



Remarkable Yukon Women

Claire Festel

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The Yukon is a mythic place: the land is vast and wild, the climate harsh and uncompromising, the people resourceful and resilient. Say the word "Yukon" and southerners still conjure up images of the rough and ready frontier: whiskered men in plaid shirts or parka-clad women wielding axes in the struggle for survival in a silent, isolated land. The truth is, you can find them here.

But the Yukon holds more than one truth. Writer Patricia Robertson says, "The fact that it's young seems to attract really interesting, adventurous people who want something different and who are willing to take a risk." The stories in this book, shared by fifty women--"born here or came here"--attest to the enduring nature of the north and the evolving character of a dynamic community. The changes over time and the things that stay the same give a unique insight into the circumstances that make their lives different.

Yukon women live lives similar to their counterparts down south: they are homemakers, doctors, teachers, run businesses and work in government. But how they live their lives in the Yukon is unique. As Robertson says, "You are pulled back to the elemental aspects of life. You can pretend in a city that you're in control but you know if your car breaks down between Whitehorse and Carcross at 40 below, you better hope somebody turns up or you're well prepared because you could die. The natural world is in charge and you are not."

These stories paint a picture of what life was--and is--really like for Yukon women. It is an untold story that will deepen your understanding of how and why this remote frontier adds not just colour, but depth, sensitivity and strength to the Canadian story.

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Maria Davis:

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