

Vincent Schwarz: Klondike Fever

When one hears the word “[Klondike](#)” now, the first thing that probably comes to mind, especially at this time of year, is the [brand name of delicious ice cream treats](#). In the late 1890s, however, Klondike meant something entirely different---gold.

I wanted the gold, and I sought it;
 I scrambled and mucked like a slave.
 Was it famine or scurvy ---- I fought it;
 I hurled my youth into a grave.
 I wanted the gold, and I got it ----
 Came out with a fortune last fall, ----
 Yet somehow the gold isn't all.¹
 (Excerpt from “The Spell of the Yukon” by Robert W. Service)



Last evening on the westbound Milwaukee train Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Schwartz and their seven children of this city left for the Klondike, where they will make their future home. About two years ago Mr. Schwartz became a victim of gold fever and went to the Klondike. He staked out five claims and in a short time realized handsomely on his diggings. Finding that five claims were too much to work he disposed of three of them, and leaving the other two in charge of an old prospector, he returned to La Crosse for his wife and family. Mr. Schwartz has built a comfortable home on one of his claims, and expects to live there until he secures an independent fortune. (*La Crosse Daily Press*, 1901 May 1)²

Who was Vincent Schwarz, and how did he, along with people from all over the world, come to leave their families and homes to rush into the northern wilderness in the waning years of the 19th Century?

Vincent Schwarz (also spelled Schwartz in some sources) was born in Germany in September 1846. He came to the United States in 1855 when he was nine years old.³ His parents, John and Marthina (or Martina), were 45 and 43 years old, respectively, when they left their home in Württemberg to make

the journey to the United States. Another son, Joseph, was born in New York about four years after they arrived in the United States.⁴

The family shows up in the 1866 La Crosse City Directory living at 804 King Street. Members of the household include Adrian Schwarz, a painter; Rinehart Schwarz, a partner in the Gantert & Schwarz furniture company; and Vincent Schwarz, a cabinet maker for Gantert & Schwarz.⁵ It appears that Gantert & Schwarz, Stephan Gantert being the other owner, had two buildings; one was on the north side of Pearl Street between 2nd and 3rd streets, and the other being on the north side of King Street between 2nd and 3rd streets.⁶

Vincent Schwarz does not show up in the La Crosse city directories covering 1868 through 1876, nor in the 1870 U.S. Federal Census for La Crosse. There is, however, a 23-year-old Vincent Schwarz, who was born in Wurttemberg, Germany, attending a newly-opened college in 1870 in St. Cloud, Minnesota, that would later become [St. Cloud State University](#).⁷

The 1878 La Crosse City Directory shows Vincent Schwarz residing at 9th and Winnebago streets, and his occupation was “grocer.”⁸

Schwarz had become a furniture dealer by 1880, with a store on the north side of Pearl Street, and he lived at 9th and Mississippi streets.⁹ This was probably the same residence that was shown in 1878 with just a different description. Vincent, 34, and his 21-year-old brother, Joseph, were living with their elderly parents at 66 Winnebago Street.¹⁰ Most of this block on 9th Street between Winnebago and Mississippi streets is now occupied by the Mathy Center and the Varsity Athletics Center of Viterbo University.

The 1881 city directory shows Vincent working as an upholsterer on the north side of State Street between 2nd and 3rd streets.¹¹

Schwarz operated a furniture store at 207 and 209 Pearl Street (the current location of The Pearl Ice Cream Parlor) in 1884. He was now living at 1108 12th Street South.¹²

From 1885 through 1900, Schwarz lived at 811 West Avenue South (across the street from the present Mayo Clinic in La Crosse). His used furniture store is shown at 207 Pearl Street from 1885 through 1891. From 1893 through 1897, its address is either 213 or 219 Pearl Street.¹³

Schwarz was a bachelor until he finally married at the age of 42. On September 13, 1888, he married Bertha Lenz in Waumandee, Wisconsin.¹⁴ His bride was 26 years old. It appears that Bertha had two daughters from a previous marriage; Mary, born in 1882; and Barbara, born in 1885. The 1900 census shows that Vincent and Bertha had a son named Eddie who was born in September 1888, the same month they were married. Without further documentation, we are left with conjecture as to how all this came about. Together they would have six more children before 1900: daughter Angela, born in 1891; a daughter, also named Bertha, in 1892; two sons, Anton and Carl, who the census clearly shows being born in 1894 but four months apart; daughter Louisia, born in 1896; and son Vincent, Jr., born in 1897.¹⁵



West end of Pearl Street, looking east, in 1897.

(La Crosse Public Library Archives)



Looking north at the same building on the west end of Pearl Street.

(Jeff Rand, 2022 July 22)



The ornamentation at the peak of the building indicates that it was built by “V. Schwarz” in 1887.

In 1897, Vincent Schwartz had an established furniture business, a wife, and nine children to support. During the previous year, events occurring thousands of miles away would soon affect their lives, as well as the lives of thousands of others.

In August 1896, a Canadian, Robert Henderson, and an American, George Washington Carmack, independently found gold on branches of the Klondike River in the Yukon region of northwest Canada. Carmack bragged about his discovery, and soon dozens of prospectors flocked to the area to try their luck.¹⁶



George W. Carmack

(Washington State University)

When 150 people returned to Seattle on a steamship in October of that year, after spending the season panning for gold in the Yukon, they brought with them \$200,000 worth of gold dust and nuggets. Three men with the United States Geological Survey were also on the manifest, and they expressed the view that quartz mining for gold could be profitable in the Yukon.¹⁷

Jack Carr also helped ignite the Klondike gold rush on July 11, 1897, when he rode into Juneau, Alaska, on a dogsled with news of a mother lode of gold near Dawson, at the junction of the Yukon and Klondike rivers, in Canada. The following week, ships arrived in Seattle and San Francisco carrying successful prospectors and tons of gold.¹⁸

Forty gold prospectors disembarked from a steamship at San Francisco carrying over \$500,000 of gold dust in buckskin bags, glass fruit jars, and jelly jars. There was another \$250,000 brought in by the Alaska Commercial Company on the same ship. An official with the ACC wrote in a letter:

The excitement on the river is indescribable, and the output of the new Klondike district is almost beyond belief. Men who had nothing last fall are now worth a fortune. One man has worked forty square feet of his claim and is going out with \$40,000 in dust. One-quarter of the claims are now selling at from \$15,000 to \$50,000. The estimate of the district is given as thirteen square miles, with an average of \$300,000 to the claim, while some are valued as high

as \$1,000,000 each. A number of claims have been purchased for large sums on a few months credit, and the amount has been paid out of the ground before it came due.¹⁹

Newspapers in every corner of the continent trumpeted the news of the great discovery in the far north.

“The New El-Dorado. The Canadian Yukon Marvellously (sic) Rich in Gold”

(*The Gazette* of Montreal, Quebec, Canada)²⁰

“Never in modern history have tales so wonderful of rich gold discoveries been told . . .”

(*Olathe News* of Olathe, Kansas)²¹

“The Placer Mining in Alaska is the Richest the World Has Ever Known”

(*Vermont Phoenix* of Brattleboro, Vermont)²²

“Gold Dust as Common as Sawdust”

(*The Dayton Herald* of Dayton, Ohio)²³

“Gold Fever Spreads”

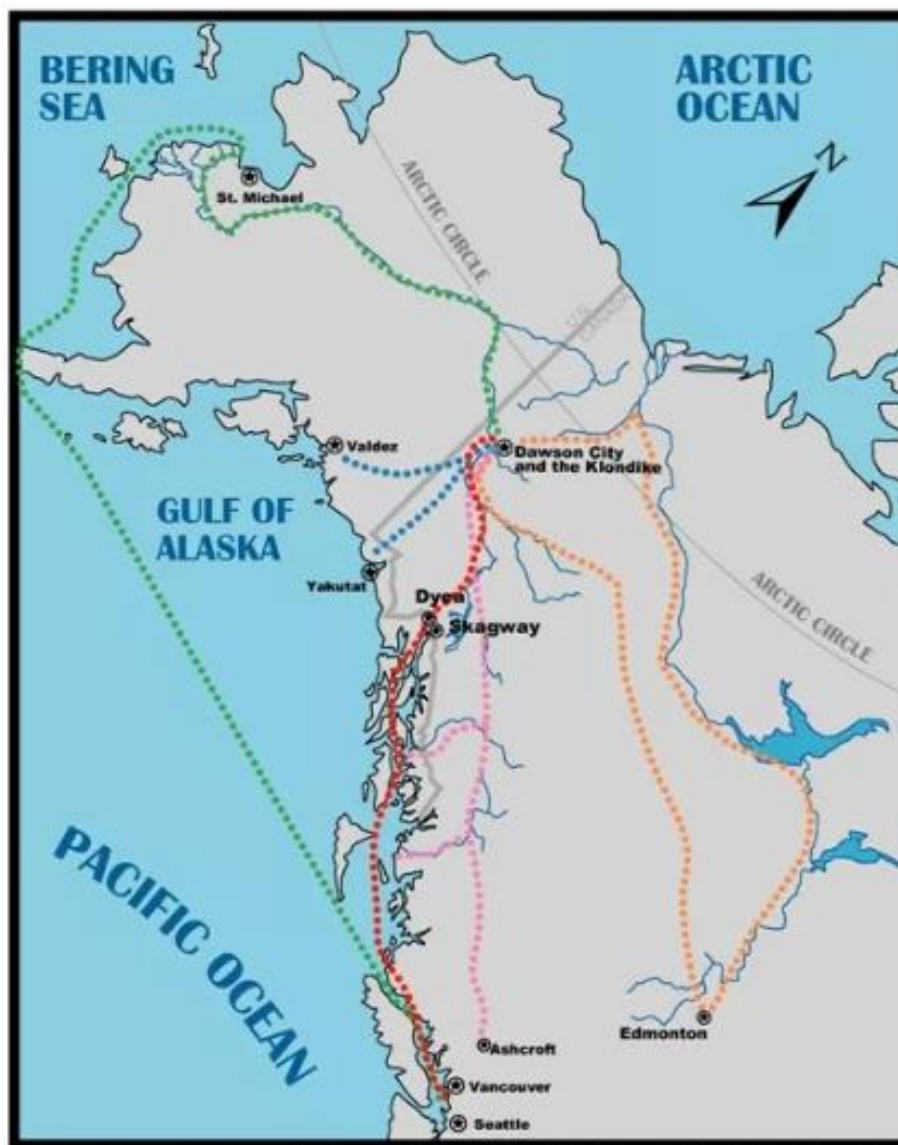
(*Pittsburgh Press*)²⁴

The rush was on.

Men and women from all over the world left everything and scrambled for any boat or train heading north to the promised land of golden riches.

One of those who made the journey was E. Hazard Wells. He was not the typical Klondiker because he was a reporter for a Cincinnati newspaper and not a gold miner, and this would be his third trip to the region. He left Cincinnati on July 26, 1897, on a four-day train trip that would take him through Chicago, St. Paul, and on to Seattle.²⁵

Seattle was the jumping off point for many of the gold seekers. Trains from all parts of the United States were arriving every day with hundreds of men and women eager to seek their fortunes in northwest Canada and Alaska. Merchants scrambled to provide supplies and provisions for the would-be gold miners. Wells wrote, “Alaska outfitting seems to be the sole business of this city at present.”²⁶



Trails to the Klondike Gold Fields 1897-98

- EDMONTON "BACKDOOR ROUTES"
- ALL AMERICAN "GLACIER ROUTES"
- ASHCROFT ROUTE
- ALL WATER ROUTE "RICHMAN'S ROUTE"
- CHILKOOT AND WHITE PASS ROUTES

According to the National Park Service, 90% of the Klondikers used the Seattle to Skagway to Dawson City trail because it was the most direct route to the gold fields.

([National Park Service](#))

Steamships were the primary means of transportation from Seattle to Skagway, Alaska. Ship fares rose to as high as \$1,000.²⁷ On July 31, Wells left Seattle on a steamship bound for Skagway, Alaska. For many, this could be a perilous journey in rolling seas while keeping a lookout for icebergs. His ship arrived in Skagway on August 7. One, two, or three steamships docked at Skagway every day to unload

their passengers and supplies.²⁸ Some ships could not even return because their crews deserted to join the gold prospectors.²⁹



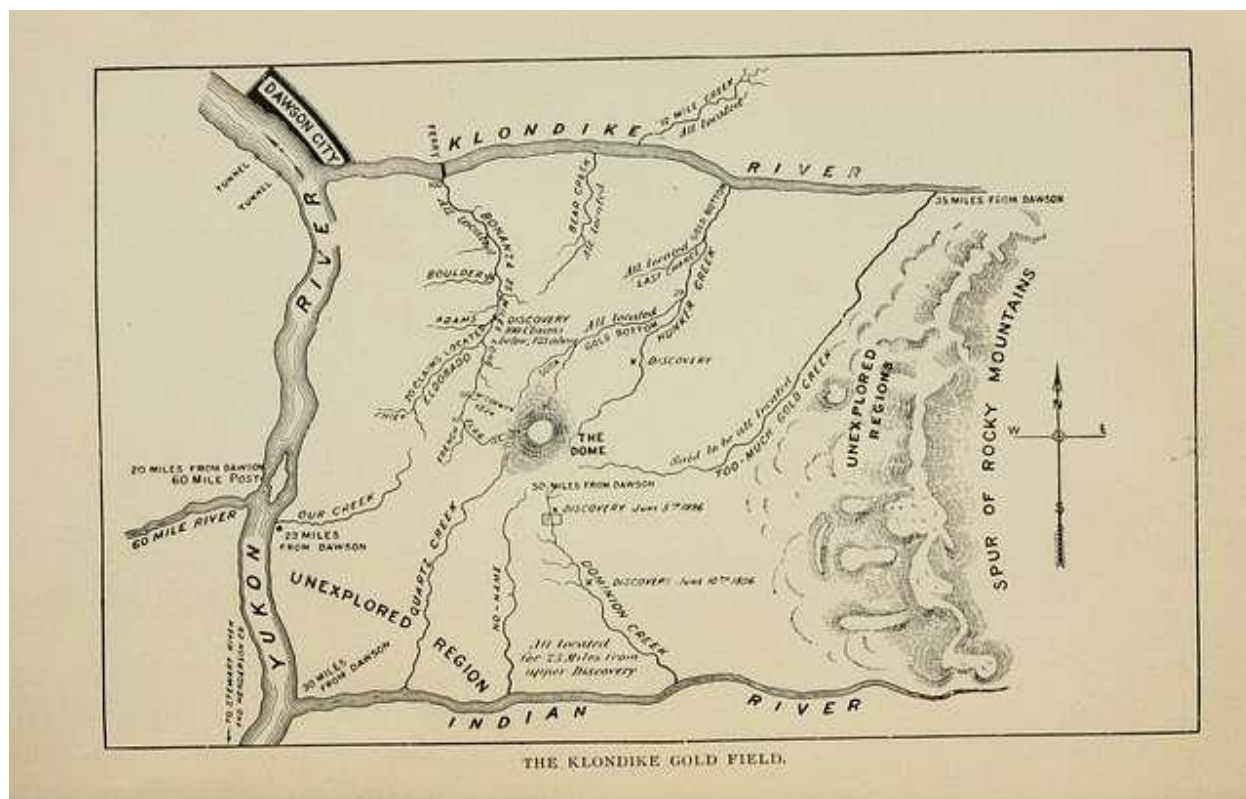
Klondike miners at Skagway, Alaska, in 1897

(Library of Congress)

Everyone's objective was the junction of the Yukon and Klondike rivers in British Columbia where the towns of Klondike City and Dawson sat in the bullseye of the Klondike Mining District, 550 miles away through untamed wilderness. That is the distance from La Crosse, Wisconsin, to Dayton, Ohio, plus another 100 miles, and much of it had to be traversed on foot or with flimsy boats in the sometimes-treacherous rivers and lakes.

Dawson City was named after a Dr. Dawson, director general of the Geological Survey of Canada, who wrote, "I consider the Yukon destined to be the greatest mining country the world ever saw."³⁰ But in the same publication was this warning, "To the miner and prospector who has dodged snow-slides in the North-western States, the Klondike will have no great terrors, with the exception that the winter is colder and longer, but to the inexperienced who know nothing of roughing it, the Yukon offers many hardships, and those who have not grit and endurance should keep out of it."³¹ Despite this warning, the fit and the unfit both came anyway.

Over 100,000 people tried to reach the land of not-so-instant riches, but only 30,000 to 40,000 were able to set foot in Alaska and the Klondike Territories.³² Fewer still struck it rich.



Klondike Gold Fields

Note the areas labeled “unexplored region.”

(<https://jenikirbyhistory.getarchive.net/amp/media/klondike-gold-rush-map-18912e>)

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The prospective prospectors had to haul (by pack animal, boat, and muscle power) food, gear, and other supplies into a trackless wilderness dotted with glaciers, forests, swamps, mountains, and wild rivers that drowned some. Often, they had to cut their own trails, building bridges and laying down logs to make corduroy roads along the way.³³ It was a landscape that challenged, and sometimes devoured, greenhorn adventurers. The pack animals fared even worse. During the winter of 1897-1898, at least 3,000 horses died on the trail from falls, drowning, broken legs, exhaustion, and starvation.³⁴

The 26-mile long Chilkoot Pass was the first major obstacle on the favored route to the Klondike. Prospectors who conquered that barrier still faced daunting difficulties. Wells described one of the challenges: “A miner portaging 1200 pounds of provisions for winter must make 12 round trips of 52 miles each, a total of 624 miles over precipitous mountains, carrying a 100-pound pack for that entire distance.”³⁵



An ant-like procession of Klondikers ascends the Chilkoot Pass in the spring of 1898,
photo by J. J. Goetzman

(University of Washington Libraries)



Klondikers hauling supplies up the Chilkoot Summit, 1898, photo by Eric A. Hegg

The 45-degree slope was not trick photography.

(University of Washington Libraries)

One Klondiker from Indiana wrote home: "I am undoubtedly a crazy fool for being here in this God-forsaken country but I have the consolation of seeing thousands of other men in all stages of life, rich and poor, wise and foolish, here in the same plight as I."³⁶

Thousands became demoralized by the brutal work in an unforgiving environment, and they turned back to Skagway before even reaching the Yukon gold fields. For some, their physical, as well as financial well-being, had been irreparably harmed.³⁷

Those who persevered had to build cabins and mining facilities on their claims before the brutal winter. Much of this was done in the summer heat while being tormented by swarms of mosquitoes. Any outside activity or travel in the winter meant slogging through feet of snow.³⁸ Wells wrote that the temperature in mid-December ranged "from 15 to 60 degrees below zero."³⁹

There were several ways to mine for gold. Placer mining was the easiest and the most familiar when we think of gold prospectors. Scooping a load of creek sediment and water into a pan and swirling it would separate the heavier gold flakes or nuggets from the sand and gravel. Another way to do this was to build wooden troughs to hold the sediment and gravel that would then be flushed with water to

separate out gold on a larger scale. Miners also dug horizontal tunnels and vertical shafts in the ground to reach gold deposits in the bedrock.⁴⁰



Panning for gold in a sluice box, Bonanza Creek, 1899, photo by Asahel Curtis

(University of Washington Libraries)

Mining continued in the winter, but the miners had to light fires in the mine shafts that would burn all night just to thaw seven to 15 inches of the soil around it. Once that thawed earth was removed, another fire would be kindled to thaw the next layer.⁴¹



Mining operation, No. 5 below Bonanza Creek, 1898 ca., photo by Eric A. Hegg

(University of Washington Libraries)



Underground mining in the Yukon territory, 1898, photo by Asahel Curtis

(University of Washington Libraries)

Since E. Hazard Wells was a reporter and not a miner, he lingered in Skagway, and then Lake Bennett, British Columbia, writing stories to send back to his newspaper in the last half of August and beginning of September. He did not arrive in Dawson until September 23, 1897.⁴² Dawson, on the north bank of the Klondike River, became a facsimile of a boom town in the American West. At the end of November 1897, Wells penned this description:

Dawson has fully thirty saloons, none of them licensed, but all "permitted" despite the law; two barbershops, which charge 50 cents for a shave and \$1 for a haircut; one incipient public library, just forming; two big stores---the A. C. [Alaska Commercial Company] and the N.A.T. and T. [North American Trading and Transportation Company] companies; several smaller stores; one meat market, where beefsteaks retail at \$4.50 each; two dance halls, for disreputable females

and forgetful husbands away from their wives; two sawmills; an uncounted number of lawyers, brokers, etc.; two jewelry shops; three secondhand establishments; one blacksmith shop; one tin shop, earning \$100 profit per day; one public hall (Pioneers) [fraternal organization]; three missionaries and 235 gamblers.⁴³

By late September 1897, Wells wrote that there were 6,000 to 8,000 men working 1,200 gold claims in the Klondike country. He said 2,000 more men were enroute along the Yukon River.⁴⁴ Most of the prospective Klondikers were too late in the season to reach Dawson City before winter set in and the lakes and rivers froze. They camped out for the winter all along the route, including about 10,000 people in a tent city on the shores of Lake Bennett. When the lake finally thawed at the end of May 1898, about 20,000 people using a motley fleet of more than 7,000 boats constructed on the spot pushed on toward the gold fields using lakes and rivers as their highway and portaging the land barriers.⁴⁵



Klondikers embarking at Lake Bennett on 1898 June 1, photo by Eric A. Hegg

(University of Washington Libraries)

By July 1898, Dawson had exploded into a city of 40,000.⁴⁶

So many people flocked to the Yukon that gear and provisions were in short supply. What was available brought premium prices. In January 1898, the Canadian official in charge of the Northwest Territory decreed that no "Klondikers" could enter Canadian territory unless they had at least 1,000 pounds of food for themselves.⁴⁷



Pack horses in front of the Dawson Market, June 1898, photo by Eric A. Hegg

(University of Washington Libraries)



Dawson City on 1899 November 21, photo by H. J. Goetzman

Note the three steamers frozen in the river on the right.

(University of Washington Libraries)



Klondike City on the Yukon River, 1898 September, photo by Eric A. Hegg

This was across the river from Dawson City.

(University of Washington Libraries)

In 1899, 52-year-old Vincent Schwarz left his business and family to try his hand at gold mining in the far north.⁴⁸ The Klondike Gold Rush had already climaxed by the time Schwarz left La Crosse in 1899, so he would be lucky to find a mining parcel that could support his family. Those who got there first had already claimed the most promising spots, and there were still thousands of men futilely seeking their own gold claim.⁴⁹

He apparently did well enough to leave the furniture business and move his family to the Klondike two years later.⁵⁰ His wife and nine children, ranging in age from two to 17, would be living with him on one of his prospecting claims. The 1900 census shows Vincent's occupation as "miner."⁵¹

We do not know how much gold Vincent Schwarz found in the Klondike. We do know that their sojourn in the far north was less than a decade. In 1910, Vincent and Bertha, along with seven of their children, were living at 2110 Massachusetts Street in Seattle, Washington. Vincent was again working as a cabinet maker.⁵²

By 1920, Bertha Schwarz and five of her children were living on 41st Street in Seattle. Vincent is not listed in the household.⁵³

Vincent Schwarz does show up in the historical record three times in the early 1920's.

Seattle celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Klondike Gold Rush with a parade, fireworks show, and carnival in July 1922. The two-mile-long parade featured hundreds of men and women who had gone north seeking gold. Vincent Schwartz, then 75 years old, won first place for best "sourdough" costume. The bearded Schwartz "carried the same pack, tools, and cooking utensils" that he had during his gold prospecting days. He was described "as a crowd-pleaser and received applause throughout the entire parade route."⁵⁴

On August 2, 1924, Vincent Schwarz sat in the window of the Seaboard Bank in Seattle panning for gold with dirt sent from Alaska by millionaire businessman [Austin E. Lathrop](#). The stunt was promotion for the premiere of the movie [Cheechackos](#) in Seattle's Liberty Theater.⁵⁵

Vincent Schwarz died on January 28, 1927, in the Northern State Hospital at Sedro Woolley, Washington. He had suffered from psychosis and senile dementia for almost nine months before his death. He was 80 years old, although his death certificate incorrectly shows his age as 75. It also shows the notation "no info" for his date of birth (place of birth is incorrectly shown as New York) and marriage.⁵⁶

One wonders why his children were not available to supply information for the death certificate. But even more curious is the death certificate of Bertha D. Schwarz, who died just a few months earlier on October 14, 1926, in Tacoma, Washington. Her marital status is shown as "widowed," even though her husband was still alive at the time. Bertha died of stomach cancer at the age of 62.⁵⁷ Surely her children knew that their father was still alive?

It looks like there was so much more to their story than what the historical documents show.

As many as 100,000 people made a trip to the frozen north in search of their fortune. Only a few hundred struck it rich, although many others raked in the \$60 million spent on transportation, supplies, and gear by potential prospectors. There was not enough gold to go around, and the Klondike gold rush slowed to a crawl in just three years. Dawson shrank to a village of 1,000.⁵⁸ Only 10 percent of those who had reached Dawson City in 1898 found any gold.⁵⁹

With the raw-ribbed Wild that abhors all life,
 the Wild that would crush and rend,
 I have clinched and closed with the naked
 North, I have learned to defy and defend;
 Shoulder to shoulder we have fought it out ---
 yet the Wild must win in the end.

I have flouted the Wild. I have followed its
 lure, fearless, familiar, alone;
 By all that the battle means and makes I claim
 that land for mine own;
 Yet the Wild must win, and a day will come
 when I shall be overthrown.⁶⁰

(Excerpt from "The Heart of the Sourdough" by Robert W. Service)

Will Langille, a Klondiker from Oregon, wrote in a letter home, “I never saw men work harder, bear more and accomplish less.”⁶¹

Of the thousands who made the trek to the Klondike, some would come to fame later in other pursuits-- - [Alexander Pantages](#), [Tex Rickard](#), [Sid Grauman](#), [Augustus Mack](#), and [Key Pittman](#)—but most would fade to historical obscurity.⁶² [Jack London](#), the future novelist, may be the only name that is still recognized by even a fraction of people.⁶³

Although they pursued their dreams of riches individually and in small groups, the danger and hardships of trail and camp in the Yukon were the price of admission to a fraternity of men and women, “the Klondikers,” who journeyed to the end of the rainbow seeking a pot of gold. And Vincent Schwarz, a middle-aged used furniture dealer from La Crosse, was one of them.

Jeff Rand
La Crosse Public Library (Retired)

Sources & notes:

¹ Robert Service, *The Spell of the Yukon* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1916), 15. Poet and adventurer Robert W. Service (1874-1958) starting working as a cowboy in the Yukon in 1894, and he was there during the Gold Rush. He became known as the “Bard of the Yukon.” “Robert W. Service,” *Poetry Foundation*, accessed 2022 July 19, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/robert-w-service>.

² “Off for the Klondike,” *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Daily Press*, 1901 May 1, p. 1. Another La Crosse man who went to Alaska in 1901 was James O’Donovan, a soldier in the United States Army who shipped out of Seattle for Nome, Alaska, to help keep the peace in another gold rush region. In his letter to Daniel J. McLaren of La Crosse, O’Donovan relates a close call with icebergs during the sea voyage to Alaska and how most miners went home “disappointed and broke.” “Soldier Life In Klondike,” *The La Crosse (Wisconsin) Daily Republican and Leader*, 1901 April 30, p. 7.

³ 1900 U.S. census, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, population schedule, La Crosse city, p. 2A, dwelling 27, family 28, Vincent and Bertha Schwarz; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2022 July 25); citing NARA microfilm publication T623, roll 1795.

⁴ 1880 U.S. census, La Crosse County, Wisconsin, population schedule, La Crosse city, p. 552A, dwelling 416, family 445, John and Marthina Schwarz; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2022 July 25); citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 1432.

⁵ A. Bailey and J. M. Wolfe, compilers, *A. Bailey’s La Crosse Directory For 1866-67 Comprising A Complete List of all Residents in the City . . .* (La Crosse, Wisconsin: A. Bailey, 1866) 86, for “Schwarz.”

⁶ *A. Bailey’s La Crosse Directory For 1866-67*, 40, for “Gantert & Schwarz.”

⁷ 1870 U.S. census, Stearns County, Minnesota, population schedule, St. Cloud city, p. 13, dwelling 94, family 94, Vincent Schwarz; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2022 July 25); citing NARA microfilm publication T132, roll 11.

⁸ *Pryor & Co.’s La Crosse City Directory 1878-9 Comprising An Alphabetical List of Citizens . . .* (La Crosse, Wisconsin: Pryor & Co., 1878) 128, for “Schwarz, Vincent.”

⁹ *Morrissey & Bunn’s La Crosse City Directory 1880-81 Comprising An Alphabetical List of Citizens . . .* (La Crosse, Wisconsin: Morrissey & Bunn, 1880) 149, for “Schwarz, Vincenz.” Rhinehart Schwarz is shown as a cabinet maker working for “V Schwarz.”

¹⁰ 1880 U.S. census, La Crosse Co., Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 552A, dwell. 416, fam. 445, John and Marthina Schwarz.

¹¹ *L. C. Bold’s La Crosse Directory for 1881-82 Comprising An Alphabetically Arranged List of Business Firms and Private Citizens; . . .* (La Crosse, Wisconsin: Louis C. Bold, 1881) 122, for “Schwarz, Vincent.”

¹² *Jan. 15, 1884 Bunn & Philippi’s La Crosse City Directory Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names. . .* (Winona, Minnesota: Jones & Kroeger, 1884) 206, for “Swartz, Vincent.”

¹³ *Urban Publishing Company's La Crosse City Directory for the Years 1885-1886, Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names*. . . (La Crosse, Wisconsin: A. B. Lamborn, 1885) 293, for "Schwarz V." *Bunn & Philippi's La Crosse City Directory 1888-9 Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names*. . . (La Crosse, Wisconsin: Bunn & Philippi, 1888) 345, for "Schwarz, Vincent." *Jones & Kroeger's La Crosse City Directory Comprising An Alphabetical List of Citizens, Their Occupations*, . . . (Winona, Minnesota: Jones & Kroeger, 1891) 344, for "Schwarz V." *Philippi's La Crosse City and County Directory Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names*. . . (La Crosse, Wisconsin: L. P. Philippi Co., 1893) 301, for "Schwarz, Vincent." *Philippi's La Crosse City and County Directory Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names*. . . (La Crosse, Wisconsin: L. P. Philippi Co., 1895) 323, for "Schwarz, V." *Philippi's La Crosse City and County Directory Comprising An Alphabetical List of Names*. . . (La Crosse, Wisconsin: L. P. Philippi Co., 1897) 334, for "Schwarz V." Present occupants of this area on Pearl Street: 211 is Drift Mercantile, 215 is TJ's Cheddarhead Store, 217 is Asian Sunny Massage, and 219 is the Outrageous Boutique. The house that Schwarz rented at 811 West Avenue South is no longer there. It was torn down in 1901, and the owner, E. C. Swarthout, built a new house on the lot in 1902 that is now 805 and 807 West Avenue South. Thanks to archivist Jenny DeRocher of the La Crosse Public Library for figuring this out using Sanborn maps and city tax records.

¹⁴ Wisconsin Historical Society, *Wisconsin Marriage Records, pre-1907*, Vincent Schwartz; Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Madison; image, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 2022 July 25).

¹⁵ 1900 U.S. census, La Crosse Co., Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 2A, dwell. 27, fam. 28, Vincent and Bertha Schwarz. The boys could have been twins, but then the recording by the census taker would be a mistake because the entries are clearly legible as written.

¹⁶ Robert Wallace, *The Miners* (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1976), 200-202.

¹⁷ "Bring Gold From Alaska," *Melrose (Wisconsin) Chronicle*, 1896 October 24, p. 3.

¹⁸ Sheila Kelly, *Treadwell Gold: An Alaska Saga of Riches and Ruin* (Fairbanks, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 2010), 27-31. Multiple gold mines in Treadwell were operating at the same time, and well after, the Klondike Gold Rush.

¹⁹ "40 Miners From Klondike," *The Sun* (New York, New York), 1897 July 15, p. 1.

²⁰ "The New El-Dorado," *The Gazette* (Montreal, Quebec, Canada), 1897 July 1, p. 6.

²¹ "Klondike Goldfields," *Olathe (Kansas) News*, 1897 July 15, p. 6.

²² "The Wonderful Klondike," *Vermont Phoenix* (Brattleboro, Vermont), 1897 July 9, p. 3.

²³ "Making Fortunes," *The Dayton (Ohio) Herald*, 1897 July 13, p. 1.

²⁴ "Gold Fever Spreads," *The Pittsburgh Press*, 1897 July 16, p. 5.

²⁵ E. Hazard Wells, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, Randall M. Dodd, editor (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1984), 3-11. Wells would later settle in Seattle where he founded and published a couple of newspapers, established some successful businesses, and become a prominent member of Seattle society.

²⁶ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 7.

²⁷ Wallace, *The Miners*, 207.

²⁸ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 22-23.

²⁹ Kelly, *Treadwell Gold: An Alaska Saga of Riches and Ruin*, 27-31.

³⁰ "Klondike and the Yukon Gold Fields in the Far Canadian North-West and Alaska," (Canadian Pacific Railway, 1897), 2. This publication, and numerous other primary sources about the Yukon and Klondike gold fields, are freely available on the [Project Gutenberg](https://www.gutenberg.org/) website.

³¹ "Klondike and the Yukon Gold Fields in the Far Canadian North-West and Alaska," 5.

³² George Cheever Hazelet, *Hazlet's Journal* (Louisville, Kentucky: Old Stone Press, 2012), 21. In a journal covering his prospecting days in Alaska, Hazelet provides intimate details of the difficulties pursuing a mother lode in the Alaskan wilderness. After a failed business venture, George Cheever Hazelet, a former school principal in Nebraska, left his wife and two sons in February 1898 to try to find riches in the Klondike gold fields. He eventually formed a mining and development company employing 28 men to mine several sites and operate a sawmill. Hazelet moved his family to Alaska in 1900. He and his partners found some gold, but by August 1902 it was not enough to pay his men. Hazelet declared himself a failure when the bank foreclosed on his operation. Hazelet later enjoyed modest success in the oil business and Alaska politics. He and his partner homesteaded over 700 acres of land to grow fodder for their livestock. Gold was later discovered on this land, and his descendants also donated part of it to rebuild the city of Valdez after the 1964 Alaska earthquake.

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- ³³ Hazelet, *Hazlet's Journal*, 21.
- ³⁴ Wallace, *The Miners*, 210.
- ³⁵ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 39.
- ³⁶ Wallace, *The Miners*, 210.
- ³⁷ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 69.
- ³⁸ Hazelet, *Hazlet's Journal*, multiple pages.
- ³⁹ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 155.
- ⁴⁰ "What is Placer Gold Mining?" *National Park Service*, 2015 April 14, <https://www.nps.gov/yuch/learn/historyculture/placer-mining.htm>.
- ⁴¹ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 147-150.
- ⁴² Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 38-79.
- ⁴³ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 139. That \$4.50 steak would cost \$160.65 today. The tin shop's \$100 profit would have the purchasing power of \$3,570 today.
- ⁴⁴ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 79.
- ⁴⁵ Wallace, *The Miners*, 213-214.
- ⁴⁶ Kelly, *Treadwell Gold: An Alaska Saga of Riches and Ruin*, 27-31.
- ⁴⁷ Wells and Dodd, *Magnificence and Misery: A Firsthand Account of the 1897 Klondike Gold Rush*, 191. The situation seemed so dire that the United States Congress appropriated \$200,000 for supplies and transport to take provisions to miners in the Yukon. Part of this effort involved purchasing 500 reindeer to serve as pack animals. By March of 1898, it was evident that the supply situation was a temporary shortage caused by hoarding with the intent of driving up resale prices. The reindeer were shipped to Alaska for "reconnaissance missions" but proved to be totally unsuited as pack animals. (Wells and Dodd, 223-228)
- ⁴⁸ "Off for the Klondike," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Daily Press*, 1901 May 1.
- ⁴⁹ Wallace, *The Miners*, 219.
- ⁵⁰ "Off for the Klondike," *La Crosse (Wisconsin) Daily Press*, 1901 May 1.
- ⁵¹ 1900 U.S. census, La Crosse Co., Wisconsin, pop. sch., p. 2A, dwell. 27, fam. 28, Vincent and Bertha Schwarz.
- ⁵² 1910 U.S. census, King County, Washington, population schedule, Seattle city, p. 10A, dwelling 114, family 117, Vincent and Bertha Schwarz; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2022 July 26); citing NARA microfilm publication T624, roll 1658.
- ⁵³ 1920 U.S. census, King County, Washington, population schedule, Seattle city, p. 8B, dwelling 186, family 204, Berth[a] J. Schwarz; image, *AncestryHeritageQuest.com* (<http://www.ancestryheritagequest.com> : accessed 2022 July 26); citing NARA microfilm publication T625, roll 1925.
- ⁵⁴ Alan J. Stein, "Seattle celebrates silver anniversary of Klondike Gold Rush on July 17, 1922," *HistoryLink.org Essay 4311*, 2004 July 8, <https://www.historylink.org/file/4311>.
- ⁵⁵ "Pans Out Gold To Advertise Alaska Movie," *The Alaska Daily Empire* (Juneau, Alaska), 1924 August 4, p. 1. This 1924 silent film is set in the Klondike Gold Rush. More well-known is the 1925 Charlie Chaplin classic, [The Gold Rush](#).
- ⁵⁶ Vincent Schwarz death certificate, Department of Health, Death Certificates, *Washington State Archives*, Digital Archives, <http://digitalarchives.wa.gov>, 2022 July 22.
- ⁵⁷ Bertha D. Schwarz death certificate, Department of Health, Death Certificates, *Washington State Archives*, Digital Archives, <http://digitalarchives.wa.gov>, 2022 July 22.
- ⁵⁸ Kelly, *Treadwell Gold: An Alaska Saga of Riches and Ruin*, 27-31.
- ⁵⁹ Wallace, *The Miners*, 188.
- ⁶⁰ Robert Service, *The Spell of the Yukon* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1916), 21.
- ⁶¹ Wallace, *The Miners*, 188.
- ⁶² Wallace, *The Miners*, 218.
- ⁶³ Wallace, *The Miners*, 215.