*, 131.

<sup>6</sup> In 1913 Chisana gold was worth approximately \$16.40 per ounce. Ibid, 132.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 129; *Dawson Daily News*, July 28, 1913. Taylor apparently did not retain his Chisana riches: "He paid his debts, bought more supplies, then celebrated for a couple of days, and gave away, threw away and spent his share of the gold." "Andy Taylor--A Man of the Region," *Alaska Geographic* 8, no. 1 (1981): 107.

<sup>8</sup> *Chitina Leader*, July 22, 1913; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, August 11, 1913.

<sup>9</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, July 20, 1913; Fred Best diary, July 17-20, 1913, Best Collection, ASL. Chisana residents renamed virtually all the streams in the vicinity, including Chavolda Creek. Miners called it "Wilson Creek," probably for pioneer prospector George Wilson.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, John Bufvers, "Valdez Trail Days," Bufvers Collection, ASL.

<sup>11</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, July 18, 1913; *Chitina Leader*, July 22, 1913.

<sup>12</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, August 1, 1913. During the gold rush era, the Upper Tanana name "Chisana" was usually transliterated as either "Shushanna" or "Shushana."

<sup>13</sup> For a first-hand account, see Ruben Lindblom, "A Cheechaka's First Stampede," typed manuscript in historical files, WRST.

<sup>14</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, July 21, 1913.

<sup>15</sup> *Alaska Daily Dispatch*, August 5, 1913.

<sup>16</sup> *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 29, 1913.

<sup>17</sup> *Seattle Times*, August 7, 1913.

<sup>18</sup> *Vancouver Sun*, August 9, 1913.

<sup>19</sup> *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), August 1, 1913.

<sup>20</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, July 26, 1913.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, July 12, 1913. The first permanent trader on the upper Tanana River, Newton opened a store at Healy River in 1907. After moving part of his operations to Tanana Crossing in 1912, he established caches at both Tetlin and the mouth of the Nabesna River. William E. Simeone, *Rifles, Blankets, and Beads: Identity, History, and the Northern Athapaskan Potlatch* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), 28.

<sup>22</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, July 12, 1913.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, July 13, 1913; July 22, 1913; *Valdez Miner*, July 20, 1913; *Dawson Daily News*, July 30, 1913; August 6, 1913.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*; *Fairbanks Times*, September 2, 1913; September 12, 1913; September 25, 1913. For an exhaustive examination of early traffic on the Nabesna and Chisana Rivers, see Terrence M. Cole, *Historic Use of the Chisana and Nabesna Rivers, Alaska* (Anchorage: Alaska Department of Natural Resources, 1979).

<sup>25</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, August 15, 1913; August 28, 1913.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, October 8, 1913; *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*, May 19, 1914. Hudson Stuck lists six boats that were wrecked while trying to ascend the Tanana River during the Chisana stampede: the *Koyukuk*, the *Dusty Diamond*, the *S. and S.*, the *Atlas*, the *Tetlin*, and the *Samson*. Stuck, *Voyages on the Yukon and Its Tributaries*, 306-07.

<sup>27</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, August 14, 1913; Cairnes, *Upper White River District*, 129.

<sup>28</sup> *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), November 14, 1914.

<sup>29</sup> Hazelet diary, July 21-31, 1913, cited in Tower, "Hazelet's High Road to Chisana," 3.

<sup>30</sup> Ruben Lindblom, "A Cheechaka's First Stampede," 7-8. Several stampeders were less fortunate than the Lindbloms. Fairbanks resident Fred Tam, for example, drowned while trying to ford the Chitistone River on July 16. At least two others, James (or Jack) Sullivan and Dan Crowley drowned in the Nizina River during the same period. Lewis Green, *The Boundary Hunters. Surveying the 141st Meridian and the Alaska Panhandle* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), 175; *Chitina Leader*, July 22, 1913; *Dawson Daily News*, October 23, 1913.

<sup>31</sup> International Boundary Commission, *Joint Report upon the Survey and Demarcation of the International Boundary between the United States and Canada* (Ottawa and Washington: GPO, 1918), 81-82.

<sup>32</sup> *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), September 26, 1913. Riggs, a Princeton graduate who had previously participated in the Klondike gold rush, later served as governor of Alaska. Atwood and DeArmond, *Who's Who in Alaska Politics*, 84.

<sup>33</sup> *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), August 22, 1913.

<sup>34</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, August 14, 1913.

<sup>35</sup> While Cairnes estimated that more than fifty stampeders perished during the Chisana rush, contemporary newspapers reveal far fewer casualties. Many, however, were probably never reported. Cairnes, *Upper White River District*, 130.

<sup>36</sup> Lindblom, "A Cheechaka's First Stampede," 15.

<sup>37</sup> Mary Barry, "The Recollections of Neil Finnesand," *Anchorage Today*, October 29, 1975, 10.

<sup>38</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, October 1, 1913; *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, October 8, 1913; *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), June 6, 1913; September 26, 1913.

<sup>39</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, October 1, 1913.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, August 13, 1913. Hamshaw was financed by prominent Salt Lake City capitalist R. H. Canning, Jr. *Ibid*, August 20, 1913. Ground-sluicing involves the excavation of gravels by running water which is not under hydraulic pressure. In effect, it is controlled and accelerated erosion. E. D. Gardner and C. H. Johnson, *Placer Mining in the Western United States, Part I, General Information, Hand-Shoveling, and Ground Sluicing*, U.S. Bureau of Mines Information Circular 6786, September 1934.

<sup>41</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, September 15, 1913; Rolfe Buzzell, "Big Eldorado Creek Drainage History," 2-3, typescript in historical files, WRST. Having arrived in the north

prior to the Klondike rush, McKinney had led a miners' rebellion against Canada's attempts to regulate its portion of the Fortymile country in 1896. It was while working there in about 1900 that he had first become acquainted with Fred Best. Gates, *Gold at Fortymile Creek*, 113; Fred Best to Jack Best, January 19, 1901, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>42</sup> Cairnes, *Upper White River District*, 129-30. A "wildcat" was a speculative claim located on unproven ground.

<sup>43</sup> Hazelet diary, July 30-31, 1913, cited in Tower, "High Road," 3.

<sup>44</sup> Hazelet diary, August 12 and 14, 1913, cited in Tower, "High Road," 6.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid. Ostrander, like Hazelet, was one of the founders of Cordova. Ferrell, *Biographies*, 243.

<sup>46</sup> Lindblom, "A Cheechaka's First Stampede," 14.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, September 24, 1913; October 9, 1913; *Chitina Leader*, April 14, 1914. In exchange for dropping their law suit, Dubois and Brady apparently received rights to work Bonanza No. 9, which, unfortunately for them, turned out to be relatively worthless.

<sup>50</sup> For more on Purdy, Best, and their operation of the Cassiar Roadhouse, see Fred Best to parents, June 30, 1903, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, the Cordova jury which initially found against Sutherland was chaired by famed Klondike photographer Eric A. Hegg. William R. Hunt, *Mountain Wilderness: Historic Resource Study for Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve* (Anchorage: National Park Service, 1991), 102; *Avalanch* (McCarthy), August 19, 1916. Similar cases included *C. H. Likaits v. W. E. James*, *J. W. Nickell and Frank H. Foster v. William A. Johnson*, *Frank H. Foster v. William A. Johnson*, and *C. H. Likaits v. William A. Johnson*. Cases C72, C76, C78, and C79, Cordova Civil Docket, 1910-1938, R.G. 21, Alaska District Court Records, National Archives-Alaska Region, Anchorage, Alaska. Sutherland served as a member of the territorial Senate from 1913-1921 and as Alaska's sole delegate to the U.S. Congress from 1921-1931. Atwood and DeArmond, *Who's Who in Alaskan Politics*, 97.

<sup>52</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, September 4, 1913.

## CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup> *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), August 1, 1913; *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, August 11, 1913; August 20, 1913; *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 3, no. 3 (September 1913): 56; *Dawson Daily News*, September 17, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, September 29, 1913; *Dawson Daily News*, September 15, 1913; October 13, 1913. Contemporary newspapers reported other charges as well, including the mistaken belief that Morgan was not a citizen of the United States. *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), September 19, 1913; September 26, 1913.

<sup>3</sup> Hazelet diary, August 12 and 14, 1913, quoted in Tower, "High Road," 6.

<sup>4</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, September 26, 1913. Although several contemporary newspaper articles suggest that Hazelet situated Woodrow on Chavolda (Wilson) Creek at the mouth of Glacier Creek, that location is difficult to reconcile with Hazelet's own verbal description.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*; *Dawson Daily News*, October 11, 1913.

<sup>6</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, September 26, 1913. At least one structure may have already have been present. O. J. Wheatly claimed that he and his partner had built a cabin near the mouth of Chathenda Creek before prospecting the rest of the district. When they returned a month later, a town had developed around their site. *Alaska Weekly* (Seattle), October 7, 1955. Although frontier towns were often built on mining claims (like Kennicott) or homesteads (like McCarthy), most communities established during this period were situated on official townsites. In order to create a townsite, local inhabitants had to form a townsite association, which could then obtain the property from the public domain. There is no record that any such association was ever formed in the Chisana district. Robert L. Spude, "Historic Chisana Townsite Land Claims," 1, historic files, WRST.

<sup>7</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, October 23, 1913; Clarence Craig, "Post Office Ledger, Vol. II, 1908-1920," 2992, Dawson City Museum, Dawson City, Yukon Territory, Canada.

<sup>8</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, October 17, 1913; *Dawson Daily News*, October 20, 1913.

<sup>9</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, October 13, 1913.

<sup>10</sup> *Chitina Leader*, October 21, 1913.

<sup>11</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, September 18, 1913. Dimond later served as mayor of Valdez, a member of the territorial Senate, and from 1932 to 1945, as Alaska's sole

delegate to the U.S. Congress. Atwood and DeArmond, *Who's Who in Alaska Politics*, 24; Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 18.

<sup>12</sup> *Chitina Leader*, September 23, 1913.

<sup>13</sup> Anthony Dimond to George Reed, September 24, 1913, Donohoe-Ostrander-Dimond Collection, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska (hereafter cited UAF).

<sup>14</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, November 24, 1913. Hazelet knew about the passage over Nizina and Chisana Glaciers because one of his former mining partners, Arthur H. McNeer, had accompanied USGS cartographer Oscar Rohn over that route in 1899. McNeer had spent the winter of 1898-1899 prospecting with Hazelet in the Chistochina area and rejoined Hazelet in February 1900 to help develop the Chisna mine. Tower, "Hazelet's High Road to Chisana," 15, endnote 17.

<sup>15</sup> *Chitina Leader*, November 11, 1913.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, September 9, 1913.

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Dimond to Joseph H. Murray, December 12, 1913, Dimond Collection, Personal File, 1904-1953, box 38, UAF.

<sup>18</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, January 1, 1914; January 26, 1914; *Fairbanks Times*, January 20, 1914; *Alaska Weekly* (Seattle), October 7, 1955.

<sup>19</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, December 10, 1913; December 13, 1913.

<sup>20</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, December 11, 1913; *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), December 19, 1913. Price was one of the most successful mining men in Alaska, holding rich properties on both Cleary Creek, north of Fairbanks, and Glen Gulch, a tributary of Otter Creek in the Iditarod district. Ferrell, *Biographies*, 257-58. The other claims leased by the syndicate included Big Eldorado Discovery, Gold Run Discovery, Glacier Discovery, Bonanza Discovery, Bonanza No. 1 Below, Bonanza Nos. 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8 Above, Caribou Pass Discovery, and Caribou Pass No. 1. Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 104. Contemporary reports of the syndicate's offer were undoubtedly exaggerated. Later estimates suggest that James and Nelson leased the property for 50 percent of any recovered gold plus a single lump payment of \$40,000. *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 2 (August 1914): 34.

<sup>21</sup> George C. Martin, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1918," in George C. Martin, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report of Progress of Investigations in 1918*, USGS Bulletin No. 712 (Washington: GPO, 1919), 43.

<sup>22</sup> Fred Best diary, October 5, 1913, through February 28, 1914, *passim*, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>23</sup> *Fairbanks Times*, February 6, 1914.

<sup>24</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, May 20, 1914.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, February 14, 1914; *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), December 19, 1913; March 13, 1914; April 19, 1914. At the time of his appointment, Hoffman was mining in the Nizina district. Before that, he had served as chief of police in Valdez. *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, September 18, 1913; October 14, 1913.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, February 24, 1914.

<sup>27</sup> *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, March 20, 1914.

<sup>28</sup> Fred Best diary, March 15, 1914, Best Collection, ASL; *Dawson Daily News*, June 8, 1914. Although usually called Bonanza City, some early residents referred to the community as Mouth-O-Bonanza. *Ibid*, June 3, 1914.

<sup>29</sup> Cairnes, *Upper White River District*, 31-32.

<sup>30</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, August 20, 1913.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, August 28, 1913.

<sup>32</sup> Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 21.

<sup>33</sup> Reckord, *Where Raven Stood*, 238-39.

<sup>34</sup> Stephen R. Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1914*, USGS Bulletin No. 622 (Washington: GPO, 1915), 211-12; *Dawson Daily News*, June 3, 1914; *Juneau Dispatch*, July 14, 1914.

<sup>35</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 211.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 208.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, 209. *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 5 (November 1914): 116. Sources differ as to who operated this claim during the summer of 1914. The *Mining Journal* suggests that it was worked by a Johansen and company. The *Dawson Daily*

*News*, however, maintains that Waggoner, McLennan, and Chisholm leased the property from Billy James. *Dawson Daily News*, July 13, 1914.

<sup>38</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 209-10. An "open-cut" placer mining operation is simply a surface working, open to the sky. "Shoveling-in" was a hand technique used in open-cuts. The gravel was normally loosened with a pick and then shoveled directly into the sluice box. Chester W. Purington, *Methods and Costs of Gravel and Placer Mining in Alaska*, USGS Bulletin 263 (Washington: GPO, 1905), 56-60; Norman L. Wimmmler, *Placer-Mining Methods and Costs in Alaska*, Bureau of Mines Bulletin 259 (Washington: GPO, 1927), 91-92.

<sup>39</sup> Fred Best to parents, July 3, 1914, Best Collection, ASL; *Dawson Daily News*, July 13, 1914; Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 209-10.

<sup>40</sup> *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, August 28, 1913; *Dawson Daily News*, August 29, 1913; *Chitina Leader*, September 9, 1913.

<sup>41</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 210-11.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 211-12. Writing in 1905, Purington notes that "ground which can be worked by men shoveling into sluices can, under certain conditions, be worked satisfactorily by horse scraping, and at an expense of one-third of that necessary to shovel in." Purington, *Methods and Costs of Gravel and Placer Mining in Alaska*, 60.

<sup>43</sup> Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 105.

<sup>44</sup> *Chitina Leader*, February 6, 1914; *Dawson Daily News*, July 13, 1914. Best's journal contained a list of the equipment he utilized on Bonanza No. 7 in July 1914. This probably typical assortment included fourteen sections of sluice box, two dump boxes, two hundred feet of sixteen-inch hose, fourteen picks, eight shovels, a gold scale, a level, two double jacks, an anvil, a hammer, a forge, a crosscut saw, a sluice fork, a bit brace with bits, two planes, one hundred feet of fire hose with nozzle, a tent, three cords of wood, a dam, two stoves, a half case of dynamite with caps and fuse, and a wash tub. Fred Best diary, July 1914, "list of stuff on No. 7," Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>45</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 213-14. "Booming" is an important variant of ground-sluicing, practiced in areas possessing little water. The stream to be worked is impounded behind a dam. On being released by either a hand-operated or an automatic gate, the water rushes down the cut, carrying most of the surface material with it. Wimmmler, *Placer-Mining Methods and Costs in Alaska*, 90. For a more colorful explanation, see the *Valdez News*, February 15, 1902.



<sup>46</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, July 13, 1914; Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 214.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, 214-15; *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 5 (November 1914): 116.

<sup>48</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, July 13, 1914; *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 5 (November 1914): 116; Michael R. Healy to Anthony Dimond, August 22, 1914, Donohoe-Ostrander-Dimond Collection, UAF.

<sup>49</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, July 13, 1914; Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 215.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, 215-16; Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 108; Healy to Dimond, August 22, 1914; Donohoe to Dimond, September 1, 1914, Donohoe-Ostrander-Dimond Collection, UAF; *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 5 (November 1914): 116.

<sup>51</sup> Fred Best diary, August 30 and September 1, 1914, Best Collection, ASL; *Chitina Leader*, September 15, 1914.

<sup>52</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 216.

<sup>53</sup> Thomas J. Donohoe to Anthony Dimond, September 1, 1914, Donohoe-Ostrander-Dimond Collection, UAF; Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 105.

<sup>54</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 216-17.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 217; *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 5 (November 1914): 116.

<sup>56</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 217-18. *Chitina Leader*, September 8, 1914. Like many of those who rushed to the Chisana, Charles Range possessed extensive local experience. In 1903 he and four partners had worked an important claim on Dan Creek in the Nizina district. *Valdez News*, July 11, 1903.

<sup>57</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 222; *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), September 12, 1913.

<sup>58</sup> *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 4, no. 5 (November 1914): 113-21.

<sup>59</sup> Capps, *The Chisana-White River District*, 113.

<sup>60</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 218-19.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, 219.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 219-20.

<sup>64</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, June 3, 1914; June 13, 1914; *Chitina Leader*, February 3, 1914; November 3, 1914; December 1, 1914; Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 221.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 222-23; *Dawson Daily News*, June 9, 1914. McGuire claimed, however, to have encountered a narrow band of paydirt at forty-five feet. *Weekly Star* (Whitehorse), July 24, 1914.

<sup>66</sup> Capps, "Mineral Resources of the Chisana-White River District," 202.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, 203.

<sup>68</sup> *Chitina Leader*, July 7, 1914; *Dawson Daily News*, July 28, 1914.

<sup>69</sup> Fred Best diary, July 1914, *passim*, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>70</sup> *Dawson Daily News*, July 28, 1914.

<sup>71</sup> Fred Best to his parents, May 12, 1914, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Hunt, *Mountain Wilderness*, 99-100. Waller served in the Chisana district as Horatio E. Morgan's assistant recorder in 1913. *Dawson Daily News*, October 13, 1913.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, July 23, 1914; *Chitina Leader*, September 22, 1914. After leaving Chisana, Kettleston served briefly as a member of the territorial House before moving to Sitka, where he ended his career as a prominent banker. Clara Kettleston, *The Golden Thread* (San Diego: North Star Press, 1984), *passim*; Atwood and DeArmond, *Who's Who in Alaska Politics*, 54-55; Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 43-44.

<sup>74</sup> *Chitina Leader*, September 22, 1914. Before rushing to the Chisana, Goshaw had served as a deputy U.S. marshall, headquartered in Valdez. After leaving the district, he became a fur trader and a prominent resident of Alaska's Seward Peninsula. During the Second World War he was instrumental in organizing the Shishmaref Company of the Alaska Territorial Guard. Ibid, February 16, 1915; Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 28.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas J. Donohoe to Anthony Dimond, September 1, 1914, Donohoe-Ostrander-Dimond Collection, UAF; Fred Best to parents, August 16, 1914, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>76</sup> Martin, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1918," 43; *Chitina Leader*, September 22, 1914.

<sup>77</sup> *Cordova Daily Times*, January 5, 1915; February 2, 1915. Schonborn operated the Yukon Hotel, said to have been the first such establishment in Dawson City, from 1897 to 1901.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, February 12, 1915. Unlike most residents, who were buried locally, Schonborn was ultimately interred in Puyallup, Washington. *Valdez Weekly Miner*, April 4, 1915.

<sup>79</sup> *Cordova Daily Times*, January 30, 1915; February 2, 1915; February 12, 1915; September 30, 1915; *Chitina Leader*, February 16, 1915; October 5, 1915.

<sup>80</sup> *Valdez Weekly Miner*, September 26, 1915; Spude, "Historic Chisana," 1; *Nome Daily News*, October 26, 1915. During the First World War, Captain J. J. Finnegan managed Alaska's military draft. *McCarthy Weekly News*, September 21, 1918.

<sup>81</sup> *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 7, no. 3 (September 1915): 58; *Chitina Leader*, October 25, 1915. James Murie originally came to the district as a special correspondent to the *Vancouver World*.

<sup>82</sup> *Cordova Daily Times*, August 9, 1915. Hydraulic mining utilizes pressurized water to break up gravel and to wash it to the sluices. Charles F. Jackson and John B. Knaebel, *Small-Scale Placer-Mining Methods*, U.S. Bureau of Mines Information Circular 6611, sixth revision, May 1934, 13.

<sup>83</sup> *Cordova Daily Times*, August 10, 1915; *Chitina Leader*, August 17, 1915; *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 7, no. 3 (September 1915): 58.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*; *Chitina Leader*, January 12, 1915.

<sup>86</sup> *Alaska and Northwest Mining Journal* 7, no. 3 (September 1915): 58.

<sup>87</sup> Martin, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1918," 43; Alfred H. Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1915," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1915*, USGS Bulletin No. 642 (Washington: GPO, 1916), 62; *Cordova Daily Alaskan*, August 31, 1915.

<sup>88</sup> *Chitina Leader*, October 19, 1915. Johnson received his nickname from his propensity to unload freight on the Nizina and Rohn Glaciers when the weight got to be "too much." Spude and Lappen, "Chisana Historic District," n.p.

<sup>89</sup> Fred Best diary, March 7, 1916, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, April 10, 1916, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid, May 2, 1916, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>92</sup> *Chitina Leader*, May 5, 1916.

<sup>93</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1916," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1916*, USGS Bulletin No. 662 (Washington: GPO, 1918), 55.

<sup>94</sup> *Chitina Leader*, October 19, 1915; March 7, 1916; Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1916," 55.

<sup>95</sup> *Chitina Leader*, October 3, 1916; William Maloney, *Report of William Maloney, Territorial Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska for the Year 1916* (Juneau: Territorial Department of Mines, 1917), 75. Although professional photographer Lewis Stanley never struck it rich, he left posterity a valuable legacy: the most emotionally evocative images of the Chisana district.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid; Harold H. Waller, survey map, "Placer Claims in the Shushana Gold Fields Alaska, 1916," copy in WRST files.

<sup>97</sup> Maloney, *Report of William Maloney*, 1916, 75.

<sup>98</sup> Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1916," 55; Fred Best diary, September 10-13, 1916, Best Collection, ASL; *Chitina Leader*, March 7, 1916; October 3, 1916; *Avalanch* (McCarthy), September 23, 1916.

<sup>99</sup> Prescott, "The Alaska Story, Vol. II," 56, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>100</sup> Fred Best diary, November 15, 1916, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>101</sup> George C. Martin, "The Mining Industry of Alaska in 1917," in George C. Martin, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1917*, USGS Bulletin No. 692 (Washington: GPO, 1919), 36.

<sup>102</sup> *Chitina Leader*, October 16, 1917; William Maloney, *Report of the Territorial Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska for the year 1917* (Juneau: Territorial Department of Mines, 1918), 43. Like the other miners in the Chisana, Billy Johnson had paid his dues. On his way to the Klondike in 1898, he was buried by a massive avalanche in Chilkoot Pass and barely survived. While working in Dawson as a driver for the

Cascade Laundry Company, Johnson grubstaked James and Nelson, receiving in return a full partnership in their claims. *Dawson Daily News*, July 29, 1913.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid; *Chitina Leader*, October 16, 1917.

## CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup> Martin, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1918," 43.

<sup>2</sup> Hulley, *Alaska, 1741-1953*, 315.

<sup>3</sup> Commissioned as an ensign, Best served as the executive officer of the *U.S.S. Dochra*, reaching the rank of lieutenant before receiving an honorable discharge at the conclusion of the war. He then returned to the sea, working in the merchant marine until he retired in 1935. He never returned to Alaska. Prescott, "The Alaska Story of Fred W. Best, Vol. II," 74-75, Best Collection, ASL. Stanley, "Nabesna Gold Mine Historic District," National Register Nomination, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> Mrs. N. P. Nelson to Fred Best, June 7, 1918, Best Collection, ASL.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1919," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1919*, USGS Bulletin No. 714 (Washington: GPO, 1921), 84.

<sup>8</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1920," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1920*, USGS Bulletin No. 722 (Washington: GPO, 1922), 50-51; Robert L. Spude and Michael Lappen, "Chisana Historic District," National Register Nomination, 1984, copy in historic files, WRST.

<sup>9</sup> *Nenana Daily News*, May 25, 1920.

<sup>10</sup> George E. Walker, "Residents of the Chisana District, March 24-27, 1920," Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, Roll 2031, listing 670, 111-13. National Archives, Alaska Region, Anchorage, Alaska. Strangely, 40 percent of the white population, including the commissioner, the trader, a freighter, a trapper, three prospectors, and nine placer miners, were born outside the United States, and only seven-

teen could trace their American roots back more than a single generation. For a more complete enumeration of Chisana's census, see Appendix Six.

<sup>11</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1921," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1921*, USGS Bulletin No. 739 (Washington: GPO, 1923), 34-35.

<sup>12</sup> *The Pathfinder* (October 1921): 6.

<sup>13</sup> Knut D. Peterson, *When Alaska Was Free* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Ashley Books, 1977), 112-15.

<sup>14</sup> Buzzell, "Big Eldorado Creek Drainage History," 4-5.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "The Alaskan Mining Industry in 1922," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1922*, USGS Bulletin No. 755 (Washington: GPO, 1924), 40.

<sup>16</sup> Alfred H. Brooks, "Alaska's Mineral Resources and Production, 1923," in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1923*, USGS Bulletin No. 773 (Washington: GPO, 1925), 45; Norman L. Wimmeler, "Placer Mining in Alaska in 1923," in Benjamin D. Stewart, ed., *Annual Report of the Territorial Mine Inspector to the Governor of Alaska, 1923* (Juneau: Territorial Department of Mines, 1924), 28.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* Aaron E. Nelson served as Chisana's last commissioner, replacing Anthony McGettigan in 1921.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Chitina Leader*, June 16, 1923.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* Boyden possessed extensive knowledge of Skolai Pass, having freighted and guided in the vicinity since 1914. George O. Young, *Alaskan-Yukon Trophies Won and Lost* (Huntington, West Virginia: Standard Publications, Inc., 1947), 90-94. The Boyden Hills, lying north of Nabesna, were named in his honor.

<sup>21</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1924," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1924*, USGS Bulletin No. 783 (Washington: GPO, 1926), 13.

<sup>22</sup> Fittingly, Medary's guide on his excursion was Andy Taylor. Milton B. Medary, Jr., "A Hunting Trip in Alaska, Diary of Milton Bennett Medary, Jr., 1924," 14, UAF.

Medary was undoubtedly referring to trader Charles A. Simons, who continued to supply the district's few remaining miners. *McCarthy Weekly News*, November 10, 1923.

<sup>23</sup> Fred H. Moffit, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1925 and Administrative Report," in Fred H. Moffit, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1925*, USGS Bulletin No. 792 (Washington: GPO, 1927), 17; Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry in Alaska in 1926," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigation in 1926*, USGS Bulletin No. 797 (Washington: GPO, 1929), 23; Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1927," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1927*, USGS Bulletin No. 810 (Washington: GPO, 1929), 24; Norman L. Wimmeler, "Placer Mining in Alaska in 1926," U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 21, item 6, 33, ARL.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> *McCarthy Weekly News*, January 3, 1925.

<sup>26</sup> Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1927," 24.

<sup>27</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1928," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1928*, USGS Bulletin No. 813 (Washington: GPO, 1930), 27, 34-35.

<sup>28</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1929," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1929*, USGS Bulletin No. 824 (Washington: GPO, 1932), 32, 39-40; Norman L. Wimmeler, "Placer Mining in Alaska in 1929," Report to the Territorial Department of Mines, U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 22, item 1, ARL.

<sup>29</sup> Robert McKennan, *The Upper Tanana Indians*, Yale University Publications in Anthropology No. 55 (New Haven: Yale University Anthropology Department, 1959), 26.

<sup>30</sup> "Description of Chisana-Nabesna Landing Fields," Alaska Road Commission, Bureau of Public Roads-Project Correspondence, 1916-1950, RG 30, Box 33/10/05/14(4), SP1 Chisana, National Archives-Alaska Region, Anchorage, Alaska. During this same period, Gus Johnson also built a slightly smaller airstrip at Nabesna. R. J. Shepard to Alaska Road Commission, December 6, 1929, *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1930," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report of Progress of Investigations in 1930*, USGS Bulletin No. 836 (Washington: GPO, 1931), 32.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 40; Benjamin D. Stewart, *Report on Cooperation Between the Territory of Alaska and the United States in Making Mining Investigations and in the Inspection of Mines for the Biennium Ending March 31, 1931* (Juneau: Territorial Department of Mines, 1931), 67-68.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1930," 41; Earl R. Pilgrim, "Placer Mines Visited 1930," Report to the Territorial Department of Mines, U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 9, item 21, 2, ARL.

<sup>35</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1932," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1932*, USGS Bulletin No. 857 (Washington: GPO, 1934), 30.

<sup>36</sup> Benjamin D. Stewart, *Mining Investigations and Mine Inspection in Alaska, Including Assistance to Prospectors, Biennium Ending March 31, 1933*, (Juneau: Territorial Department of Mines, 1933), 94-95.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 94; Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1932," 30; Beth Day, *Glacier Pilot: The Story of Bob Reeve* (Sausalito, Calif.: Comstock Editions, Inc., 1986), 52-55.

<sup>38</sup> R. G. Wayland, "Gold Deposits Near Nabesna," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1940*, USGS Bulletin No. 933 (Washington: GPO, 1943), 177. Bell Joe, interview conducted by Geoffrey Bleakley, September 16, 1995, Chistochina, Alaska, audio tape in historic files, WRST.

<sup>39</sup> Stewart, *Mining Investigations . . . in Alaska, 1933*, 94; Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1933," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1933*, USGS Bulletin No. 864 (Washington: GPO, 1936), 42.

<sup>40</sup> Peterson, *When Alaska Was Free*, 90; Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1933," 42.

<sup>41</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1934," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1934*, USGS Bulletin No. 868 (Washington: GPO, 1937), 44; Peterson, *When Alaska Was Free*, 25.

<sup>42</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1935," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1935*, USGS Bulletin No. 880 (Washington: GPO, 1937), 47; Fred H. Moffit, "Recent Mineral



Developments in the Copper River Region Alaska," in *ibid*, 105. Hirst was hardly a newcomer to the area, having traded in Chistochina since the early 1920s. See Milton Medary diary, September 1924, Medary Collection, UAF.

<sup>43</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1936," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1936*, USGS Bulletin No. 897 (Washington: GPO, 1938), 55.

<sup>44</sup> John C. Roehm, "Investigations: McCarthy, Nizina River, Bremner and Chisana Mining Districts," 13, Report to the Territorial Department of Mines, U.S. Bureau of Mines, roll 7, item 25, ARL.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*. A "giant" is large nozzle used for directing a stream of water under a hydraulic head. E. D. Gardner and C. H. Johnson, *Placer Mining in the Western United States, Part II, Hydraulicking, Treatment of Placer Concentrates, and Marketing of Gold*, U.S. Bureau of Mines Information Circular 6787, October 1934, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Roehm, "Investigations," 13.

<sup>47</sup> Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1936," 55; Roehm, "Investigations," 13; John C. Roehm, "General Conditions Relative to Mining in the Chisana District, August 1936," U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 2, item 45, 1, ARL.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid*; John C. Roehm, "Preliminary Report of Peterson's Lode Prospect, Big Eldorado Creek, Chisana Mining District, August 23, 1936," U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 2, item 39, ARL.

<sup>49</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1937," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1937*, USGS Bulletin No. 910 (Washington: GPO, 1939), 56; Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1938," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1938*, USGS Bulletin No. 917 (Washington: GPO, 1939), 55; William R. Hunt, *Golden Places: A History of Alaska-Yukon Mining with Particular Reference to Alaska's National Parks* (Anchorage: National Park Service, n.d.), 242.

<sup>50</sup> John C. Roehm, "Summary Report of Mining Investigations in the Nizina, Bremner, Chisana, Tiekel, Nabesna, and Prince William Sound Districts . . . August 22 to September 1, 1938," Report to the Territorial Department of Mines, U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 7, item 35, 4, ARL. Oral testimony suggests that "Shushanna Joe" was the same "Indian Joe" who guided Billy James to the site of the original Chisana discovery.

<sup>51</sup> Roehm, "Summary Report," n.p. This "unidentified Native man" was probably Jack John Justin, who is known to have mined in the vicinity during this period. James Kari, ed., *Tatl'ahwt'aenn Nenn' The Headwaters People's Country* (Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, 1985), 149.

<sup>52</sup> Lone E. Janson, *Mudhole Smith: Alaska Flier* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1981), 67.

<sup>53</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1939," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1939*, USGS Bulletin No. 926 (Washington: GPO, 1941), 53; Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1940," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1940*, USGS Bulletin No. 933 (Washington: GPO, 1942), 51; Hunt, *Golden Places*, 242.

<sup>54</sup> Fred H. Moffit, "Geology of the Nutzotin Mountains, Alaska," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report of Progress on Investigations in 1940*, USGS Bulletin No. 933 (Washington: GPO, 1943), 171.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 171-72; Fred H. Moffit, *Geology of the Eastern Part of the Alaska Range and Adjacent Area*, USGS Bulletin No. 989 (Washington: GPO, 1954), 200.

<sup>57</sup> Moffit, "Geology of the Nutzotin Mountains," 172-73.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 164-65, 172-73. In the late 1930s, Gamblin mined property further to the east near Horsfeld Creek. Janson, *Mudhole Smith*, 56.

<sup>59</sup> Reckord, *Where Raven Stood*, 236. Bell Joe interview, conducted by Geoffrey Bleakley, September 16, 1995, Chistochina, Alaska. Audio tape in historic files, WRST.

<sup>60</sup> Kari, *Tatl'ahwt'aenn Nenn'*, 149; Reckord, *Where Raven Stood*, 70.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>62</sup> Philip S. Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1941 and 1942," in Philip S. Smith, et al., eds., *Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report of Progress of Investigations in 1941 and 1942*, USGS Bulletin No. 943 (Washington: GPO, 1944), 11.

<sup>63</sup> Smith, "Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1941 and 1942," 11; Mary J. Barry, *A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula* (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1976), 168.

<sup>64</sup> Peterson, *When Alaska Was Free*, 87, 90-91. Searchers, however, recovered one of McGettigan's boots, still containing the missing miner's foot.

<sup>65</sup> Janson, *Mudhole Smith*, 104.

<sup>66</sup> Benjamin D. Stewart, *Report of the Commissioner of Mines for the Biennium Ended December 31, 1946* (Juneau: Territorial Department of Mines, 1947), 37, 41-42; Bruce Thomas, "Report of Mining Investigations, September 1946," U.S. Bureau of Mines Microfilm Records, roll 8, item 40, 3, ARL. Nelson failed to perform his required assessment work in 1947, and appears never to have worked his claims again. At this point, however, Nelson still controlled Bonanza Creek No. 8, No. 8 Fraction, No. 9, and the Discovery Claim at the mouth of Coarse Money Creek. N. P. Nelson, Declaration of Intention to Hold, July 5, 1947, Record Book Vol. 13, Chitina Recording District, 1945-1948, 199, District Court Records, Third Division, Glennallen, Alaska.

<sup>67</sup> B. J. Davis, Proof of Annual Labor, February 24, 1947, Record Book Vol. 13, Chitina Recording District, 1945-1948, 159, District Court Records, Third Division, Glennallen, Alaska.

<sup>68</sup> B. J. Davis, Notice of Intention to Hold, February 24, 1947, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Quitclaim deed, William E. James and Agnes T. James to the Nutzotin Mining Company, September 17, 1946, Record Book Vol. 13, Chitina Recording District, 1945-1948, 127-28, District Court Records, Third Division, Glennallen, Alaska. The claims transferred to the new corporation included Bonanza Creek Discovery, No. 1, Discovery Fraction, No. 4, No. 5, No. 5 Fraction, No. 5 Bench on Left Limit, and No. 6; Chathenda Creek No. 1 and No. 1 Above; Little Eldorado Creek No. 1 Fraction, Discovery Bench Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Left Limit, No. 3 Creek Claim, James Bench Right Limit joining No. 3 Little Eldorado, Gold Bug Bench Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Left Limit, No. 4 Creek Claim, and No. 5 Creek Claim; and Gold Run Creek Discovery and Discovery Annex. Billy had married Agnes in Seattle in 1926, following the untimely death of Matilda Wales. *McCarthy Weekly News*, September 5, 1925; March 13, 1926; *Anchorage Daily Times*, April 9, 1960.

<sup>70</sup> Stewart, *Report of the Commissioner of Mines, 1946*, 41; Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 248.

<sup>71</sup> Wright held Gold Run Creek Nos. 1 Above Discovery and 2 Above Discovery in 1947. Alfred T. Wright, Exemption from Assessment Work, June 21, 1947, Record Book Vol. 13, Chitina Recording District, 1945-1948, 189, District Court Records, Third Division, Glennallen, Alaska.

<sup>72</sup> Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 247-48. B. J. Davis, Proof of Annual Labor, November 10, 1947, Record Book Vol. 13, Chitina Recording District, 1945-1948, 237, District Court Records, Third Division, Glennallen, Alaska.

<sup>73</sup> Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 194, 247.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 247.

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<sup>1</sup> Tewkesbury, *Who's Who in Alaska*, 212.

<sup>2</sup> Stuart Starbuck, interview conducted by Geoffrey Bleakley, August 25, 1995, Skagway, Alaska, audio tape in historic files, WRST.

<sup>3</sup> Georgia Strunk, personal communication with Geoffrey Bleakley, March 15, 1996, Glennallen, Alaska, notes in author's files.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan R. Thorall, personal communication with Geoffrey Bleakley, Steve Lang, and Amy Gallaway, July 20, 1995, Chisana, Alaska, notes in author's files. Bell Joe, interview conducted by Geoffrey Bleakley, September 16, 1995, Chistochina, Alaska, audio tape in historic files, WRST.

<sup>5</sup> Ivan R. Thorall, personal communication with Geoffrey Bleakley, August 8, 1996, Chisana, Alaska, notes in author's files.

<sup>6</sup> Spude, "Historic Chisana" attachment, "Chisana: History of the Townsite," 4.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>9</sup> *Tundra Times*, January 28, 1966.

<sup>10</sup> *Anchorage Daily Times*, December 24, 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Stewart Udall, Public Land Order 4582.

<sup>12</sup> Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, Pub. L. No. 92-203, 85 Stat. 688 (Dec. 18, 1971).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, Sec. 17(d)(2).

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<sup>14</sup> Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, Pub. L. No. 96-48 (Dec. 8, 1980).

# APPENDIX ONE

## HISTORICAL NOTE ON THE PRONUNCIATION OF CHISANA

The following article appeared in the *Dawson Daily News*, August 20, 1913:

### CHIS-ANA IS THE WAY TO PRONOUNCE IT

---

ALL AUTHORITIES SAY THAT SUCH IS ORIGINAL INDIAN STYLE

---

### SCIENTIFIC MEN AGREE

---

CANADIAN AND AMERICAN GEOLOGISTS STAND BY ONE SPELLING

---

The pronunciation of the name of the stream at the head of the Tanana after which the new placer district is called has been puzzling a good many. The name as it appears on all the official and geological maps of the United States government is Chisana, and the spelling is stoutly defended by all scientific men known to have been in the region. Dr. D. D. Cairnes, the Dominion geologist, who was in the new camp and returned here last week from the diggings, agrees thoroughly with the spelling adopted by the American geological corps, namely "Chisana," and says that the popular pronunciation will be found to be little, if any, interfered with if "Chisana" be divided into the proper syllables.

The Indians and others of the region, Fred Best, one of the first from the district explained, pronounce the name as though the division was after the letter a, making the name read as though "Chis" and "ana" were separate words, pronounced closely together.

The peculiarly fine shaded pronunciation of the natives is supposed not to have been grasped by all who heard the name pronounced by the aborigines or others acquainted with its true pronunciation, and the result was the corruption into the term "Shushana," which became common among the whites.

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Despite the arguments presented in this article, current residents of the district pronounce its name "Shushanna."

## APPENDIX TWO

### GLOSSARY

**Adit:** a horizontal passage driven from the surface for working or unwatering a mine.

**Booming:** a ground-sluicing variant usually employed in areas that lack a dependable flow of water. A dam is used to create an artificial reservoir. Once sufficient water has accumulated, the dam is opened, releasing a flash flood which quickly removes any surface gravel.

**Crosscut:** a cut intended to intersect a body of ore.

**Drift:** a horizontal passage which follows a vein under-ground.

**Drift mining:** a method of mining by means of drifts and shafts. The technique was often used during the winter to develop shallow stream deposits.

**Flume:** an inclined channel used to convey water to a mining operation. Usually supported by a trestle, most are made of wood.

**Giant:** the nozzle through which the pressurized water in an hydraulic mining operation is directed.

**Ground-sluicing:** a mining method which employs running water to remove the overburden. In effect, it is controlled and accelerated erosion.

**Hydraulic mining:** mining method which employs pressurized water to excavate gravel.

**Layman:** an individual who is leasing a claim, usually for a share of its production.

**Lode:** a mineral deposit that is still bound within its rock matrix.

**Open-cut:** a mining method in which the workings remain open to the surface.

**Overburden:** worthless surface material covering a body of valuable ore.

**Placer mining:** the extraction of minerals from alluvial gravel by removing the detrital material with running water.

**Prospect:** an unproven mineral property.

Riffles: ribs which are placed in the bottom of a sluice box at right angles to the current in order to trap any gold.

Rocker: a box-like, gold recovery device which is rocked back and forth like a child's cradle.

Shaft: a vertical or steeply inclined access passage from the surface into a mine.

Shoveling-in: a hand mining technique in which the gravel was usually loosened with a pick and shoveled directly into a sluice box.

Sluice box: a long, open-ended, slightly inclined box through which gold-bearing gravel is washed.

Tailings: the refuse material remaining after gravel is washed.

Test pit: a shallow excavation made to test the subsurface gravel.

Wing dam: a dam employed to force the water to undercut banks during the stripping operation.



## APPENDIX THREE

### DATES AND AMOUNTS OF SOME TYPICAL CLEANUPS ON BONANZA CREEK, 1914.<sup>1</sup>

#### LOWER NO. 7

Jul	06	77.5	ozs
Jul	11	59	
Jul	14	3	
Jul	26	10.5	
Aug	07	59.5	
Aug	23	10.5	
Aug	25	52	
Aug	29	10.5	
Sept	-	8.5	

#### BRYSON'S FRACTION

Jun	25	50	ozs
Jul	01	28	
Jul	05	90.5	
Jul	09	50.5	
Jul	13	29	
Jul	16	6.5	
Jul	22	2.8	
Aug	02	27.5	
Aug	09	99	
Aug	19	45.8	

#### NO. 7A FRACTION

Jun	20	91	ozs
Jun	24	19	
Jun	30	24.5	
Jul	05	7.5	
Jul	11	24.5	
Jul	13	10.8	
Jul	14	8.5	
Jul	25	11.5	
Jul	26	7.5	
Jul	31	20.5	
Aug	08	44.5	
Aug	16	26	
Aug	22	59	
Aug	25	9.5	
Aug	31	44	
Sept	07	75.8	

#### NO. 3B FRACTION

Jun	17	25.3	ozs
Jun	28	94.8	
Jul	02	190	
Jul	08	19.8	
Jul	15	40.5	
Jul	26	40.5	
Jul	30	45.5	
Aug	04	80	
Aug	06	30.8	
Aug	09	42.3	
Aug	12	17.5	
Aug	17	109	
Aug	27	38	
Aug	31	25	
Sept	06	24.8	
Sept	-	96.8	

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Best, diary, 1914, Alaska State Library and Archives, Juneau, Alaska.

## APPENDIX FOUR

### CHISANA MINING DISTRICT: ANNUAL GOLD PRODUCTION, 1913-1942.<sup>1</sup>

YEAR	NO. OF MINES	NO. OF EMPLOYEES	Total production
1913	not recorded	not recorded	\$ 40,000.00
1914	22	325	250,000.00
1915	17	110	160,000.00
1916	12	40	40,000.00
1917	11	44	40,000.00
1918	[ 8]	[14]	15,000.00
1919	[10]	[24]	27,000.00
1920	8	18	20,000.00
1921	6	16	23,000.00
1922	9	25	29,000.00
1923	9	22	23,000.00
1924	8	[20]	23,400.00
1925	6	[18]	24,000.00
1926	5	[15]	18,000.00
1927	[ 5]	[15]	15,000.00
1928	5	12	16,000.00
1929	5	12	7,000.00
1930	6	12	5,800.00
1931	[ 6]	12	3,000.00
1932	[ 6]	[12]	7,000.00
1933	[ 7]	20	16,000.00
1934	7	20	16,300.00
1935	10	[24]	21,000.00
1936	8	20	37,500.00
1937	[ 8]	20	30,000.00

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1938	9	20	29,000.00
1939	[ 8]	20	20,000.00
1940	[ 8]	20	14,000.00
1941	[ 8]	[20]	14,000.00
1942	[ 4]	[ 8]	8,000.00
TOTAL			992,000.00

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<sup>1</sup> Bracketed figures are estimates. All others are drawn from USGS annual reports regarding mineral development in Alaska.

## APPENDIX FIVE

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Abrahamson, --. Abrahamson worked Bonanza No. 12 in 1914.

Altman, Max. Altman mined above Hamshaw's camp on Bonanza No. 6 during 1915.

Anderson, --. Partnered with Al Wright, Anderson worked the upper end of Bonanza No. 11 Fraction in 1915.

Anderton, Louis E. "Lou". Anderton mined an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1946 and beginning in the late 1940s operated a store and guiding business out of Chisana City. Anderton died in Seattle in March 1961.

Atkinson, Miles. Partnered with Pete Eikland, Atkinson worked an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1923. Although he did not mine during the 1926 season, he returned to Bonanza Creek in 1929.

Bastell, --. Partnered with miners named Lewis and Munsell, Bastell sluiced Gold Run No. 3 Below in 1915.

Baxter, H. Baxter operated a general merchandise store in Chisana City in 1915.

Beebe, Mark. Beebe, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected in the Chisana district in 1915.

Behling, E. R. Partnered with J. E. McCabe and Joe Davis, Behling worked Big Eldorado No. 3 Below in 1917.

Bell, Richard. Bell sluiced Big Eldorado Creek No. 3 Below Upper Discovery in 1915.

Belney, Louie. In September 1913, Belney and his partner W. H. Simpson built Chisana City's most elaborate log building.

Berglund, --. Arriving in the district in August 1913, Berglund staked a fraction on One Below Discovery on Bonanza Creek for himself and Tommy Doyle.

Berry, Bill. Freighting into the Chisana district during the 1920s, Berry partnered with Billy James in 1926. Berry lived in McCarthy until the 1950s.

Best, Fred W. Born in Massachusetts in 1872, Best rushed to the Klondike in 1897 and later operated the Cassiar Roadhouse on the Yukon River. A former partner of Nels Nelson and Billy James, Best joined the first wave of stampedeers from Dawson City, arriving in the district in early July 1913. More successful than most, he staked Bonanza Nos. 3 and 7 in 1913. In 1914 he worked Bonanza No. 3A Fraction and No. 7. Partnered with Don Greene, Best mined Bonanza No. 7 in 1915 and 1916, and still with Greene, worked Bonanza Nos. 3 and 7 in 1917. Leaving the Chisana district to participate in World War I, Best never returned to Alaska. After serving in the U.S. Navy, he pursued a second career in the merchant marine, finally dying at his home in Massachusetts in 1939.

Biglow, W. A. Biglow was reported to have made a new strike in May 1916 on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek, about twenty miles west of Chisana City.

Bittner, George. Bittner worked Bonanza No. 12 in 1915. He also operated a roadhouse in Chisana City.

Boggs, C. F. In 1913 Boggs and co-owner Young operated a roadhouse on the Hazelet trail near the foot of the Chisana Glacier.

Bollinger, Bert. Partnered with Jack Costello, Bollinger secured several claims in the district in 1913, including a fraction adjacent to Bonanza No. 8, two bench claims on Gold Run, two bench claims on Canyon Creek, a claim on Skookum Creek, two claims on Lucky Pup, and a bench claim on Bonanza No. 2.

Bostwick, Grace G. A reporter for the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Bostwick spent the winter of 1913-1914 in Chisana City.

Boulin, Archie. Boulin, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected in the Chisana district in 1914, 1915, and 1916.

Boutin, P. Boutin operated a boarding house on Little Eldorado No. 1 in 1915, catering to crews fielded by Altman, Whitham, and Briggen.

Boyden, Harry. Boyden began freighting in the Chisana district about 1915. Leaving to participate in the First World War, he returned to the area following its conclusion and was again freighting when interviewed for the 1920 census. In late 1923, he obtained the contract to haul mail into the Chisana district. In 1925 the Alaska Road Commission hired Boyden and Pete Eikland to rehabilitate the shelter cabins along its McCarthy-Chisana trail. Boyden eventually moved to Nabesna, where he served as the caretaker at Carl Whitham's gold mine during the Second World War. In 1947 he still lived in the vicinity, guiding hunters out of the Devil's Mountain Lodge. The Boyden Hills, lying just north of Nabesna, were named in his honor.

Boynton, Joe. Boynton, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected the Chisana district in 1915.

Brady, Hugh. Partnered with Henry Dubois, Brady worked Bonanza No. 9 in 1914.

Bratnober, Henry. A well known capitalist, Bratnober spearheaded the mineral exploration of the White River district.

Breedman, S. Oscar. A Chitina hotelier, Breedman became the leading merchant in the Chisana district. By the spring of 1914, he owned stores in both Chisana and Bonanza cities, as well as operating a roadhouse near the Peavine Bar on the lower Chitistone River.

Briggen, Edward "Shorty". Partnered with a miner named Hocker, Briggen mined the lower end of Bonanza No. 7 in 1915. He worked Big Eldorado No. 2 Below in 1917 and mined on Big Eldorado in 1923.

Brooks, Alfred H. USGS geologists Alfred Brooks and William J. Peters traversed the upper White River country in 1898 and 1899. Brooks had a brilliant career, eventually becoming the head of the Geological Survey's Alaska division and gaining enduring fame as the "dean" of Alaska geologists. Many of the state's more prominent natural features are named in his honor, including Mt. Brooks, Lake Brooks, Brooks Falls, and, of course, northern Alaska's Brooks Range.

Brown, C. J. Brown operated a roadhouse in Chisana City in 1915.

Bryson, --. Bryson worked part of Bonanza No. 7 in 1914.

Bush, Charles. Bush stampeded to the Chisana district in early August 1913 and worked the claim at the confluence of Gold Run Creek and Discovery Pup that fall.

Cairnes, DeLorme D. Cairnes was a Canadian geologist who examined the Chisana district in 1913.

Capps, Stephen R. A USGS geologist, Capps examined the Chisana district in 1908 and 1914.

Carden, E. W. Partnered with Ketching, Carden worked Bonanza Creek in 1918. Carden was listed as a prospector on the 1920 census.

Carroll, John "Jack". Carroll prospected in the Chisana district in as early as 1918. Listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census, Carroll partnered with Pete Eikland to work Bonanza No. 4 in 1921. In 1923 and 1926 he mined Gold Run Creek and

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worked Little Eldorado No. 1 in 1931. Carroll remained in the area until at least the winter of 1934-1935, which he spent in Chisana City.

Catching, Virgil. Catching worked Gold Run No. 3 Discovery in 1917. Catching may also be the Ketching, referred to below.

Catching, Virgil Lee. Lee Catching, the son of Virgil Catching, worked Gold Run No. 2 Discovery in 1917 and remained in the district until at least January 1918.

Chisholm, Jim. Chisholm worked Little Eldorado No. 3 in 1914.

Claire, Dan. A Whitehorse resident, Claire was prospecting near the head of the White River with H. E. Morgan and Dan Ryan when the Chisana discovery was made. He was, therefore, one of the first stampeders to reach the district, and was at one time reported to have secured Bonanza No. 5.

Clark, James. In 1913 Clark operated the Pleasant Valley Roadhouse on the Hazelet trail.

Clark, Robert M. "Bob". One of the first stampeders into the Chisana district, Clark sluiced the lower end of Bonanza No. 10 in 1915.

Cochrane, Berta. Cochrane, the head of the local Red Cross Hospital, lived in Chisana City from the fall of 1913 until August 1914. In December 1913, she married prospector O. J. Wheatly in a ceremony performed by U.S. Commissioner Tony Dimond.

Coryell, Bud. Coryell rushed from Whitehorse to the Chisana in 1913, securing a claim on Seleigh Creek, a tributary of Chathenda Creek.

Costello, E. J. "Jack". A Cordova resident, Costello arrived in the district on July 28, 1913. More successful than most, he secured a fraction of Bonanza No. 8, two bench claims on Gold Run Creek, two bench claims on Canyon Creek, one claim on Skookum Creek, two claims on Lucky Pup, and one bench claim on Bonanza No. 2. He prospected Lucky Pup in 1915.

Dahl, Louis. Dahl prospected claims on middle Chathenda Creek in 1914 and 1915. According to Fred Best, he was still in the district in 1916.

Dalton, Jack. One of Alaska's foremost pathfinders, Dalton established a trading post in the Yukon Territory in 1894, eventually building his famous "Dalton Trail" over Chilkat Pass to connect it with the coast. First prospecting the White River country in 1898, he and Henry Bratnober scoured the area in 1903 searching for copper

prospects. In 1905 Dalton guided the surveyors locating the route for the Copper River and Northwestern Railway.

David, Charles. David operated the Spruce Point Roadhouse near the mouth of the Chitistone River in 1913.

Davis, Blas Joseph "Joe". Davis prospected in the Chisana district in 1916. Partnered with J. E. McCabe and E. R. Behling, Davis worked Big Eldorado No. 3 Below in 1917. Partnered with Don Greene, he mined an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1923. From 1929-1938, Davis operated Little Eldorado No. 2, which he leased from Carl Whitham. He also mined the adjoining claim on Skookum Creek in 1938. In 1947 Davis still controlled Little Eldorado Creek No. 2, No. 2 Fraction, Snow Gulch No. 1, Skookum Creek No. 1, the Blue Fox Claim on Skookum Creek, and two claims in Caribou Pass.

Deffinbaugh, --. Partnered with Woodman, Deffinbaugh prospected No. 2 Skookum Creek in 1915.

Dimond, Anthony J. Dimond served as the U.S. commissioner for the Chisana district from November 1913 until July 1914. He later served as mayor of Valdez, a member of the territorial Senate, and from 1932 to 1945, as Alaska's sole delegate to the U.S. Congress.

Doln, Jacob. Doln was listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census.

Doyle, Tom. A bartender at Dawson City's Bonanza Saloon, Doyle joined the first wave of stampeders into the Chisana district. Partnered with Andy Taylor, Doyle staked Bonanza No. 14 in 1913. He also held property on Glacier Creek.

Dubois, Henry K. Included in the second wave into the Chisana district, Dubois arrived in early August 1913. Partnered with Hugh Brady, he worked Bonanza No. 9 during 1914.

Eagan, --. Partnered with Dan Ryan, Eagan prospected Bonanza No. 13 in 1915. He also worked Coarse Money Creek No. 1 that same summer.

Eikland, Pete (sometimes spelled Ekland or Eiklund). Listed as a placer miner on 1920 census, Eikland partnered with Jack Carroll, working Bonanza No. 4 in 1921. Partnered with Miles Atkinson, he mined an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1922. In 1925 the Alaska Road Commission hired Eikland and Harry Boyden to rehabilitate the shelter cabins along its McCarthy-Chisana trail. The following year Eikland operated Bonanza No. 3.



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- Erickson, Carolyn. The wife of Leon Erickson, Carolyn Erickson was listed without occupation on the 1920 census.
- Erickson, Leon. Leon Erickson was listed as the infant son of Leon B. and Carolyn Erickson on the 1920 census.
- Erickson, Leon B. Partnered with Charley Fogelberg, Leon B. Erickson worked a lay held by Shorty Briggen in 1919. Erickson was listed as a prospector on the 1920 census.
- Erickson, Oscar. Oscar Erickson prospected near Dry Gulch in 1916, where he was reportedly killed by poisonous gas which accumulated in his shaft. Like most of the other miners who died in the district, Erickson was buried in Chisana City.
- Fales, Mark A. Fales, one of the last miners in the district, operated several claims on Big Eldorado Creek in the 1990s.
- Farstvedt, Ole. Partnered with Billy James, Farstvedt worked Bonanza Nos. 5 and 6 in 1919.
- Finnegan, J. J. Finnegan served as U.S. commissioner in the Chisana district from August-September 1914. He was later reappointed to the position, replacing Ned Hill.
- Finnesand, Neil. A participant in the 1913 Chisana stampede, Finnesand spent the remainder of his century-long life in Chitina.
- Fogelberg, Charles. Fogelberg worked a claim on Bug Gulch in 1916. Partnered with Leon B. Erickson, he obtained a lay from Shorty Briggen in 1919 and was listed as a prospector on the 1920 census.
- Gamblin, Sam. Gamblin worked claims along Horsfeld Creek in the 1930s, spending at least some of his winters in Chisana City. Partnered with Earl Hirst, he attempted to develop a lode claim above Chathenda Creek in 1940.
- Gates, Lem. One of the Dawson contingent into the Chisana district, Gates staked Bonanza No. 12 in 1913. The following year he partnered with Dud McKinney, working Bonanza No. 8 Fraction. Dying on August 30, 1914, Gates was buried in Chisana City.
- Goshaw, George R. Goshaw was the second postmaster at Chisana City, serving from November 19, 1914 to May 13, 1917. In 1915 he managed Oscar Breedman's Chisana operations. Later, Goshaw became a fur trader and a prominent resident of

Alaska's Seward Peninsula, where he was instrumental in organizing the Shishmaref Company of the Alaska Territorial Guard during the Second World War.

Graham, William. Graham, an acquaintance of Fred Best, worked in the Chisana district in 1917. The 1920 census listed Graham as a freighter.

Granville, Tom. Granville staked Bug Gulch Nos. 3 and 4 in August 1913.

Green, Bernard. The 1920 census listed Green as a prospector.

Greene, Don L. Originally from Sacramento, Greene partnered with Fred Best, working Bonanza No. 3 in 1914 and 1915. Again with Best, he worked Bonanza No. 7 in 1916 and also completed some prospecting on Gold Run. In 1917 the pair operated Bonanza Nos. 3 and 7. In 1919 Greene and one employee worked Bonanza No. 3. Greene was listed as a placer miners on the 1920 census. Partnered with Joe Davis, Greene worked an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1923. With Tony McGettigan, he mined Bonanza No. 5 in 1926. Again with McGettigan, he worked a claim on Bonanza Creek in 1929. In 1936 he mined the left bench on Bonanza No. 4 and worked the left bench of Bonanza No. 3 in 1938 and 1940.

Griffen, --. An acquaintance of Fred Best, Griffen prospected in the Chisana district in 1914.

Griffith, J. G. Griffith leased Big Eldorado No. 2 from Matilda Wales in August 1913. He also worked a portion of the Glacier Creek bench.

Grisko, Tony. Grisko and partner Gus Lepart rushed to the Chisana in July 1913. He remained in the district until at least 1920, when the census listed him as a trader.

Gwin, G. C. "Shorty". In 1913 Gwin operated a roadhouse on the Hazelet trail just south of Chisana Pass. In 1916, he freighted supplies into the Chisana district. By 1918 he was also guiding big game hunters out of McCarthy.

Hagen, James E. In 1913 Hagen and partners T. W. Jackson and E. J. Ives leased Glacier No. 2 and five claims on Big Eldorado and Chavolda Creeks. Partnered with Tom Johnson, he worked Bonanza No. 8 in 1914. He returned to Bonanza No. 8 in 1915, this time partnered with a miner named Smedley.

Haggren, A. F. "Fred". Haggren worked the Discovery bench on Coarse Money Creek during 1913.

Haggren, --. Haggren was the wife of Fred Haggren.

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Hall, Franklin. Hall, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected in the Chisana district in 1914, 1915, and 1916.

Hamshaw, Fletcher T. A well known mineral developer, Hamshaw leased the Jameses' holdings from Price, Manley, and Ives in early 1914. He worked Bonanza Nos. 4, 5, and 8, and No. 1 Little Eldorado in 1914.

Hamshaw, Greta. Fletcher Hamshaw's daughter, nine-year-old Greta rushed to the Chisana district with her father in 1913.

Handy, George. Handy, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected in the Chisana district in 1915 and 1916. Already a noted figure in the region, in 1913 Handy and mountaineer Dora Keen had completed the first ascent of nearby Mt. Blackburn.

Harris, Frank. Harris prospected Little Eldorado No. 1 Bench in 1914. He also examined Gold Run Creek.

Hawkins, Charlie. Hawkins prospected middle Chathenda Creek in 1915, and later worked at Kennicott. After the mine there closed, Hawkins returned to the Chisana district, where, partnered with Almer Peterson, he prospected Coarse Money Creek in 1940.

Hayes, Jack. An acquaintance of Fred Best, Hayes prospected the Chisana district in 1917.

Hazelet, George C. The former mayor of Cordova, Hazelet reached the Chisana district in late July 1913. Hazelet was unable to obtain any valuable ground, but eventually staked Chicken Nos. 3 and 4. He also established a townsite which he named "Woodrow," due its location on Wilson Creek. That fall, Hazelet established a new route from McCarthy to Chisana City via the Nizina, Rohn, and Chisana Glaciers.

Healy, M. J. Healy rushed from Valdez to the Chisana in 1913, securing a claim on Bonanza Pup.

Hill, George E. "Ned". The Chisana miners selected Hill as their temporary U.S. commissioner in September 1913, supplanting J. J. Finnegan. Succeeded by Anthony J. Dimond in November 1913, he was restored to the federal position in July 1914. Partnered with Wagner, Hill prospected Sargent Creek in 1916.

Hirst, Earl. A Copper basin prospector and trader since at least 1917, Hirst worked the left bench of Bonanza No. 2 in 1935, 1936, 1938, and 1940. Partnered with Sam Gamblin, he attempted to develop a lode claim above Chathenda Creek in 1940.

Partnered with Harry Sutherland, Hirst again mined on Bonanza Creek in 1946 and 1947.

Hocken, Tom. Hocken, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected in the Chisana district in 1916.

Hocker, --. Partnered with Shorty Briggen, Hocker mined the lower end of Bonanza No. 7 in 1915.

Hodel, John. Hodel mined Gold Run Creek in the late 1940s.

Hoffman, Frank. Hoffman was appointed Chisana's first deputy marshal in October 1913.

Horsfeld, Jack. A Canadian prospector, Horsfeld discovered gold on a tributary of Beaver Creek in 1902. Local prospectors subsequently named the stream in his honor.

Hover, Robert K. Hover apparently operated a store in Bonanza City in 1915 and 1916. Partnered with McGettigan, Hover worked Bonanza No. 2 bench in 1917. He was listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census.

Huntley, --. Partnered with a miner named Moore, Huntley worked the lower end of Bonanza No. 11 in 1915.

Hurdning, Charles E. Operated a \$14,000 "sawmill plant" in Chisana during the summer of 1918.

Hussey, Jim. Hussey and Dick Woodman built Alaska Road Commission relief cabins along the McCarthy-Chisana trail during the fall of 1918.

Ives, E. J. Ives was one of the trio of Alaskan capitalists who optioned the James/Nelson properties in late 1913. He also joined with Jim Hagen and Tom Jackson in leasing Glacier No. 2 and five claims on Big Eldorado.

Jackson, T. W. Partnered with Jim Hagen and E. J. Ives, Jackson leased Glacier Creek No. 2 and five claims on Big Eldorado and Chavolda Creeks in 1913.

James, Agnes T. Agnes James was the wife of Chisana co-discoverer William E. James. In 1947 she, her husband, and Almer J. Peterson formed the Nutzotin Placer Company to exploit the couple's claims.

James, Claude H. Claude James, the brother of William James, was living in Chisana in 1918.

James, William E. "Billy". The co-discoverer of gold in the Chisana district, James staked numerous claims; including Little Eldorado No. 1. James hydraulically mined Bonanza No. 9 in 1915, building a thousand-foot flume to transport water from the mouth of Coarse Money Creek. Later that summer, James and Nelson extended the ditch downstream as far as Bonanza No. 4, crossing from the west to the east side of the creek at the upper end of Bonanza No. 6. In 1917, James, Wales, Nelson, and Johnson mined Bonanza Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 9, and Little Eldorado No. 1. In 1919 James, partner Ole Farstvedt, and six employees worked Bonanza Nos. 5 and 6, building an elaborate "boomer" dam. Listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census, James partnered with Percy Thornton to work Bonanza No. 6 and Little Eldorado No. 1 in 1923. Left single by the death of his long-time companion Matilda Wales in 1925, James married his wife, Agnes, the following year. James mined Bonanza Discovery in 1930, 1931, and 1936. In 1947 he, his wife, and Almer J. Peterson formed the Nutzotin Placer Company to exploit the couple's claims. Little came of the venture, however, and James died in Anchorage in April 1960. James Creek, a tributary of Carl Creek lying northeast of Beaver Lake, appears to have been named in honor of this pioneer miner.

Jensey, --. Partnered with a miner named Hill, Jensey worked a claim on Sargent Creek in 1916.

Joe, Shushanna (also known as Chisana Joe or Indian Joe). Joe led Billy James to the mouth of Bonanza Creek, the site of the 1913 Chisana gold discovery. Although he failed to profit in the initial rush, Joe remained in the area, working Bonanza Nos. 3B Fraction in 1938, and probably mining No. 3B Fraction and No. 4 in 1940. Dying in the late-1950s, Joe was buried on a bluff overlooking Chisana City.

Johnson, --. Partnered with a miner named Waggoner, Johnson worked Little Eldorado No. 3 in 1914.

Johnson, A. S. Operating in the Chisana district from at least 1925, Johnson mined Bonanza No. 8 in 1931 and worked the left bench of Bonanza No. 9 in 1936.

Johnson, Aaron. Arriving in 1906, Johnson and his four partners were the first to work Chathenda Creek. Early Chisana prospectors consequently designated the stream Johnson Creek in his honor. Despite the continuing objections of the USGS, the name remains in local use today.

Johnson, Andy. Partnered with McGovern, Johnson worked the upper end of the left bench on Little Eldorado No. 1 during 1915.

Johnson, Gus. Johnson built the territorial airstrip in Chisana City for the Alaska Road Commission in 1929.

Johnson, Iver. A partner of Ivan Thorall and a seasonal resident of the district, Johnson lengthened Chisana City's airstrip in 1956.

Johnson, Luella. Johnson ran Chisana's post office from October 30, 1929 until replaced by Anthony McGettigan on February 24, 1938.

Johnson, Sidney "Too Much". Johnson freighted into the Chisana district during the teens and 1920s. In 1922 Johnson and his wife worked a claim on Pan Creek, just across the international border.

Johnson, William A. "Billy". While employed as a driver for the Cascade Laundry in Dawson, Johnson grubstaked James and Nelson and became, in return, a full partner in their claims. In 1917, James, Wales, Nelson, and Johnson mined Bonanza Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 9, and Little Eldorado No. 1. He was listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census.

Justin, Jack John. Born in Cross Creek Village in 1906, Justin placer mined near Chisana in the 1930s.

Kawakami, Y. Having rushed to the district in 1913, Kawakami ran a boarding house at mouth of Coarse Money Creek in 1915, and remained in the vicinity until at least November 1916. This is probably the same Kawakami who had earlier operated a roadhouse at the foot of Twelve Mile Hill near Dawson City.

Kelly, Fred. Kelly guided big game hunters out of Chisana City in 1915.

Kerns, Doctor --. Kerns practiced medicine in the Chisana district in 1914.

Ketching, --. Partnered with Dr. Charles Montgomery, Ketching sluiced Big Eldorado Creek No. 4 Below Upper Discovery in 1915. Partnered with E. W. Carden, he worked Bonanza Creek in 1918.

Kettleson, Theodore. Kettleson, a former steamboat captain from Fairbanks, served as Chisana City's first postmaster from September 30, 1913 to November 18, 1914. After leaving Chisana, he served briefly as a member of the territorial House and ended his career as a prominent banker in Sitka.

Killian, Karl. Killian prospected in the Chisana district in 1938.

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King, Albert. King was a failed stamper who established the townsite of King City, on the Chisana River about 15 miles northeast of Chisana City.

Kingston, William "Billy". The brother of Jimmy Kingston, Billy Kingston prospected in the Chisana district from 1913 to 1915.

Kingston, James "Jimmy". Arriving in Chisana district in mid-July 1913, Kingston staked ground on Coarse Money Creek. In early 1915 authorities arrested Kingston for the murder of Louis Schonborn. They failed to convince a Valdez jury, however, and Kingston was eventually released.

Knowles, Mike. Knowles prospected the Chisana district in 1916 and reported finding pay on Notch Creek in 1919. In 1922 and early 1923 he carried the mail from Chisana to McCarthy.

Larson, Gus. A McCarthy resident, Larson was one of the original stampeders of July 1913.

Lawrence, John "Jack". Lawrence, an acquaintance of Fred Best, freighted in the Chisana district in 1916, 1917, and 1918. The 1920 census listed Lawrence as a trapper.

Leby, Fred. Leby worked a bench claim in the Chisana district in 1914.

Leedy, Jack. Rushing from Whitehorse to the Chisana in 1913, Leedy secured two claims on Johnson Creek.

Lepart, Gus. Lepart and partner Tony Grisko rushed to the Chisana in July 1913. Unable to find good prospects around Gold Hill, Lepart staked claims well down the Chisana River.

Lewis, --. Partnered with miners named Bastell and Munsell, Lewis sluiced Gold Run Creek No. 3 Below in 1915.

Lewis, Henry. Lewis served as Fletcher Hamshaw's foreman in 1914.

Lindblom, Hugo. The brother of Ruben Lindblom, Hugo rushed from Cordova to Chisana via the "goat trail" in July 1913. Although the pair completed some preliminary prospecting on Chathenda Creek, they never filed a claim.

Lindblom, Ruben. The brother of Hugo Lindblom, Ruben rushed from Cordova to Chisana via the "goat trail" in July 1913. Although the pair did some preliminary prospecting on Chathenda Creek, they never filed a claim.

Linden, Gus. Linden, a prospector who died destitute in Chisana City, was buried there by public subscription in 1915.

Ludwig, John. Ludwig mined Bonanza No. 7 Fraction in 1915.

Manley, Frank. Manley, for whom the village of Manley, Alaska, was named, was one of the trio of Alaskan capitalists who optioned the James/Nelson holdings in late 1913.

McAllister, L. McAllister was reported to have made a new discovery on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek, in May 1916.

McCabe, J. E. McCabe worked the lower end of Bonanza No. 7 in 1914. Partnered with E. R. Behling and Joe Davis, he worked Big Eldorado No. 3 Below in 1917.

McCallum, Louis. McCallum was probably an early arrival in the Chisana district. He is known to have sluiced on Shamrock Creek in 1915 and to have made a new discovery on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek about twenty miles west of Chisana City, in May 1916. In 1931 McCallum worked the right limit of Alder Gulch.

McClellan, Joe P. McClellan worked Bonanza No. 3B in 1913 and Little Eldorado No. 3 in 1915. In 1916 he joined with Andy Taylor mining Bonanza No. 3. Partnered again with Taylor in 1917, McClellan worked Bonanza No. 2. He remained in the Chisana area until at least 1920.

McDonald, Jack. Reaching the district in early August 1913, McDonald leased Bonanza No. 12 from Dud McKinney and Lem Gates.

McDonald, James "Windy Jim". McDonald prospected in the Chisana district in 1916 and worked Gold Run No. 2 Above Discovery in 1917.

McGettigan, Anthony "Tony". McGettigan served as Anthony Dimond's assistant during the winter of 1913-1914. In 1915 he was appointed U.S. commissioner for the Chisana district, serving until 1921. McGettigan prospected Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek, in 1916, and was rumored to have made a strike. Partnered with Bob Hover, he worked Bonanza No. 2 bench in 1917. Listed as U.S. commissioner on the 1920 census, McGettigan worked an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1923. Partnered with Don Greene, he mined Bonanza No. 5 in 1926. Again with Greene, he worked an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1929. McGettigan operated Bonanza No. 11 in 1931, an unidentified claim on upper Bonanza Creek in 1933, Bonanza Nos. 11 and 12 in 1936, and Bonanza No. 12 in 1938 and 1940. He



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was Chisana City's last postmaster, serving from February 24 to July 30, 1938. McGettigan died under mysterious circumstances in about 1943.

McGuire, Anthony. McGuire worked Dry Gulch in June 1914.

McGuire, J. E. McGuire located claims on Snow Gulch in 1913.

McGuire, Ned. McGuire, a resident of Fairbanks, claimed to have discovered gold in the middle of Chisana City in October 1913.

McKay, Bill. McKay, an acquaintance of Don Greene, prospected in the Chisana district in 1914 and 1915. Like Mike Knowles, he worked Notch Creek in 1919.

McKinney, Barney. A Tlingit Indian from Klawock, Barney was listed on the 1920 census as the adopted son of Dud McKinney. He sluiced Gold Run No. 1 Above Discovery in 1929 and 1930.

McKinney, Emma. Emma McKinney was Dud McKinney's wife.

McKinney, W. D. "Dud". A former mayor of Forty Mile in the Yukon Territory, McKinney joined the first wave of stampeders into the Chisana district. He staked Bonanza No. 11 in 1913, sluiced the upper end of Bonanza No. 11 in 1915, and worked Bonanza No. 8 in 1917. Listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census, McKinney partnered with Jack Carroll, working Gold Run Creek in 1923.

McLean, Archie. Both Archie and brother Tom participated in the Chisana rush.

McLean, Tom. Both Tom and brother Archie participated in the Chisana rush.

McLennan, William "Billy". McLennan prospected in the Chisana area before James's discovery, but failed to find any gold. He returned with the other stampeders in 1913, eventually working Little Eldorado No. 3 in 1915. The 1920 Chisana census listed McLennan as a prospector.

McMullen, Edward. McMullen reported making a new strike on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek, in May 1916. Partnered with Tony McGettigan, he worked Bonanza No. 10 in 1919. He was listed as a prospector on the 1920 census.

McNutt, --. McNutt sluiced on Shamrock Creek in 1915 and partnered with Al Wright, mined Bonanza No. 11 in 1916.

McNutt, Raymond A. A master guide, McNutt purchased the eastern half of the Chisana City townsite in about 1980.

Meloy, Jack F. Meloy, who was living in Chisana in 1918, later became an important resident of McCarthy.

Merritt, W. H. A Tanana River trader, Merritt chartered the *Dusty Diamond* to transport thirty tons of freight to the Chisana district in July 1913.

Meyers, Henry. The 1920 census listed Meyers as a trapper.

Miller, Frank. Frank Miller established Chisana City's first saloon in the winter of 1913-1914.

Miller, J. A. J. A. Miller operated a roadhouse in Chisana City in 1915.

Millett, Ezkil. Millett was listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census.

Moffit, Fred H. A USGS geologist, Moffit examined the Chisana district in 1908. Several important Alaska features were named in his honor, including Mount Moffit, a prominent peak located in the central Alaska Range.

Montgomery, Dr. Charles. Partnered with Ketching, Montgomery sluiced Big Eldorado Creek No. 4 Below Upper Discovery in 1915. A doctor, he also practiced medicine in Chisana City.

Moody, James A. Moody, one of the last miners in the district, operated several Bonanza Creek claims during the 1990s.

Moon, John. A McCarthy resident, Moon was an early stamper to the Chisana district.

Moore, --. Partnered with Huntley, Moore worked the lower end of Bonanza No. 11 in 1915.

Morgan, Horatio E. The first U.S. Recorder in the Chisana district, Morgan served during July and August 1913. Partnered with Bob Wiley, Morgan mined Gold Run Creek in 1913. In 1914 he operated a claim on Discovery Pup and worked several other claims the following summer, including Bonanza No. 8 Fraction and No. 10, which he leased from Carl Whitham.

Mosier, George. Mosier prospected benches along Shamrock Creek in 1915.

Mullet, Zeke. Partnered with Percy Thornton, Mullet worked a claim on Skookum Creek in 1919.

Muncaster, Frances. William Muncaster's wife, Frances Muncaster was listed without occupation on the 1920 census.

Muncaster, William. The 1920 census listed William Muncaster as a prospector.

Munsell, --. Partnered with miners named Bastell and Lewis, Munsell sluiced Gold Run Creek No. 3 Below in 1915.

Murie, James H. Partnered with Jack Costello, Murie worked Bonanza No. 10 in 1915. He remained in the Chisana district at least through 1918. By 1926 Murie had apparently changed occupations. That year he was reportedly operating a roadhouse on the Nizina River near McCarthy.

Myers, George. Myers, an old time prospector, died and was buried on Bonanza No. 10 bench in July 1915.

Nelson, Aaron E. Aaron Nelson prospected Canyon Creek in 1915, and apparently worked Bonanza No. 13 in 1919. Listed as a prospector on the 1920 census, he served as the district's U.S. commissioner from 1921-1930. Nelson mined Big Eldorado Creek in 1923, and worked an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1926 and again in 1929.

Nelson, Fred. Fred Nelson was reported to have made a strike on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek in May 1916. According to Linnie Nelson, Fred Nelson worked Jim Murie's ground in 1918.

Nelson, Linnie. N. P. Nelson's wife, Linnie Nelson was listed without occupation on the 1920 census.

Nelson, Nels Peter. N. P. Nelson co-discovered the gold in the Chisana district. In 1917, James, Wales, Nelson, and Johnson mined Bonanza Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 9, and Little Eldorado No. 1. Listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census, Nelson mined Bonanza No. 5 in 1934 and 1935, the left bench of Bonanza No. 6 in 1936, Bonanza Nos. 5 and 6 in 1938, 1939, and 1940, and an unidentified claim on Bonanza Creek in 1946. In 1947 Nelson still controlled Bonanza No. 8, No. 8 Fraction, No. 9, and the Discovery claim at the mouth of Coarse Money Creek. Nelson Creek, lying just north of Gold Hill, appears to have been named in his honor.

Nelson, Thomas W. Nelson prospected in the Chisana district in 1914.

Nelson, W. E. Nelson worked Snow Gulch Nos. 3 and 4 in 1915.

Nichols, John. In 1915 Nichols prospected Bonanza No. 17 for Sam Shucklin.

Noyes, Bonnie. Noyes was listed as William and Frances Muncaster's adopted daughter on the 1920 census.

O'Hara, Jack. In 1919 O'Hara, partnered with Shorty Briggen, worked the unidentified "Ford" property. Listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census, O'Hara mined on Big Eldorado in 1923.

O'Malley, Mike. O'Malley operated a claim on Big Eldorado Creek during 1914.

Packard, Slim. Packard resided in the Chisana district in 1914.

Peck, Fred. Mined an unidentified claim in the Chisana district in 1916.

Peters, William J. A USGS geologist, Peters and Alfred H. Brooks traversed the upper White River country in 1898 and 1899. Several prominent Alaska features were named in his honor, including the Peters Glacier, which drains the northwestern flank of Mt. McKinley.

Peterson, Almer J. Partnered with Charlie Hawkins, Almer J. Peterson prospected Coarse Money Creek in 1940. In 1946 he, Billy James, and Agnes James formed the Nutzotin Placer Company to exploit the Jameses' claims.

Peterson, C. F. Peterson operated a tobacco shop in Chisana City in 1915.

Peterson, Knut. Peterson spent the winter of 1934-1935 in Chisana City. Partnered with his brother Ulrich, he worked Big Eldorado No. 1 Below Discovery in 1936.

Peterson, Ulrich. Partnered with his brother Knut, Peterson worked Big Eldorado No. 1 Below Discovery in 1936.

Poulin, --. The Poulin brothers operated a roadhouse in Chisana City in 1915.

Price, John J. Price was one of the group of Alaskan investors who optioned the James/Nelson properties in late 1913.

Purdy, Frank. Purdy, Fred Best's former partner in the Cassiar Roadhouse, jumped Dan Sutherland's fraction on Big Eldorado Creek during the summer of 1913.

Range, Charles I. An unsuccessful Klondike stamper, Range located one of the first claims in the Rampart district in 1898. Reaching the Chisana district in 1914, he leased and operated Skookum Creek No. 1.

Ray, Frank. Ray, an acquaintance of Fred Best, prospected the Chisana district in 1914.

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- Reed, Grant. A Cordova resident who was formally cashier for the Copper River and Northwestern Railway, Reed stampeded to the Chisana in early August 1913. Although he located claim No. 1 Above on the left fork of Chathenda Creek, he was better known for operating a store at Bonanza City. A friend of Fred Best, he remained in the district through at least 1916.
- Reeve, Bob. Bob Reeve began flying into Chisana in 1932, carrying food and equipment for the local miners. This pioneer aviator later founded Reeve Aleutian Airways.
- Roberts, Lorain. Roberts, a barber, rushed to the district in August 1914, eventually settling in Bonanza City. Before leaving the district in 1915, she married fellow barber William Zacharias.
- Running, Hans. Listed as a placer miner on 1920 census, Running partnered with John Swanson, working Bonanza No. 6 in 1921.
- Ryan, Dan. One of the first stampeders to reach the district, Ryan was prospecting near the head of the White River with H. E. Morgan when the initial discovery was made. Partnered with a miner named Eagan, Ryan prospected Bonanza No. 13 in 1915. He also sluiced Poorman Creek that same year.
- Sargent, Draper C. "Bud". One of the first prospectors in the Chisana district, Sargent entered the area with Henry Bratnober's crew in 1905. In 1913 Sargent staked Skookum Creek No. 1, and partnered with Percy Thornton, worked the claim in 1917. Sargent Creek, a tributary of Glacier Creek, was named in his honor.
- Schonborn, Louis K. The former owner of the Yukon Hotel in Dawson City, Schonborn rushed to the Chisana district in August 1914 and opened a store in Bonanza City. He later moved his business to Chisana City, where he was murdered by a presumed robber in late December 1914.
- Schrader, Frank C. A USGS geologist, Schrader explored the Chisana district in 1902.
- Shucklin, Sam. Shucklin operated a clothing store in Chisana City from 1913 to at least 1915.
- Simons, Charles A. Listed as a merchant on the 1920 census, Simons served as the third postmaster of Chisana City from May 14, 1917 until his death in 1929. Simons was buried in Chisana City.
- Simpson, W. H. "Simmie". In September 1913, Simpson and his partner Louie Belney built one Chisana City's most elaborate log structures.

Slaven, Frank. Slaven, who rushed to the Chisana in 1913, helped establish the northern end of the Hazelet trail.

Smith, Lynn H. Smith worked as a carpenter in Chisana City during 1915. A gifted amateur photographer, he took most of the photos in the Zacharias Collection.

Smith, Merle "Mudhole". A Cordova Air Service pilot, Smith ferried supplies to the Chisana district in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Smith, Pete. Smith prospected the Chisana district in 1917.

Spaulding, Donald O. Spaulding was a hunting guide who operated out of Chisana City in 1947.

Stacey, Dan. A McCarthy resident who was among the first wave into the Chisana district, Stacey staked claims on Bonanza and Shamrock Creeks in 1913.

Stanley, Lewis V. A professional photographer, Stanley prospected the upper end of Bonanza Creek in 1915 and 1916.

Starbuck, Stuart. Starbuck, a pilot for Cordova Air, flew the mail to Chisana in the late 1940s.

Steinberger, William. Steinberger prospected the mouth of Canyon Creek in 1914.

Stevens, Red. Stevens worked Big Eldorado Nos. 3 and 4 Below Upper Discovery in the mid-1920s.

Stonebraker, Edward G. The 1920 census listed Stonebraker as a blacksmith.

Sullivan, F. Sullivan operated a roadhouse at Horsfeld in 1915.

Sutherland, Dan. Sutherland mined a fraction on Big Eldorado Creek during the summer of 1913. He later served as a member of the territorial Senate from 1913-1921 and as Alaska's sole delegate to the United States Congress from 1921-1931.

Sutherland, Harry. Partnered with Earl Hirst, Sutherland mined on Bonanza Creek in 1946 and 1947.

Swanson, John. Listed as a placer miner on 1920 census, Swanson partnered with Hans Running, working Bonanza No. 6 in 1921.

Taylor, Andrew M. A well known White River guide, Taylor was one of the first prospectors in the Chisana district. Arriving at the beginning of the rush, Taylor staked Bonanza No. 2 in 1913. In 1915, he mined No. 7 Fraction. Partnered with Joe McClellan in 1916, he worked Bonanza No. 3, and with McClellan again in 1917, mined Bonanza No. 2. Taylor continued working Bonanza Creek in 1918 and was listed as a prospector on the 1920 census. In 1925 he guided the first expedition to climb Mt. Logan, Canada's highest peak.

Thorall, Ivan. A partner of Iver Johnson, Thorall began living and mining in the Chisana district in the mid-1950s. At this writing, he still resides at his homestead south of Chathenda Creek.

Thornton, Duval Percy. Partnered with Bud Sargent, Thornton mined Skookum Creek in 1917. Although drafted into the U.S. Army in July 1918, Thornton had returned by 1920: he was listed as a placer miner on that year's census. Partnered with Billy James, Thornton worked Bonanza No. 6 and Little Eldorado No. 1 in 1923.

Tweedale, George. Juneau miner Tweedale arrived in the Chisana district in 1914, sluiced on Shamrock Creek in 1915, and was reported to have made a new strike on Foley Creek, a tributary of Notch Creek, in May 1916.

Waggoner, --. Partnered with a miner named Johnson, Waggoner worked Little Eldorado No. 3 in 1914.

Wagner, --. Partnered with Ned Hill, Wagner prospected Sargent Creek in 1915.

Wales, Matilda. Wales, the long-time companion of Billy James, was a co-discoverer of gold in the Chisana district. In late 1913 the James syndicate, of which she was part, optioned their block of claims to Frank Manley, John J. Price, and E. J. Ives, who in turn leased them to Fletcher Hamshaw. Having regained its claims, in 1917 the syndicate mined Bonanza Nos. 4, 5, 6, and 9, and Little Eldorado No. 1. Still a resident of Chisana in 1920, Wales was listed without occupation on that year's census. Wales died in 1925.

Waller, Harold H. Besides working as Horatio E. Morgan's assistant recorder at Bonanza City, Waller surveyed parts of Bonanza Creek in 1913.

Walstrom, Alex. Walstrom worked Bonanza No. 6 in 1913.

Wann, Fred. Wann served as emergency recorder at the start of the Chisana rush and prospected Glacier Creek in 1914.

Wheatly, O. J. Wheatly, who prospected the Chisana district in 1913 and 1914, claimed to have built the first cabin in Chisana City. On December 19, 1913, Wheatly married the head of the local Red Cross Hospital, Berta Cochrane, the ceremony being preformed by the newly appointed U.S. commissioner, Tony Dimond.

White, Lottie. White was listed as a cook on the 1920 census.

Whitham, Carl F. One of the first to prospect in the Chisana district, Whitham arrived on Little Eldorado Creek just after James had made his discovery. Staking Little Eldorado No. 2 in 1913, Whitham worked the claim in 1914, 1915, and 1916. In 1916 Whitham also mined No. 2 Fraction, as well as adjoining property on Snow Gulch. Whitham was listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census. He continued to operate Little Eldorado No. 2 until 1923, when he began working a lode claim in the Nabesna country.

Whitham, Marie. The sister of miner Percy Thornton, Marie married Carl Whitham in 1919 and was listed without occupation on 1920 census.

Wiley, Nat. An acquaintance of Fred Best, Wiley prospected in the Chisana district in 1915.

Wiley, Robert W. The owner of mining property on Beaver Creek, Wiley was an early stamper to the Chisana district. Arriving in August 1913, he obtained an option on Carl Whitham's Snow Gulch claim. Partnered with Horatio Morgan, he worked Gold Run in 1913, building an elaborate ditch. Partnered with Joe McClellan, he mined the upper end of Bonanza No. 3 Fraction in 1915. Wiley Creek, an upper tributary of the Middle Fork of the White River, was named in his honor.

Williams, George. Williams worked No. 3 Bonanza in 1914.

Wilson, George C. Wilson was one of the first prospectors to examine the Chisana district, entering the area with Henry Bratnober's crew in 1905. Early Chisana miners renamed Chavolda Creek in his honor, and despite the objections of the USGS, the name remains in local use today.

Woodman, Dick. Woodman and Jim Hussey built three Alaska Road Commission relief cabins along the McCarthy-Chisana trail during the fall of 1918.

Woodman, George. Partnered with a miner named Deffinbaugh, Woodman prospected Skookum No. 2 Above in 1915. Woodman was also reported to have brought one of the first Keystone drills into the district.



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Wright, Alfred T. "Al". Partnered with Anderson, Wright worked the upper end of Bonanza No. 11 Fraction in 1915. In 1917 he mined Bonanza Nos. 11 and 11 Fraction. Listed as a placer miner on the 1920 census, he remained in the area until at least 1947 when he still controlled Gold Run Creek Nos. 1 and 2 Above Discovery.

Wyerer, William. Wyerer was listed as a freighter on the 1920 census.

Young, ---. In 1913 Young and co-owner C. F. Boggs operated a roadhouse on the Hazelet trail near the foot of the Chisana Glacier.

Zacharias, William. Operated a barber shop in Bonanza City until September 1915. Before leaving the district, Zacharias married fellow barber Lorain Roberts.

Zavoritis, George. One of Fletcher Hamshaw's employees on North Fork Island at the time of the Chisana discovery, Zavoritis reached the Chisana district on July 11, 1913.

## APPENDIX SIX

### FOURTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES Residents of the Chisana District March 24-27, 1920

NAME	SEX	AGE	BIRTHPLACE	OCCUPATION
McGettigan, Anthony	M	51	Ireland	Commissioner
Simons, Charles A.	M	62	New York	Merchant
Boyden, Henry	M	35	England	Packer
Stonebraker, Edward G.	M	60	Iowa	Blacksmith
Fogelberg, Charles	M	46	Sweden	Prospector
McLennan, William	M	59	Maine	Placer miner
Millett, Ezkil	M	44	England	Placer miner
Carroll, John	M	36	Ireland	Placer miner
Hover, Robert K.	M	49	Ohio	Placer miner
Eikland, Pete	M	28	Norway	Placer miner
Running, Hans	M	30	Norway	Placer miner
O'Hara, Jack	M	40	Ireland	Placer miner
Doln, Jacob	M	42	Germany	Placer miner
Wright, Alfred T.	M	40	Sweden	Placer miner
Green, Bernard	M	36	Washington	Prospector
McKinney, W. D.	M	57	Missouri	Placer miner
McKinney, Barney	M	17	Alaska	None
Atkinson, Miles	M	42	Scotland	Prospector
Whitham, Carl F.	M	36	Washington	Placer miner
Whitham, Marie L.	F	31	Arkansas	None
Thornton, D. Percy	M	29	Arkansas	Placer miner
Davis, Blas J.	M	31	Austria	Placer miner
Swanson, John	M	30	Sweden	Placer miner
McMullen, Edward	M	59	New York	Prospector

Nelson, Aaron E.	M	64	Minnesota	Prospector
Carden, E. W.	M	55	Minnesota	Prospector
Taylor, Andrew M.	M	45	Canada	Prospector
White, Lottie	F	40	Missouri	Cook
Graham, William	M	55	Montana	Packer
Wyeres, William	M	54	Maine	Packer
Muncaster, William	M	34	Washington	Prospector
Muncaster, Frances	F	39	Washington	None
Noyes, Bonnie	F	19	Alaska	None
Erickson, Leon B.	M	45	Illinois	Prospector
Erickson, Caroline	F	31	Iowa	None
Erickson, Leon	M	1	Canada	None
Meyers, Henry	M	34	Switzerland	Trapper
James, William E.	M	45	California	Placer miner
Wales, Matilda	F	50	Iowa	None
Johnson, William A.	M	45	Kentucky	Placer miner
Greene, Don L.	M	42	Oregon	Placer miner
Lawrence, John	M	46	New York	Trapper
Grisko, Tony	M	38	Russia	Trader
Nelson, N. Peter	M	49	Sweden	Placer Miner
Nelson, Linnie	F	35	Iowa	None
Andy	M	36	Alaska	Trapper
Tobey Charley	M	67	Alaska	Trapper
Annie	F	18	Alaska	None
Indian [Shushanna] Joe	M	50	Alaska	Trapper
Polly	F	35	Alaska	None
Pershing	M	1	Alaska	None
Nancy	F	75	Alaska	None
John	M	45	Alaska	Trapper
Nellie	F	24	Alaska	None

Tilda	F	22	Alaska	None
Bertha	F	70	Alaska	None
-----	F	20	Alaska	None
Tetlin Johnny	M	26	Alaska	Trapper
Big Annie	F	--	Alaska	None
Martha	F	7	Alaska	None
Sam	M	65	Alaska	None
Annie	F	28	Alaska	None
Mary	F	3	Alaska	None
Frank	M	35	Alaska	None
Pete	M	40	Alaska	Trapper
Essie	F	30	Alaska	None
Pete	M	11	Alaska	None
Dora	F	8	Alaska	None
Dolly	F	6	Alaska	None
Ketchumstuk Charley	M	55	Alaska	None
Lucy	F	36	Alaska	None
Johnny	M	18	Alaska	None
Billie	M	12	Alaska	None
Sam	M	10	Alaska	None
Bill	M	40	Alaska	Trapper
Susie	F	25	Alaska	None
Joseph	M	10	Alaska	None
Charlie	M	8	Alaska	None
Nellie	F	6	Alaska	None
Maggie	F	4	Alaska	None
Northway	M	75	Alaska	Trapper
Susie	F	60	Alaska	None
Martha	F	15	Alaska	None
Carrie	F	12	Alaska	None

Walter	M	30	Alaska	Trapper
Bertha	F	20	Alaska	None
Mary	F	1	Alaska	None
Lee	M	20	Alaska	Trapper
Lena	F	55	Alaska	None
Steven	M	30	Alaska	Trapper
Lucy	F	60	Alaska	None
Sargent	M	8	Alaska	None
Lulu	F	16	Alaska	None
Ida May	F	10	Alaska	None
Jimmy	M	32	Alaska	Trapper
Jenney	F	24	Alaska	None
Johnny	M	5	Alaska	None
Albert	M	2	Alaska	None
Lucy	F	35	Alaska	None
Jack	M	16	Alaska	None
Wilson	M	5	Alaska	None
Mrs. John	F	48	Alaska	None
Nicholas	M	20	Alaska	None
Charley	M	13	Alaska	None
Edward	M	3	Alaska	None
Lulu Belle	F	15	Alaska	None
Billie	M	40	Alaska	Trapper
Enoch	M	45	Alaska	Trapper
Annie	F	30	Alaska	None
Sinclair	M	3	Alaska	None
Kyak	F	6	Alaska	None
Frank	M	65	Alaska	None
Fanny	F	50	Alaska	None
Big Shorty	F	19	Alaska	None

Little Shorty	F	17	Alaska	None
Teresa Annie	F	16	Alaska	None
Henry	M	14	Alaska	None
Alex	M	12	Alaska	None
James	M	11	Alaska	None
Tony	M	10	Alaska	None
George	M	9	Alaska	None
Bessie	F	13	Alaska	None
Latchow	M	40	Alaska	Trapper
Elisha	F	15	Alaska	None
Little Jack	M	45	Alaska	Trapper
Maggie	F	32	Alaska	None
May	F	2	Alaska	None
Lottie	F	4	Alaska	None
Robert	M	6	Alaska	None
Johnson	M	55	Alaska	Trapper
Sarah	F	35	Alaska	None
Edith	F	5	Alaska	None
-----	M	1	Alaska	None
Billiki	M	35	Alaska	Trapper
Jennie	F	30	Alaska	None
Paul	M	10	Alaska	None
Titus	M	32	Alaska	Trapper
Martha	F	30	Alaska	None
----- Jack	M	10	Alaska	None
Rosie	F	9	Alaska	None
Lottie	F	8	Alaska	None
Mary	F	7	Alaska	None
Eva	F	5	Alaska	None
Samuel	M	40	Alaska	Trapper

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Maggie	F	29	Alaska	None
Ida	F	8	Alaska	None
Peggie	F	5	Alaska	None
Big Jennie	F	16	Alaska	None

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