

## KLONDIKE MINES RAILWAY

Ontario born Thomas O'Brien, President of the Klondike Brewing and Malting Company, was among those who made application for a charter to develop a railroad and it was he with his partners who were successful. The Klondike Mines Railway was granted a charter in 1899 but it would take until 1906 before the line was finally completed. O'Brien and his investors had dreamed of a railroad that would not only carry supplies back and forth to the goldfields but also be a passenger train. The railway builders had originally dreamed of connecting their line to far away Edmonton. The KMRs 31-miles of 3-foot narrow gauge track was laid from Dawson City to Sulphur City near the 3,000-foot high Dome, the highest point in the center of the goldfields. Necessity being the mother of invention, good wagon roads had already been developed for the goldfields and stage lines operated into the larger camps and by 1906 the rush that had begun with so many was becoming a new kind of operation. The labour intensive hand mining had given way to dredges that would forever change the landscape of the Klondike. With these dredges and heavy equipment came names that, as O'Brien had been, were visionary. Treadgold, Boyle and the Guggenheims would also stake their places in the history of the Yukon.

This change in mining operations together with the discovery of gold in Nome resulted in Dawson City dwellers leaving almost overnight to make their way to Nome to continue their quest for gold or return south having not made their fortune in the Yukon.

The Klondike Mines Railway continued by moving cordwood to the mining operations for thawing the earth but it was not long before the mining companies had stocked up all the cordwood they would need and by 1913 the KMR wrapped up its operations. The Klondike Mines Railway would never achieve the success of which O'Brien had dreamed but it would carve a place in the history of the Yukon.



**KLONDIKE MINES RAILWAY LOCOMOTIVE #1**  
Manufactured by the Brooks Locomotive Works of Dunkirk, New York, the Klondike Mines Railway locomotive #1 has been refurbished and stands on display at the Dawson City Museum.

**THIS MAP OF THE KLONDIKE GOLD FIELDS WAS COMPILED BY JOSEPH DAVIS, A JUDGE FROM HELENA, MONTANA.**

Visible at the top right centre are the cities of Dawson City, named by Joseph Francis Ladue, in honor of George Mercer Dawson, head of the Geographical Survey of Canada. At the very start of the Yukon Gold Rush, Ladue obtained a grant to layout a 160 acre townsite. Klondike City, located across the Klondike River from Dawson City, was the ancestral fishing and hunting Moosehide First Nations village of the Han people prior to the coming of the miners. The white men took over their village and it originally took on the name of Lousetown because of the relocation of the prostitutes from Dawson City. The Moosehide First Nations moved their village 3-miles upriver to be away from the influence of the white miners.

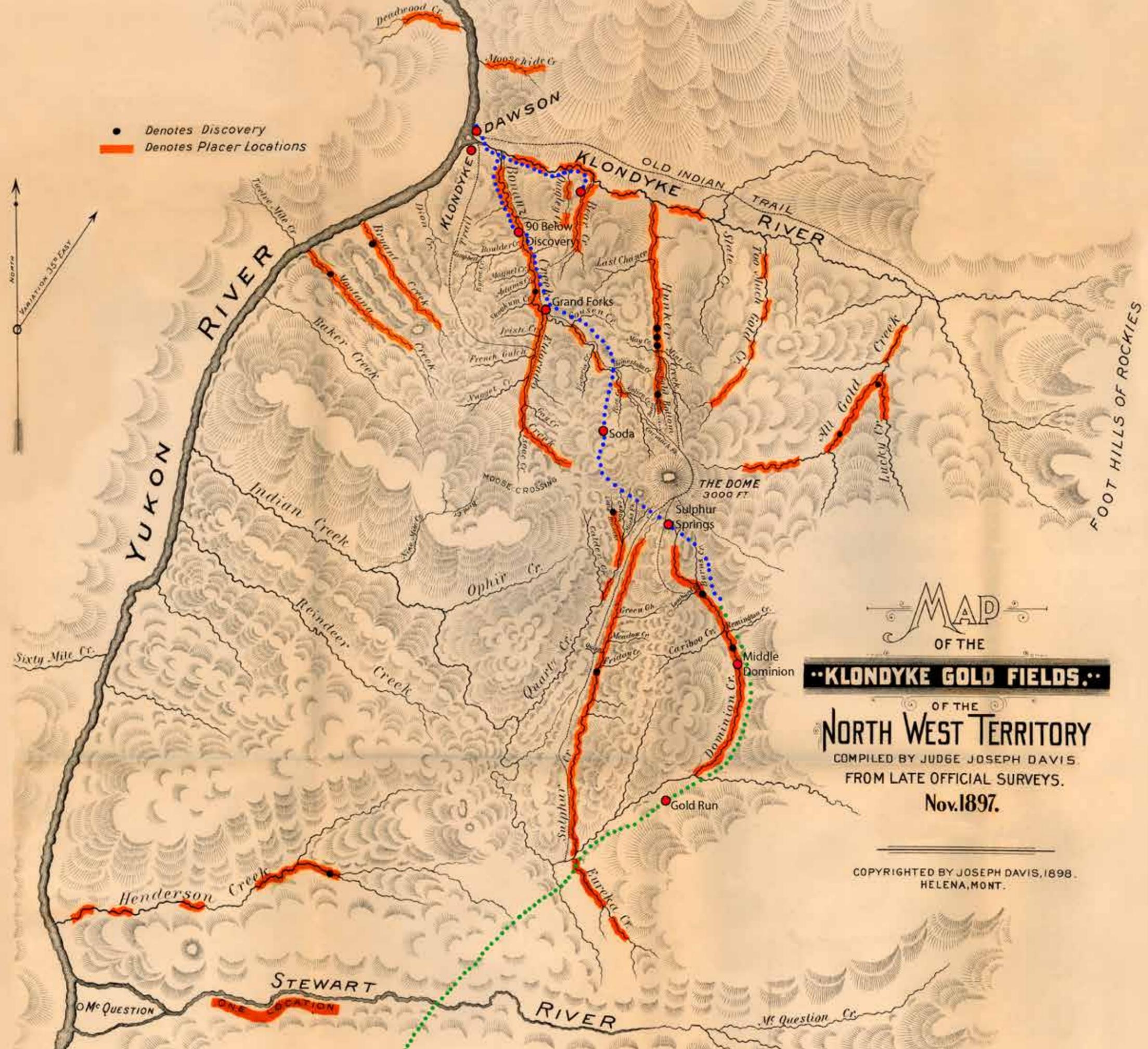
The black dot on Gold Bottom Creek—a tributary of Hunker Creek— marks the spot where Robert Henry Henderson, a Canadian from Nova Scotia, made a gold discovery.

The black dot on Bonanza Creek at the confluence of Skookum Creek marks the spot where George Washington Carmack and his First Nations brothers-in-law Skookum Jim—afterwards James Mason—and Tagish Charlie—afterwards Dawson Charlie—made the gold discovery that started the Yukon Gold Rush.

The blue dots show the route of the 31-mile Klondike Mines Railway that connected to 90 Below Discovery, Grand Forks, Soda and Sulphur Springs. An ambitious and expensive project, its builders had hoped to connect with the Vancouver, Westminster and Yukon Railway (green dots). As a result the towns of Middle Dominion and Gold Run never came to exist.

This map has been altered from the original because it contained too much information for a 2-page reproduction. As well, the route of the Klondike Mines Railway has been added. The blue (completed) and green (prosed) lines show the route of the railway. As well as transporting machinery into the gold camps, the railway hoped to extend the line to connect with the Canadian pacific railway line at edmonton to bring tourists to see the mines. Like so many ambitious schemes around the turn of the century, the plan never materialized.

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MAP  
OF THE  
**KLONDIKE GOLD FIELDS**  
OF THE  
**NORTH WEST TERRITORY**  
COMPILED BY JUDGE JOSEPH DAVIS  
FROM LATE OFFICIAL SURVEYS.  
Nov. 1897.

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