

I-133 Just For the Fun of It!

By Lois Walker

DIRECTOR NOTES:

ESTABLISHING THE RHYTHM

To find the proper rhythm for this rhyming piece, first read-aloud and clap through the sections as you go. Each underlined word or word part falls directly on a beat. As you read, clap on each underlined word, keeping the rhythm steady. Be careful not to read too fast! This is a rehearsal technique and readers will not clap throughout these sections during performance. After you have established the beat, it is time to start interpreting, experimenting, and having fun with the words by varying tempo, volume, inflection, and expression.

READING THE SCRIPT

This piece has been formatted for 12 to 26 readers. After the first 12 formatted reader numbers, the remaining reader numbers have been left blank. This way, you can divide the remaining lines between your 12 readers, or add as many new readers as you wish to finish the piece.

Note: An unformatted version of the story is also included so that you may do your own formatting and assign reading parts in any way that works best for your reading group.

HISTORY:

The historic information below was found online: "Women of the Gold Rush" <http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu/gold/women.html>

Mary Hitchcock and Edith Van Buren helped usher in a new phase of the Klondike gold field's history. In 1898, while thousands were still struggling to reach the fields, this pair of adventurous women sailed up the Yukon into the Klondike as tourists.

Neither was overly worried about the dangers of a journey to the far north. Mary Hitchcock, the widow of a Naval officer, and Edith Van Buren, a great niece of former U.S. President Martin Van Buren, had both the money and energy for the journey, and were determined to do the Klondike in style.

On June 12, 1898, they left San Francisco on the steamer St. Paul with their dogs, two canaries, a parrot, two dozen pigeons, fine linen and dishes, air mattresses, and books. Wanting to bring the comforts of home with them, the pair's luggage also included a gramophone and records, musical instruments, an ice-cream freezer, a portable bowling alley, a "beautiful acetylene light with which we intended to illuminate our tent," and a film projector and accompanying films.

When they arrived in Dawson City, the two tourists decided to pitch their tent across the Yukon River at was known as "west Dawson." This

area was not as populated as Dawson City, which was important because ground rent was cheaper and the pair needed extra space for their tent. In order to house all that they had brought, and leave room to move comfortably about, Hitchcock and Van Buren had purchased a tent that measured 40 x 70 feet, and weighed over 400 pounds. It stood out easily among the more ordinary tents dotting the landscape.

However, soon the tent sagged and leaked. When the pair was able to open up the rest of their luggage, they discovered that the trunks were soaked and many of their clothes were ruined.

The pigeons also quickly became a problem. Instead of returning only to specially constructed pigeon crates, they made themselves at home throughout the tent, resting on desks while the women were trying to write, setting off the gramophone, "causing the greatest amount of trouble. . . . Nothing will induce them to leave the tent."

Despite its defects, the pair did find the tent useful for public religious services and both became an important part of Dawson society during their stay.

Mary Hitchcock and Edith Van Buren were not the first drawn to the Klondike as tourists, but Mary wrote a book about their adventures and it was published on their return. The book was widely read and made the pair the best known of the early gold rush sightseers.

READER 1: During the Canadian Gold Rush...

**ALL READERS: Two women traveled to the Klondike.
That's how this story's told.
Two women traveled to the Klondike,
But not to search for gold.**

**These women liked adventure,
So they packed their bags and kit,
And because they could afford the trip,
Went just for the fun of it!**

READER 1: It was eighteen hundred and ninety eight,
And June twelfth - that was the date...

READER 2: ...When Mary and Edith boarded a ship
To undertake an historic trip.

READER 3: They'd go to the Klondike, but travel in style,
And just to make the trip worthwhile...

READER 4: ...They packed some of their cherished things,
Things meant for queens – and even kings.

READER 5: They didn't travel light, oh no!
What they took along made quite a show:

READER 6: They packed their dogs, fine linen and books,
Some canaries, a parrot, embroidery hooks.

READER 7: They took along a record player
With records packed in a second layer...

READER 8: ...Between bed sheets and fluffy pillows,
Protected from wild waves and billows.

READER 9: An ice cream freezer and film projector,
Sheet music, in case they met a director...

READER 10: Air mattresses and a portable light
To ward off darkness in the night.

READER 11: And pigeons! They took twenty four
With crates to house them on the floor.

READER 12: And most important for this event,

ALL ABOVE

READERS: They took along a massive tent!

**ALL READERS: Two women traveled to the Klondike.
That's how this story's told.
Two women traveled to the Klondike,
But not to search for gold.**

**These women liked adventure,
So they packed their bags and kit,
And because they could afford the trip,
Went just for the fun of it!**

READER Most Klondike bound traveled hard and long.
For many months they had to stay strong.

READER But these gals had the right techniques -
Sailed to Dawson City in just three weeks!

READER And there they saw tent after tent -
Ten dollars per foot per month to rent.

READER So they pitched their tent across from town
Where there was much more space and prices were
down.

READER For their large tent needed land and grounds.
It was huge and weighed four hundred pounds!

READER Workers put it up, and the size and shape
Were a center of attention on the Dawson landscape.

READER The latest additions to Dawson society,
They brought wealth and fame, and amazing
variety...