

She may have been holding a gun, or an axe, or her hiked-up skirts, but she was there, in the Klondike of the Gold Rush. And her decision to venture everything on the dream of northern gold was in every way bolder and riskier than any man's. In *Frontier Spirit*, Jennifer Duncan celebrates the lives of women who, in defiance of traditional expectations, left their homes, their families, and their professions, to make the arduous journey through a punishing climate and unfamiliar wilderness to seek their fortunes in the Klondike. The story of women in the Klondike begins with the strong and knowledgeable women who were there before the race for riches began -- First Nations women like Shaaw Tlaa, whose experience and traditional skills were critical to the survival of her white prospector husband, and ultimately, to the discovery that sparked the Gold Rush. The white women who joined the Klondike Stampede came from all walks of life: rich and poor, educated and illiterate, single and married. Wealthy socialite Martha Black left her world of comfort to pursue a career as a miner, mill manager, and politician on the northern frontier. Belinda Mulrooney, an Irish farm girl, arrived in Dawson with a quarter to her name but used her business acumen and canny resourcefulness to turn the shantytown into a city and herself into its richest woman. And then there's Kate Rockwell, a working-class girl from Kansas City, whose thirst for fame and adulation led her over the treacherous waters of the Whitehorse rapids and fired her ascent to the title of Queen of the Klondike. Duncan has spent the last five years experiencing Dawson City in all its seasons and, like the women who came before her, she has fallen under the spell of the North, coming to love its wilderness, its challenges, and its rugged glory. With remarkable empathy, imagination and personal insight, Duncan creates an engrossing portrait of the splendour of the Yukon, breathing life into the stories of the daring and diverse women of the Klondike and the grandeur of the adventurers who gambled everything to find their fortunes there. From the Hardcover edition.

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