

DAWSON CITY FROM THE BASE OF THE MOOSHIDE SLIDE, AROUND 1910

"In a world gripped by economic depression, news of the Klondike gold discovery was electrifying as 30,000 stampedeers braved the journey to the cabins and tents of the new mining camp. Dawson sprang up overnight as the hub of the service and supply to the goldfields as a boomtown with wooden boardwalks, false-fronted dance halls, stores and warehouses. By 1898 Dawson City was the largest city in Western Canada and capital of the newly

created Yukon Territory. Fabulous wealth and isolation sparked a demand for luxuries—many of which were still uncommon in southern cities. Electricity, telephone service, luxury foods and high fashions imported from outside earned Dawson City the title "Paris of the North". The frenzy of the Klondike Gold Rush lasted 2 only years."

Essentially wilderness in 1896, by 1898 Dawson was the largest city in Canada west of Winnipeg and only slightly

smaller than Seattle or Portland. In this 1910 photograph, Dawson City was no longer the tent town of a decade earlier. The Yukon's capital had taken on a more permanent appearance. At the start of the gold rush, Joseph Ladue had staked a claim to 160 acres of boggy flats at the mouth of the Klondike to establish a townsite that he intended to name in his own honour. Instead, he was persuaded to name the place Dawson City in honour of George Mercer Dawson, an early surveyor into the Yukon. Several

sternwheelers are tied up along Front Street. There are several log booms tied up at water's edge in readiness to be turned into lumber at Ladue's sawmill. Real estate, lumber and gold made Ladue a very rich man as some of his lots on Front Street sold for as much as \$8000. Unfortunately, Ladue died in 1901 and was never able to enjoy much of his new found wealth.

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