

Klondike Kate; Belle of Yukon, Calm Over Latest Gold Strike

By LORRY LOKEY

Jefferson, Oct. 27 (AP)—Klondike Kate, the belle of the Yukon who once earned \$750 a night dancing for Alaskan sourdoughs, took a calm view today of the new Fishwheel gold strike.

"So they've found nuggets the size of peas?" asked Kate, known formally now as Mrs. W. L. Van Duren. "Is that all the larger they are? Why, I've got a necklace with half a dozen nuggets larger than that."

Mrs. Van Duren said there was no chance that she and her husband would follow the rush to Fishwheel where men were panning and digging for gold today with a fever comparable to that of 50 years ago when the name of Klondike Kate was famous across the territory.

She said she and Van Duren were content to stay on their farm near here. But she had some expert advice for gold seekers.

There are still fortunes to be made up there," she said. "But they'll have to be made the modern way."

"What you need is one bush pilot, a helicopter and some light mining equipment. There are hundreds of lakes in the Alaskan wilderness that can't be reached on foot."

"A good bush pilot with a helicopter could get to those lakes and he could bring out more gold in five years than has been found in all the north in the last 75 years."

Klondike Kate, now 69, was a teen-ager when she earned her title at robust Dawson City. It was there that the sourdoughs relaxed and spent their pokes of gold.

She danced, acted and entertained. Her dancing job and liquor commissions usually netted her more than \$100 a night. Her friends say she lost most of her fortune grub-staking miners and other men such as the late showman Alexander Pan- tagas.

Pantagas, with Klondike Kate's help, rose from waiter at the Savoy theater at Dawson City to become owner of a chain of theaters throughout the nation.

Informed of reports that a taxicab took a load of prostitutes from Anchorage to the new gold rush area, Mrs. Van Duren said:

"I'm not surprised at that." She said the strike might be "good for Alaska."

"The latest perennial gold strike at Fishwheel may peter out in a few months, just like many others did. But if it doesn't, the Fishwheel strike surely will attract residents from the States to settle in the territory," she said.

In Klondike Kate's day, the

Nome strike was the most spectacular of the far north bonanzas. Nome looked like a Hollywood set with saloons, dives, gambling houses, and usually a murder a day.

"But at Dawson City there was no rowdiness," said Mrs. Van Duren. "The Canadian mounties were there to keep law and order."



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