

# THE DAILY KLONDIKE NUGGET.

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## DAWSON

In many respects the history of Dawson is the most wonderful known to modern times, and, indeed, only the commercial advancement of the present age makes such a history possible.

A trifle more than three years since Dawson was unfought of, even as the nucleus of the present flourishing city, let alone what it is today, one of the most modern, and at the same time, perhaps the newest and most isolated city in the world, and it has become all of this in three years' time and in the face of a climate which a few brief years since was considered in more favored parts impossible for the white race to withstand.

To divide the history of Dawson into parts, it may be said that the time previous to last year was the primary stage, and that last year the writing was placed upon the wall which foretold of the present prosperity so noticeable to all.

Not until the river carried away its winter's accumulation of ice last spring did the present modern city become a tangible fact noticeable to resident and visitor alike. When the freight which had been ordered during the winter previous from almost every known quarter of the globe, began pouring in by the earliest boats, and this merchandise, building material, furnishings and what not was distributed so that its presence was known and consequent influences felt, people began to awaken to the fact that Dawson was no longer a mere mining camp, but that it had assumed its proper place of dignity and importance, and had passed at a stride from a small and crude town, the temporary stopping place for miner and prospector en route to the scene of actual mining or possible fresh discoveries, to the position of a great commercial and social center. With the first two sections of Dawson's history the present sketch has little to do, otherwise than by comparison, as that has been long since given to publication, and the Dawson of former times, although it must ever be lovingly remembered by those who knew it, and which as it recedes farther and farther from us with the tearing down of each old landmark, and takes to itself new and ever varying aspects, as it passes from all but the treasure house of memory, is by no means the Dawson of today.

Dawson is no longer a mere mining camp. It is a modern city. Let anyone who doubts this statement look down any of Dawson's principal streets, and "looking backward" a brief year or two compare the past and present. This done let him scan the faces of those he meets and be convinced that with the passing of the mining camp goes also the pioneer. This done, if he has the quality of reverence at all developed, he will, mentally at least, recover while the two pass together to an honored place in history.

### Improvements.

In referring to the multitude of improvements which are not only seen but felt by every sense, it is difficult to know just where to begin or what to say, for the reason that the original is so fast passing from our ken, and one in looking at the improvements in the city as a whole, is apt to confound the improvement with the improved.

Where once the city lay in a mirey bog, it now rests upon a solid foundation—the product of immense labor and expense, and at this season of the year when the nights are long and dark, when the sun, if visible at all, only deigns to show his light for a few brief moments during the day, once the streets were filled with impenetrable blackness, relieved here and there by a sperm dripping candle lantern or spluttering oil lamp. The nights of our present winter are electric lit and as bright as they are in any modern city. There was a time when sidewalks were unknown, except as the porches before the doors of some of the log cabins were so dignified, and those who went to the dance halls to dance carried their shoes under their arms, and wore the Indian-made muckluks or rubber boots on their feet as they waded through the muddy streets.

Although the log cabin is still much in evidence, it gives place, month by

month to the more modern and pretentious frame building, and the time must come when the log cabin will be as much of a rarity here as elsewhere. There is a very good and quite sufficient reason why the log cabin as a residence building is not supplanted by the more modern structure more rapidly. The extreme cold of the winter weather makes the extra warmth of the log house a most desirable quality.

There was a time in Dawson's history when, if a man wanted a bath he took it in a gold pan, and a clean shirt was only to be had at the expense of personally washing it. Meals he might, or might not, get at the restaurants, according to the amount of provisions there happened to be in town. Now bath houses are as plentiful and as reasonable in their charges as anywhere, and the laundries are unexcelled either in the grade of work turned out or its cost.

In the matter of restaurants and hotels where meals are served, Dawson has her share of culinary artists and caterers, with the result that a better meal is scarcely obtainable than the one that can be bought in Dawson's eating places.

Perhaps one of the greatest and most generally felt improvements is that of the telegraphic service. This makes possible a great many things altogether out of the question previous to its establishment.

The fugitive from justice may be stopped and returned by a finger's weight upon that instrument of magic—the telegraph key, and the merchant wanting a supply of some commodity, in place of sending, at great expense, as in former times, a man to buy and see to its safe delivery, sits in his office and fills in the blank spaces of a telegraph form, sends his office boy to the station with it, and forgets all about it for the time, well knowing that the matter has been attended to.

Churches, public libraries, free reading rooms, and a whole multitude of social organizations are among the heavy-list of modern improvements already enjoyed, to say nothing of the many others which have been projected and are well under way.

### Public Institutions.

Perhaps there is no public institution already in existence here of equal importance and promise as that of the proposed public museum. This institution was projected but recently, yet bids fair to become a very prominent and important part of the new Dawson. A lot has already been purchased upon which to erect a museum building, and the plans for the building are sufficiently far advanced to warrant the prediction that the coming summer will see the public museum an established fact. No country in the world is more prolific in the production of material with which to fill such a building.

The foundation of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was another one of those long steps of the young giant Dawson which attracted the attention of people in other parts of the world where its inhabitants are fondly pictured by many as being considerably lower in mental stature and advantages than those of other lands, and while the forming of the society was laughed at for a time, by a few, its effect has been very noticeable already.

The Free Public Library and Reading Room has been in the past, and will no doubt continue to be in the future, one of the greatest marks of improvement and public advancement in the city. The library is well stocked with standard and contemporaneous works of fiction, history, religion and reference, to say nothing of the files of newspapers, magazines and other current literature. The room is always open to the public, and has proved a lasting source of pleasure and benefit to a vast number of people to whom reading might otherwise have been almost an impossibility.

The courts of justice are two in number, known respectively as the Police court and the Territorial court. The former is presided over by Magistrates Starnes, Scarth, McDonnell, Rutledge, or by Major Z. T. Wood.

Two court rooms are provided in the

courthouse proper, and in these, court is held by Justices Dugas and Craig. The promptitude with which justice is dealt out in these courts, and their admirable methods are all so well known that discussion is uncalled for.

### Churches.

To the watchfulness and care of the Christian churches is due the fact that no place is ever allowed to remain long without Christian teaching, and Dawson has been far from neglected in this matter, as five churches have been established, the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist, besides the Salvation Army.

### Public Schools.

Latterly the public schools have outstripped the city itself in the race of progress, rapid though its pace has been, so that but recently the Yukon council was compelled to rent McDonald hall and fit it up as a temporary schoolroom, notwithstanding the fact that three large schoolrooms besides a kindergarten were already in commission.

This of course is due to the fact of the unexpected arrival of so many families last fall when the last boats arrived. The council, when the present term of school commenced last fall, had ready for use the present public school building containing two large rooms. Besides this there was the building already occupied in the North End by Father Gendreau's school, and arrangements were made whereby this could be made use of by the public school children of the neighborhood, and later still another room was fitted up and is in use at present as a kindergarten. Notwithstanding all these arrangements which were thought at the time to be ample, the principal, Miss McRae, has found the congested state of the rooms incompatible with good results, and the council has purchased a number of lots on Fifth avenue, and plans are being drawn for a modern school building which will be immediately erected.

### Hospitals.

Of these praiseworthy and necessary institutions there are two, known as the Good Samaritan and St. Mary's hospitals.

These institutions are situated one at the north end and the other at the south end of the city, and have been from the time of their founding, of incalculable benefit to the public, making possible the successful treatment of

many difficult cases which would, of necessity under less favorable circumstances, have resulted in fatalities.

### Buildings.

The saw and hammer have been heard in the land to some purpose during the past summer, and the great gaps between dwelling houses just outside the business portion of the city, have been greatly lessened. The rapid and constant building which has been in progress since early last spring have been matters of public comment, and referred to by the press a great many times.

Aside from the erection of dwelling houses there has been some notable public and commercial building in progress, the former still far from being completed.

Last spring one might look up or down, or across the Yukon from almost any point on First avenue, but very early this view was shut off by the erection of an uninterrupted row of warehouses the full length of the river front where steamers land. This work was pushed all over the city and a large number of vast warehouses is the result. That portion of Dawson lying over against the Klondike has also been greatly improved, and is thickly built up at present.

The recently finished postoffice building at the corner of Third street and Third avenue is the most notable and handsome of Dawson's new buildings, and the new courthouse, public school and public museum buildings, contemplated and in course of construction are among the buildings which the government has arranged for.

### Streets.

Those who laid out the city knew what they were about when they mapped out the broad, commodious thoroughfares dividing it into blocks.

The streets running east and west are numbered from one to ten inclusive, while the avenues run north and south and are also numbered, beginning with First avenue at the river and running back towards the mountain. The streets lying between what is known as the Klondike slough and the Klondike river are known in the same way, with the addition of the word south.

Long ago the project of numbering the houses of the city was started, and the council issued a three years' franchise for that purpose, but that, together with the publication of a city directory has been found impracticable

till such time as Dawson becomes incorporated.

### Electric Lights.

The writer well remembers being in Dyea once, before the White Pass & Yukon R. R. made Skagway the point of departure for Dawson, when word was brought from Dawson concerning the fabulous prices offered there for kerosene oil and candles, it being said that the market had been depleted of both commodities.

It was little thought at the time men were loading candles on dog sleds for the Dawson market—that within one short year that city would be electric lit, and that the current would also be harnessed to drive heavy machinery, and that when the difference in cleanliness, risk of fire and convenience were taken into account, that the electric lights would be the cheapest, yet such is the surprising fact, and today Dawson has one of the most complete and modern electric light and power plants in existence, with a capacity far exceeding the demands of its present population.

### Water Supply.

Water is supplied at a moderate cost through the pipes of the water company which draws its supply from the Klondike river, upon the bank of which is situated a powerful pumping plant, capable of supplying a much more extensive city than even Dawson promises to be anywhere in the immediate future.

One of the great problems of water supply in Dawson has been to devise some plan by which the pipes and their outlets could be kept open during the winter months, and while owing to a failure to get the necessary piping and machinery in last fall, the plan could not be put in operation this winter, the company believes it has such a plan that will fill all the requirements. This consists in a combination of water pipes and electrical appliance. The pipes being connected and made of iron will carry the current as well as a wire, and it is said that a current applied to the main where it connects with the pumping plant will prevent the freezing of water throughout the entire system even in the coldest weather.

The plan will be put in operation next fall, as the plant for carrying it out will arrive with the opening of navigation. Meanwhile by keeping constant pressure on the water the pipes have been kept open thus far this winter

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