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# FRONTIER ALASKA

A STUDY IN  
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION  
AND OPPORTUNITY

## ALASKAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

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ALASKA METHODIST UNIVERSITY PRESS  
1968

## TEACHER PARTICIPANTS

Beatrice Bratlie West High School Anchorage	Katherine Fleming Chugiak School Chugiak	Nina Prockish Chester Valley School Anchorage
Lucille L. Bybee Borough School Staff Anchorage	Margaret Franklin Creekside Park School Anchorage	D. Jean Queen Wendler Jr. High School Anchorage
Marian Case Lake Otis School Anchorage	Alice Frisbie Airport Heights School Anchorage	Beatrice Rose Borough School Staff Anchorage
Darla M. Church Craig Public School Craig	Mary P. Heller Sunflower School Elmendorf	Marilynn Scott Borough School Staff Anchorage
Stella V. Cooley West High School Anchorage	Leah Hoffman Borough School Staff Anchorage	Sybil Townsend Aurora School Elmendorf
Margaret Cox Airport Heights School Anchorage	Sharon Kubeck Northwood School Anchorage	Vera Wagner Borough School Staff Anchorage
Virginia Davlin Romig Jr. High School Anchorage	Lillian F. Motter Full Time Substitute Anchorage	Bond Whitmore Nunaka Valley School Anchorage
	Dennis Nelson Kodiak High School Kodiak	

## OTHER REGISTERED PARTICIPANTS

Ruth Adler Anchorage	Joseph A. Gross Anchorage	Mrs. Byron Petre Anchorage
Mary J. Barry Anchorage	Muriel Hannah Spenard	Maxine Reed Anchorage
Margery Bennett Anchorage	Barbara Herbst Anchorage	Kurt Rein Anchorage
Laurel L. Bland Anchorage	Herb Hilscher Anchorage	Carole Reeve Anchorage
Virginia L. Brost Ft. Richardson	Norma J. Hoyt Anchorage	Helen Roberts Spenard
Bruce E. Cannon Anchorage	H. Wendy Jones Anchorage	Irene E. Ryan Anchorage
Audrey L. Clawson Anchorage	Karla Josephson Anchorage	Ted Scott Anchorage
Margaret Cole Spenard	Neil R. Koeniger Anchorage	Marcella Sharrock Anchorage
Joy DuBoise Anchorage	Joyce Cotter Luther Anchorage	Mrs. John E. Thomas Anchorage
W. H. Evans Anchorage	Elizabeth M. MacAlpine Chugiak	Ronald D. Todd Spenard
Ernest H. Evans Anchorage	M. R. Marston Anchorage	June Warren Anchorage
Louise C. Gore Anchorage	Gaynelle Martin Anchorage	June Weaver Anchorage
Gladys E. Grady Seattle	Carl McDowell Anchorage	Carol R. Wheeler Anchorage
Alice S. Green Anchorage	Elsa Pedersen Seldovia	Bond Whitmore, Jr. Anchorage

(Typist). Fran Papp and Georgette Armstrong of the Business Office supervised mailing, registration, and information services prior to and during the conference. My AMU colleague, Saradell Ard, proved a gracious hostess at a reception given in her apartment for the visiting scholars. Laurel Bland rendered the transcription from the tapes of the sessions. Without the cheerful and efficient work of each of the above — and unnamed others — the Conference would not have been a success.

It is my belief that the objectives of the Conference were addressed and largely achieved. For the communication of participants did contribute to a clearer understanding of the status of Alaskan history by reviewing the research and writing in the topics on Alaskan studies which they treated; in suggesting reinterpretations and misconceptions where encountered; and advocating new directions in research and writing which will prove helpful in sharpening Alaska's understanding of its past and its future.

Robert A. Frederick  
Director



Conference members gather for the Banquet



In the foreground, left to right, Donald Ellegood (back to camera) — Stuart Tompkins — Frank Busko — Paul McCarthy.

## CONFERENCE ROSTER

Editor's Note: The names listed below in categories of participants are those who officially registered during the Conference. Many others attended the banquet and sessions but failed to register.

### TEACHER PARTICIPANTS WITH STIPENDS

Thomas M. Acree Dimond High School Anchorage	Rex Fisher Lathrop High School Fairbanks	William Ristow Ft. Wainwright Jr. High School College
Betty L. Beckley* Chistochina School Chistochina	Ted Gulick* Wasilla High School Wasilla	Jeanne E. Sande* Ketchikan School Ketchikan
Harold Bergmann Petersburg School Petersburg	Ronald Larson Palmer High School Palmer	John W. Switzer* Kodiak High School Kodiak
Curtis Bland West High School Anchorage	Joyce Macbeth East High School Anchorage	Sam G. Thomas* False Pass School False Pass
Ronald H. Buzby Lathrop High School Fairbanks	Norris Sims Kenny Lake School Copper Center	Peggy Thompson Kenai High School Kenai
Richard Carignan Kenai Central High School Kenai	Larry Noble Homer High School Homer	Paul Toth Delta Junction School Delta Junction
Joseph Cassidy Monroe High School Fairbanks	Virginia Parks* Seldovia School Seldovia	Robin Wallace Lathrop High School Fairbanks
Thomas R. Church Craig Public School Craig	Margaret Petro* Baranof School Sitka	Florence Wassman King Salmon School King Salmon
Susan Coonjohn* Glacier Valley School Juneau	Lee Poleske* Seward High School Seward	Pauline Witner Clark Jr. High School Anchorage
Wendell H. Crouch West High School Anchorage	Karyn Price Juneau-Douglas High School Juneau	L. S. Wright Glenallen Area School Glenallen
	Teresa A. Ripley Mt. Edgumbe School Mt. Edgumbe	

\* Though selected, these teachers could not attend.

cisions. It is impossible to calculate the beneficial national effect of 'being scientific,' but few would question that such an outlook has been of fundamental importance in achieving our present material good fortune at home and our leadership abroad. We are persuaded that 'being humanistic,' both in our schools and colleges and outside them, is equally necessary for solutions to our national anguishes, to maintain our leadership abroad, and to represent to the world what the quality of human life can be. No less than this is the ultimate objective of the *Endowment*, and we believe that it was as an expression of such hopes and convictions that the President and Congress established the Endowment. The need, as the President put it is 'not only in enriching scholarship but enriching life for all people.'

The *Endowment* intends to develop programs aimed at improving qualitatively the teaching of humanities in the schools, and aimed at achieving the same effect on those instruments of the humanities useful in reaching the general public — television, films, the newspapers, the museums and historical societies. Support of basic research in the humanities is the keystone around which such efforts must be built in order to achieve a lasting effect. It serves no purpose to instill a high school student with a driving interest in history, then send him into a college where his history professor has not been able to sustain his own interests. It serves no purpose to create public interest in the humanities, if those who must serve that interest are so poorly trained that they quench what great effort has ignited.

In the next several years, one may hope that new approaches to teaching and research at all levels of the humanities will create the possibility of a genuine break-through. It is also entirely likely that increasing numbers of students, competition for funds, and the absence of a focused national effort to up-grade the humanities will cause such an opportunity to be missed. The *Endowment* expects to encourage as many promising avenues of qualitative improvement at all levels and in all fields as its funds permit. It hopes to serve such as a leaven to draw attention to the needs and the satisfactions of the humanities. But it is well aware that the break-throughs must come in the final analysis from the scholars and citizens who labor to understand what the humanities can teach."

— Barnaby C. Keeney, Chairman  
*National Endowment for the Humanities*  
Washington, D.C.

National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities  
1800 G Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20506

## THE SERVICE CENTER FOR TEACHERS OF HISTORY

The Conference on Alaskan History was selected by Dr. Robert L. Zangrando, Director of the American Historical Association's *Service Center for Teachers of History* as worthy of sponsorship. Alaska Methodist University wishes to thank Dr. Zangrando and the Committee on Teaching of the American Historical Association for their interest and financial support.

The American Historical Association has long been interested in the teaching of history in the United States. Committees of the Association have published more than twenty volumes of reports concerning the organization and content of history courses and the value of history in American education. But the growing complexity of the world in which we live and the increasing specialization of historical research constantly produces new topics and areas of interest that must be treated, and many interpretations must be revised. Therefore, because of its continuing interest in the teaching of history in the schools, in 1956 the American Historical Association established the *Service Center for Teachers of History* in an effort to offer constructive assistance in solving some of the problems facing the classroom teacher. Teachers of history are frequently responsible for courses in other social studies, and teachers of social studies with major training in other disciplines are often assigned to history courses. It is difficult for busy teachers to keep abreast of the flood of new materials published by experts in various fields. The *Service Center* helps to provide scholarly leadership in meeting these problems.

### HISTORICAL PAMPHLETS

One of the programs sponsored by the *Service Center* is the preparation of a series of pamphlets (now over 65 in number) on selected historical topics appropriate to the history courses most widely offered in schools. Since many secondary-school teachers have neither the time nor the opportunity to read widely in the monographic literature, these pamphlets seek to bring the reader in touch with current interpretations

## SERVICE CENTER FOR TEACHERS OF HISTORY

and significant writings in a particular field of historical study. By helping teachers keep up to date in their fields of interest, the pamphlets can materially benefit the teacher and thereby contribute to the enrichment of classroom instruction.

### CONFERENCES FOR HISTORY TEACHERS

To promote the general objective of maintaining and improving standards of history teaching, the *Service Center* also sponsors conferences for history teachers. These meetings, held in conjunction with the department of history at a college or university or with a state or regional council for the social studies, are designed to serve high school teachers within a convenient radius. There are some two-dozen *Service Center* meetings throughout the country each year. Their primary purpose is to provide teachers with an opportunity to hear specialists discuss the latest research and writings in their fields and present current, scholarly historical interpretations on selected topics. The sessions are organized to do in person much the sort of thing that is done in the pamphlet series. The conferences have the added benefit of bringing college and research historians directly in touch with the problems and potentials of the school history teacher. Members of the history department at the host institution collaborate with visiting specialists to lead the program sessions. Outside speakers can contribute added interest and broader scope, while the members of the local department or social studies council can provide essential continuity and liaison for ongoing work among colleges and secondary-school teachers.

The *Service Center for Teachers of History* is sponsored by the Committee on Teaching of the American Historical Association.

Historical pamphlets and subscriptions to the *American Historical Review* may be obtained by writing the Service Center for Teachers of History, 400 A Street, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20003.

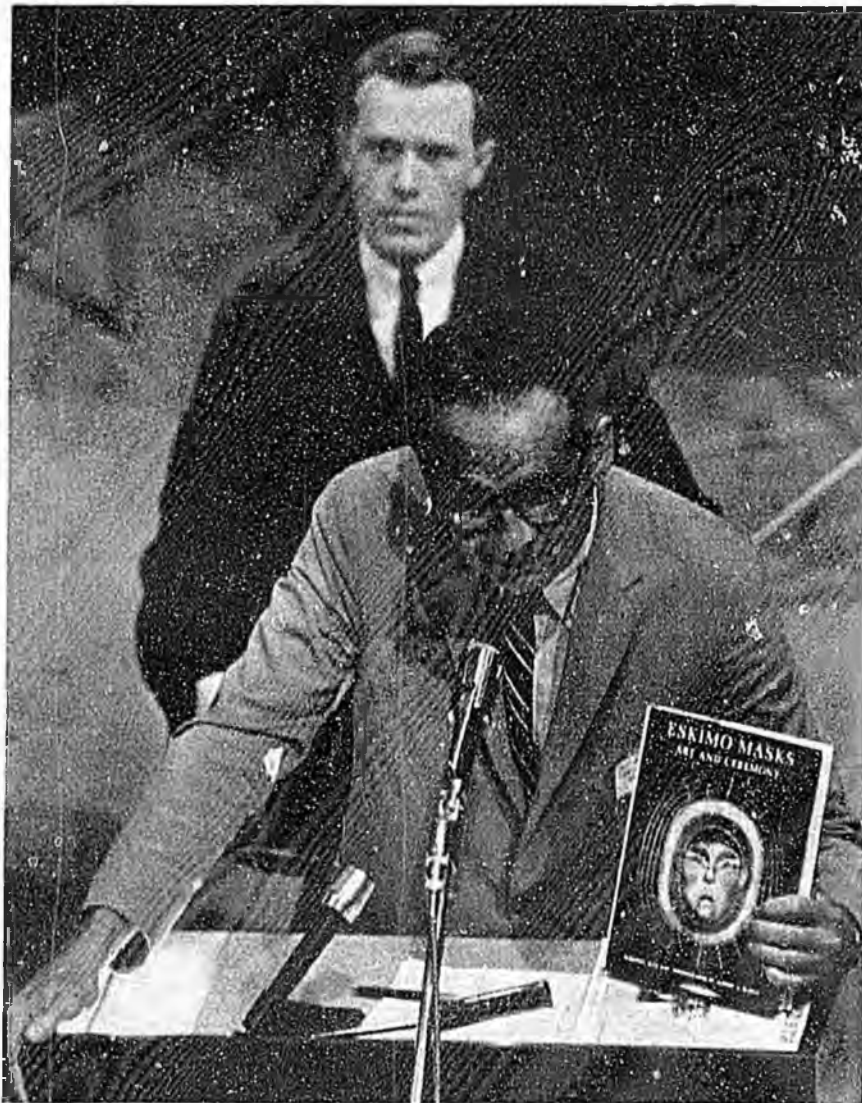
## THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

Alaska Methodist University wishes to express its gratitude to Dr. Robert H. Walker, Director, Division of Education and Public Programs and the *National Endowment for the Humanities* for the encouragement and generous financial support of this first Conference on Alaskan history. The excellent work of the Endowment is only possible with leadership which matches goals and opportunities. The following thoughts of Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney, Chairman of the *National Endowment*, are reprinted in deep appreciation for his vision and that of his colleagues of the *National Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities*.

— — —

"A striking point of the last decade of American life has been the growing frustration in public life as realization, developed that our wealth, our superb technical and material skills, our undifferentiated desire for the superlative across the gamut of our national existence, created as many, perhaps more, problems than they solved. As though to mock our material progress, darkening problems of urbanization, of lacerating political and social division, and of aimless discontent grow with our progress. It is perhaps not too much of an exaggeration to say that the country is passing through a crisis of confidence in its achievements and its aspirations—indeed; itself.

It is in response to this climate that the *Endowment* faces its most challenging opportunity—to increase the interest in and use of the humanities by our citizens, and to improve their access to them. Other things can make us wealthy and powerful; the humanities are to make us wise, and they lead us to apply our wisdom in ways which can heal both private and public life. It is urgently in the national interest to make available to the broad public as well as the scholarly community the attitudes of mind, the methods of assessing value, the self-knowledge and civic knowledge which are the ultimate contributions of the humanities to public and private life. If a broad public can be encouraged to appreciate and understand the humanities, they may habitually use this knowledge in making their public and private de-



DONALD R. ELLEGOOD is the Director of the University of Washington Press. His informal talk "The Publication of Alaskan History and Anthropology" opened the first full conference day. The presentation surrounded recent publications on Alaskan history which the University of Washington Press has developed: Morgan Sherwood's *Alaska and Its History*; Murray Morgan, *One Man's Gold Rush: A Klondike Album* (written around the photographs of E. A. Hegg) and the *American Heritage* excerpts (August, 1967); Dorothy Jean Ray's, *Eskimo Masks, Art and Ceremony* (photographs by Alfred A. Blaker). The University of Washington Press has joined the University of Alaska in publishing its Centennial Monograph Series. Mr. Ellegood's closing remarks are here printed.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTICIPANTS

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Evangeline Atwood<br>Alaska World Affairs Council<br>Cook Inlet Historical Society<br>Anchorage | Orcutt W. Frost, Jr.<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>& Alaska Review<br>Anchorage                         | Rodman W. Paul<br>Calif. Institute of Technology<br>Pasadena, California                                  |
| Frank Buske<br>Anchorage Daily Times<br>Anchorage   | Gordon P. Gould<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage   | Richard A. Pierce<br>Queen's University<br>Kingston, Ontario  |
| Laura Butler<br>Kenaitze Indian Culture Club<br>Kenai   | Senator Ernest Gruening<br>United States Senate<br>Washington, D.C.   | George W. Rogers<br>University of Alaska<br>Juneau  |
| Phyllis Carlsen<br>Loussac Library<br>Anchorage   | Wilma S. Hackney<br>Kenaitze Indian Culture Club<br>Kenai   | Mildred K. Sherwood<br>Northwest Collection<br>University of<br>Washington Library<br>Seattle, Washington |
| Elizabeth Carroll, Librarian<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage                        | Ted C. Hinckley<br>San Jose State College<br>San Jose, California   | Morgan B. Sherwood<br>University of California<br>Davis, California                                       |
| Mrs. Chancy Croft<br>Alaska Festival Native Arts<br>Anchorage                                   | Margaret Justice<br>Alaska State Department<br>of Education, Juneau   | Joseph E. Shafer<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage  |
| John C. Crupper<br>U.S. Forest Service<br>Anchorage   | Niilo E. Koponen<br>Institute of Social, Economic<br>& Government Research<br>University of Alaska, College | Herman Stoltick<br>University of Alaska<br>College  |
| Mrs. James Dolaney<br>Alaska Festival Native Arts<br>Anchorage                                  | Paul McCarthy, Archivist<br>University of Alaska<br>College   | Justin J. Stauter, Archivist<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage                                  |
| Don E. Dumond<br>University of Oregon<br>Eugene, Oregon   | Pres. Frederick P. McGinnis<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage                                     | Victor C. Strash<br>Anch. Community College<br>Anchorage  |
| Donald R. Ellegood<br>University of Wash. Press<br>Seattle, Washington                          | Orlando W. Miller<br>University of Alaska<br>College  | Stuart Ramsay Tompkins<br>University of Oklahoma<br>(emeritus)<br>Victoria, British Columbia              |
| Major O. H. Entwistle, Jr.<br>Alaska Command Historian<br>Elmendorf                             | Jeannette Paddock Nichols<br>University of Pennsylvania<br>Philadelphia, Pennsylvania                       | James W. VanStone<br>Field Museum of Natural<br>History<br>Chicago  |
| Harry Norton Fitch<br>San Jose College (emeritus)<br>San Jose, California                       | Phyllis Nottingham<br>Alaska State Historical<br>Library, Juneau  | William H. Wilson<br>University of Alaska<br>College  |
| Robert A. Frederick<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage                                 | Dorothy Novatney<br>Alaska State Department<br>of Education, Juneau   | M. David Yamamoto<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage   |
| Chester C. Frisbie<br>Alaska Methodist University<br>Anchorage                                  | Amy Paige<br>Institute of Social, Economic<br>& Government Research<br>University of Alaska, College        | Chester E. Youngblood<br>University of Alaska<br>College  |

## KEYNOTE: AN HISTORIAN-OF-ACTION



ERNEST GRUENING, United States Senator, Alaska, opened the Conference on Alaskan History with an address touching events which culminated with the entrance of the 49th State into the American Union. The Battle For Alaska Statehood (1967) and his *An Alaskan Reader* (1967) celebrate the Purchase Centennial of the land he served as Territorial Governor for fourteen years. His brilliant career has encompassed medicine, journalism, diplomacy, government administration, legislation in domestic and foreign policy, and the acting and writing of history. Having entered the world of news and ideas as editor of the *New York Evening Post* and *The Nation*, his years in the public service have produced significant chronicles: *The State of Alaska* (1954), *These United States, Mexico and Its Heritage* (1928), and *The Public Pays* (1931). Few who have known Ernest Gruening could deny that his life reflects Thomas Jefferson's democracy and Winston Churchill's ability.

## THE QUEST FOR ALASKAN HISTORY

DONALD R. ELLEGOOD

*Editor's Note: These comments are the closing portion of Mr. Ellegood's informal talk before the Conference on the topic "The Publication of Alaskan History and Anthropology." They are reprinted here because Mr. Ellegood notes the characteristics of unpublishable manuscripts, calls for a meaningful dialogue between historians and university presses, and suggests categories of publishable history. He is now Director of the University of Washington Press.*

The University of Washington Press would publish many more books on Alaska if we could find publishable manuscripts. A number have been submitted to the Press in the past few years, but after careful evaluation we found that most of them suffer from the faults that we find in history writing generally and which Ray Allen Billington found specifically in western history. Too many of the manuscripts submitted to us are *provincial* — concerned only with local events and lacking in greater significance. Other works suffer essentially from being antiquarian in which the author is concerned with tracking down the origin of ultimately *meaningless* or trivial detail. The third category of unpublishable manuscripts that have come our way is the extremely popular work in which *bad writing* is a notable characteristic and the least modest action is *blown out of proportion*.

This experience has yielded a sense of the possible. I hope that the first Conference on Alaskan History will develop a dialogue between you who are interested in Alaskan history and we who are interested in publishing Alaskan history, enabling us to identify those subjects which deserve book-length scholarly publication. It is easy enough to point to broad areas, and this I will do. It is up to you, however, the

Mr. Donald R. Ellegood is director of the University of Washington Press.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALASKA'S PAST

been neglected. My own views about the quality of existing historical writing are in print; if anything, I was too general and too polite.<sup>2</sup> The literature is strewn with nonhistories, irresponsible duplications, "how-to" books, and just plain sloppy and superficial research. This Conference can lead the way to correcting that distressing situation. The scholars on your program will evaluate existing research, survey the state of our knowledge, and identify topics which need investigation. Their own books and articles are examples of what can be done and what must be done if we are to have any clear understanding of Alaska's present condition and its future possibilities.

<sup>1</sup> On this last point, see the remarks of Alan T. Waterman, then Director of the National Science Foundation, at the Thirteenth Annual Alaska Science Conference, Juneau Daily Empire, August 24, 1962.

<sup>2</sup> *Alaska And Its History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967) xiii-xx.



Stuart Ramsay Tompkins and Morgan B. Sherwood

## PROLOGUE



MORGAN B. SHERWOOD, Program Chairman for the Conference on Alaskan History, received his doctorate in history from the University of California at Berkeley. He has taught at the University of Cincinnati, and is now with the University of California at Davis. He is author of *Exploration of Alaska* (1965) and editor of *Alaska and Its History* (1967). His articles have appeared in the *Pacific Historical Review*, *Journal of the West*, *Agricultural History*, and *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. A specialist in the history of American science, he is associate editor of the University of California's journal of *Agricultural History* and co-editor with J. L. Penick, Jr., C. W. Pursell, Jr., and D. C. Swain of *The Politics of American Science: 1939 To The Present* (1965). His article, "Science in Russian America 1741 to 1865" appeared in the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, January, 1967.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ALASKA'S PAST

MORGAN B. SHERWOOD

Nobody here would deny the necessity of studying Alaskan history. The significance of Alaska's past should be obvious, but the obvious, too often, is never stated. Perhaps one paragraph from the proposal for this Conference can stand repetition:

"Alaska's history has regional, national, international and interdisciplinary dimensions. An understanding of Alaska's prehistory is crucial to an understanding of the origin of all the native peoples of the continent. Alaska was the limit of Russian eastward expansion and Alaska's past is therefore closely related to Russian and Far Eastern history. Russian America had a role in the history of the whole Pacific Ocean area. Alaska was the westward continental limit of United States territorial expansion, and therefore deserves the attention of historians of the American westward movement. Both Russian Alaskan and American Alaskan history merge with the history of Canada. Alaska's purchase, its boundaries and fisheries have played an important part in the diplomatic history of the United States. As the first non-contiguous territory of the United States, Alaska's past is an area for the study of American colonial practices. Alaska's large area, ample resources but small population pose a problem for students of economic history. A part of the country's past is a notable chapter in the history of science.<sup>1</sup> And Alaska itself is a living laboratory "or study of the Turner thesis."

Given these broad areas of investigation, the Conference seeks, through a meeting of professional historians, high school teachers, and Alaskans, to determine what has been done and what needs to be done in Alaskan historical scholarship.

Alaska is still young country, 235 years after its discovery by Europeans. Its future is still unmapped, in part because its past has

Dr. Morgan B. Sherwood is associate professor of history at the University of California, Davis.



DON E. DUMOND is Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Oregon. Author of articles in the *New Mexico Quarterly*, *Arctic Anthropology*, *American Antiquity*, and the *American Anthropologist*, among other places, he is completing a monograph on the archaeological anthropology of the Naknek River and Lake region, and has begun research into the prehistory of Nunivak Island. His publications have ranged widely in American anthropology including Swidden agriculture and the rise of the Maya civilization; the John Day Reservoir area of the middle Columbia River; southwestern Alaska; and Eskaleutian linguistics, archaeology, and prehistory.

experts in the field, to point to us specific areas, specific subjects that are suitable for book-length treatment. An obvious need in your field is for an up-to-date bibliography. The only available bibliography [Wickersham] is down to 1924. I have heard tales of work done by Melvin Ricks and while I am here I hope to track down this manuscript and learn more about it. Another large area in which work remains is in translation of the basic documents in the Russian and possibly from the Spanish. The Press has commissioned a translation which is nearing completion of Tikhmenev's *Historical Review of the Russian-American Company*. Richard Pierce tells me that the translation is nearing completion. We look forward to putting into print, in English, this basic document in the very near future. I am equally certain there are many other deserving documents which must be translated into English before they enter the mainstream of English scholarship. I am quite certain these works are essential to an understanding of the development of Alaskan History. Indeed, they may contain very significant clues to the character of this great state.

Without question many, many more biographies need to be written of leading and possibly secondary personages of Alaska. I suspect, reasoning by analogy with Southern history (a field with which I am better acquainted), that there are a number of unwritten heroes of Alaskan history deserving of reconstruction. We are on the lookout for these works.

Last evening Senator Gruening outlined a whole spectrum of general history of Alaska which needed to be written — economic, social, political, and to this, I would add, there is the greatest possible need for a viable textbook for use in Alaskan history, possibly at the secondary school level. The first-rate textbook can't be written, of course, until the other research has been done, but my understanding is that the textbooks presently in use are very badly outdated, so that even an interim textbook would fulfill a useful need for many years to come.

I also suspect there are many deserving books which have fallen into the "out-of-print" category which might well be reprinted to benefit the whole field. Drawing on our own backlist and on the publications of the American Ethnological Society, the University of Washington Press has already done some of this. But we would like to expand this to include reprints of books by other publishers to which should be added a new introduction, pointing up its major contributions, and most serious shortcomings — which annotates, corrects, comments, elucidates the text itself. We would like to reprint basic documents with full scholarly annotation to give maximum utility to the profession.

## THE QUEST FOR ALASKAN HISTORY

Another area in which much work needs to be done is the field of editing certain documents. These can be diaries. These can be collections of photographs, or collections of drawings. At Fairbanks, Paul McCarthy, University Archivist showed me an absolutely fascinating collection of drawings by an Eskimo girl named Florence Nupak who, under the inspiration of Otto Giest, made a series of detailed drawings of life on St. Lawrence Island in 1928 and 1929. The drawings have esthetic value, of course, but also great anthropological value in the detail that they show in the way of life there.

I am sure that Alaska is abundant in its documentary resources in attics, or caches, or locked away in old chests.

In any and all of these fields, much work needs be done. Our meeting will be a resounding success IF this Conference on Alaskan History, like the Western history inaugural meeting five years ago can focus your interests, stimulate your activity, and lead to a start in filling these many gaps. I would conclude by stressing again the very strong interest of the University of Washington Press in working with you in publishing these materials. The books I discussed are almost accidental, but in things Alaskan our concerns are long range. I assure you that our interest will extend far beyond this Centennial Year.

# TOWARD A PREHISTORY OF ALASKA

D. E. DUMOND

The purpose of this paper is to assess in a general way the progress made thus far in the development of an Alaskan prehistory. The word *development* is used intentionally in this context, for as with history itself, the formulation of prehistory is a process of creation, of interpretation. Like history, prehistory is an organization of facts. But the *pre* in prehistory means that these facts are not historic, that is, not documentary. Central, but not alone, are archaeological facts, and prehistorians are commonly archaeologists. Thus as history is something inflicted by historians upon documents, so prehistory is imposed by prehistorians upon stones and bones.

The immediate problem which confronts the prehistorian when he approaches aboriginal Alaska is simply this: There are two kinds of people commonly recognized here, the Eskimos together with their cousins the Aleuts on one hand, and the Indians on the other. What, we may ask, makes these people different from one another? When did they come? Where did they come from? Why are they where they are? These are simple and obvious questions. The answers, as any historian would suspect, are neither simple nor obvious.

More particularly, then, the intent of this paper is to provide an indication of the extent to which these questions can at present be answered. But in order to do this, it will be necessary first to mention the kinds of facts which may be used in arriving at a statement of prehistory.

## THE RAW MATERIALS OF PREHISTORY

I have mentioned archaeology, and to many people this appears to be synonymous with prehistory. Archaeology, of course, involves the study of ancient things which people have made or used. These things include both portable objects such as harpoons and toothpicks, and

Dr. Don E. Dumond is associate professor of anthropology at the University of Oregon.

And then, no man knows why,  
 There came the savages, smiling, bring corn,  
 Corn-givers, why do you give  
 That these men live?  
 They think that you are devils of the wood  
 And you have fought them once and will again,  
 Yet, in their last extremity, you come  
 As if in answer to some forest drum  
 To bring the bounty never understood,  
 To bring the food that saves the starving men.  
 Gods? You have seen them die like truculent fools  
 Where any one of you would live and thrive  
 And, if they have the iron and the tools,  
 The powder and the shot,  
 These things avail them not.  
 Their magic cannot keep their best alive.  
 Pity? Why should you pity them or care?  
 They will be greedy, soon, when they are led.  
 Look in their eyes and see  
 The felling of the tree . . .  
 Look in their eyes and see the hungry man  
 Moving with axe and fire upon the wood,  
 Spoiling the rivers, digging up the dead.  
 This is your own destruction that you bear  
 In venison and corn  
 And the red Autumn leaf  
 That falls before the snow . . . .  
 And yet, before it happens, and the great  
 Passionate drum of wrong begins to sound,  
 Ere the dead lie upon the bloody ground  
 And the chief's sons lie drunken in the street,  
 Let us remember how this happened, too,  
 And how food was given, not in hate,  
 Liking or dazzled wonder, but, it seems,  
 As if compelled by something past all plans,  
 Some old, barbaric courtesy of man's,  
 Wild as his heart, red as his hunter's dreams,  
 —And for no cause the white men ever knew.

—Stephen Vincent Benet  
*Western Star*

## WORKING THE SMALLER CLAIM

SCHOLARLY AND  
 POPULAR JOURNALS

George Washington, writing to Mathew Carey, June 25, 1788, captured the significance of one medium of communication when he penned these words.

For myself, I entertain a high idea of the utility of the periodical Publications . . . I consider such easy vehicles of knowledge, more happily calculated than any other, to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry and meliorate the morals of an enlightened and free People.<sup>1</sup>

The teacher and writer of history will find these scholarly and popular journals a source of material on Alaska, the Arctic, the American and Canadian West, and the Pacific Basin. They also afford the careful author an opportunity to publish worthwhile manuscripts. Often a subject is not of book-length although it is desirable that important research is published frequently enough to be helpful to others working in the same or related fields. The scholarly or popular journal provides this service. Many of these journals were displayed at the Conference.

ALASKA MONTHLY REVIEW OF BUSINESS  
 AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS  
 Institute of Social, Economic, and  
 Government Research  
 University of Alaska  
 College, Alaska 99701

ALASKA SPORTSMAN  
 Alaska Northwest Publishing Company  
 Juneau, Alaska 99801

ALASKA NORTHERN LIGHTS QUARTERLY  
 Alaska Northern Lights Press  
 Post Office Box 4BB  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99503

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST  
 American Anthropological Association  
 1530 P Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20005

ALASKA REVIEW  
 Alaska Methodist University  
 Anchorage, Alaska 99504

AMERICAN ANTIQUITY  
 Society for American Archaeology  
 1530 P. Street, N.W.  
 Washington, D.C. 20005

WORKING THE SMALLER CLAIM

AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW  
American Economic Association  
Northwestern University  
Evanston, Illinois 60201

AMERICAN HISTORICAL REVIEW  
American Historical Association  
400 A Street, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

AMERICAN WEST  
Western History Association  
577 College Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94306

ANTHROPOLOGICAL PAPERS  
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Department of Anthropology and  
Geography  
University of Alaska  
College, Alaska 99701

ARCTIC  
Arctic Institute of North America  
3458 Redpath Street  
Montreal 25, Canada

ARCTIC ANTHROPOLOGY  
Department of Anthropology  
University of Wisconsin  
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

BEAVER: MAGAZINE OF THE NORTH  
The Hudson's Bay Company  
Hudson's Bay House  
Winnipeg 1, Canada

CANADIAN HISTORICAL REVIEW  
Canadian Historical Association  
University of Toronto Press  
Toronto 5, Canada

CANADIAN INSTITUTE OF  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
University of Toronto Press  
Toronto 5, Canada

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS  
AND POLITICAL SCIENCE  
Canadian Political Science Association  
University of Toronto Press  
Toronto 5, Canada

JOURNAL OF AMERICAN HISTORY  
Ballantine Hall, Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

JOURNAL OF THE WEST  
1915 South Western Avenue  
Los Angeles, California 90018

PACIFIC HISTORICAL REVIEW  
University of California Press  
Berkeley, California 94720

PACIFIC NORTHWEST QUARTERLY  
Parrington Hall  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington 98105

PROCEEDINGS OF  
ALASKAN SCIENCE CONFERENCES  
Alaska Division, American Association  
for the Advancement of Science  
Executive Secretary  
University of Alaska  
College, Alaska 99701

FEDERAL FIELD COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN ALASKA  
(A PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE)  
632 W. Sixth Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Though this Presidential Committee does not issue a journal, it does have available to the public economic analyses and reports on different sections of the Alaskan economy and socio-economic analyses on the circumstance of the Alaskan native.

PREHISTORY  
AND  
ETHNOLOGY  
OF  
ALASKA

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the frontispiece of Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory 1965-66, Volume 2 (Arts, Humanities, Business, & Social Sciences) edited by Eileen C. Graves and published by R. R. Bowker (New York, 1966).

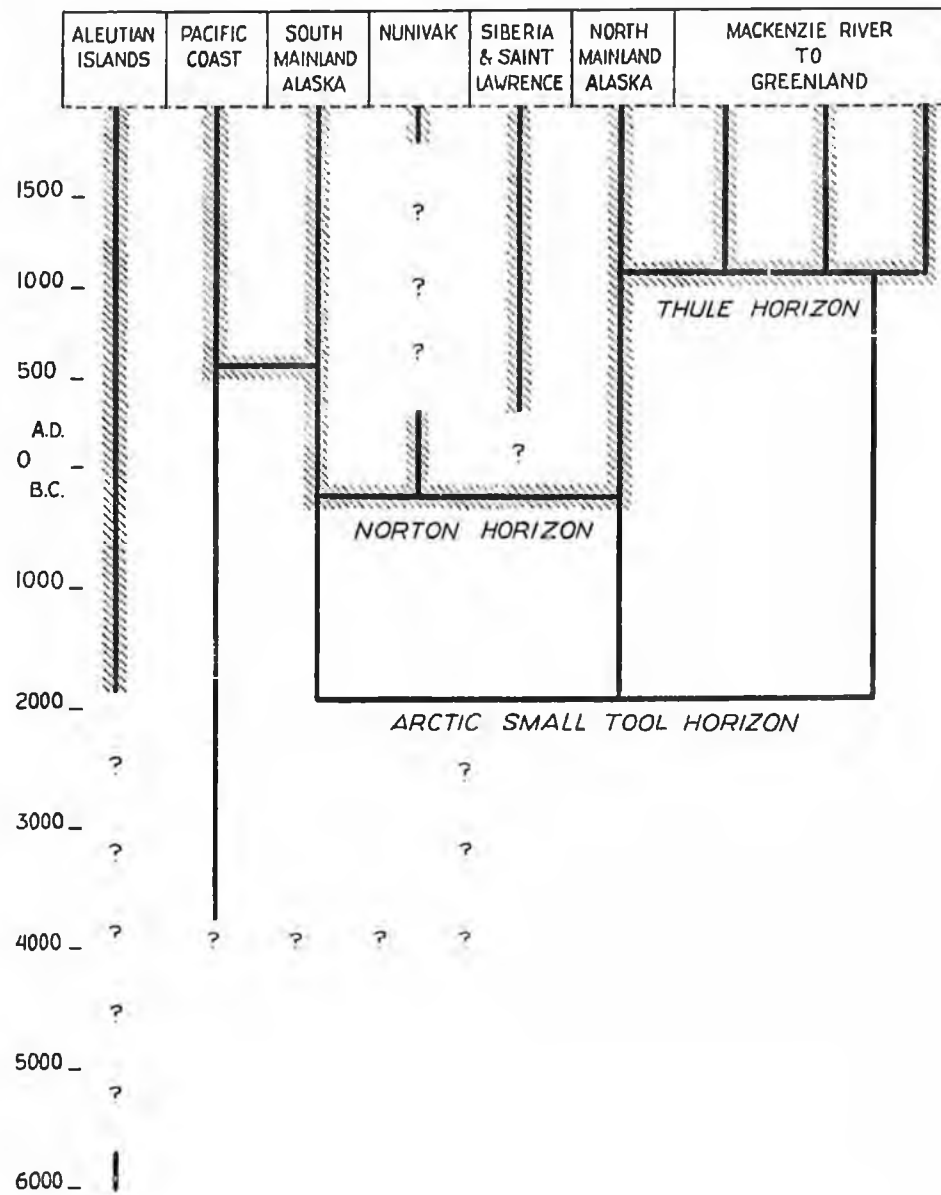


Fig. 3. — Archaeological relationships in the Eskimo-Aleut area. Shaded areas represent connections most nearly in accord with those supported by linguistic evidence.

non-portable objects such as houses and hearths and graves; all these things are aids to the achievement of what any given people conceives to be a proper life. They are, that is, *tools* in the broadest possible sense.

Because people learn to make these tools from their parents and companions, it is obvious that people who have been reared together will tend to make the same kind of tools. And what the archaeologist does is to make collections of tools from different places and points in time and compare them. This is especially a process of comparing the entire assemblage of tools of one society, with the entire assemblage of tools of another society. For this reason, knowledge of the exact source of implements is of utmost importance; loose museum specimens, while interesting and frequently useful in a subsidiary way, are of secondary utility.

But archaeology is not the only device of the prehistorian. In saying that aboriginal Alaska was made up of two kinds of people, I was already using another most important device. For just as these two kinds of people are distinct socially and culturally, they fall into two broad linguistic divisions: the Eskaleutian family on the one hand, which includes the Eskimo and Aleut languages; and the Nadene phylum of languages on the other hand, which includes the speech of all the Indians of Alaska — Athapaskan, Eyak, and Tlingit (Figure 1).

The usual thing is for one to learn to speak his native language as he learns to make his tools — from his family and friends. Therefore, in saying that these aboriginal peoples are two, I have in fact said that I believe the speakers of Nadene to have had a common ancestor, and that I believe the Eskimo-Aleut to have had another common ancestor. That judgment is of obvious prehistoric importance. Furthermore, not all Eskimos live in Alaska — they are spread from the easternmost tip of Siberia to the east side of Greenland, covering the northern coast of Canada. And not all Nadene speakers live in Alaska — the Haida are in British Columbia, and the Athapaskan family includes peoples in a solid block extending east almost to Hudson's Bay and south to interior British Columbia, with other scattered relatives in Oregon, California, and the American Southwest. Surely these facts too are of importance to the prehistorian, with their indication that aboriginal Alaska was not a self-contained ethnic unit.

A third major device of the prehistorian involves the assessment and comparison of physical characteristics, either those of living peoples or of surviving bones of dead ones. By this means, account is taken of the degree to which different populations hold genes in common. And as it is most usual for any person to obtain his genes from the same people from whom he learns to speak his language and make his tools,

the results of this approach should tend to parallel those of the other two. In Alaska, this device has served to support that division of Eskimo-Aleuts and Indians into two groups (e.g., Laughlin 1962; Oschinsky 1964), and it also apparently supports the division between Eskimos and Aleuts, who are not so distinct from each other as from Indians, but who are nevertheless held to be recognizably individual (Laughlin 1962).

Although potentially of great use, there are some theoretical difficulties — not to be gone into here — hampering the extensive use of physical characteristics for constructing prehistory, and also an eminently practical one: human bones deteriorate rapidly and aboriginal populations were usually small, so that in the long run it is easier to amass a collection of tools than a collection of human skeletons. I shall therefore need to add only that at this time we do not really have enough data to go farther than I have already gone in deriving inferences from Alaskan aboriginal physical remains.

After these preliminary remarks, I shall turn specifically to a short discussion of some opinions which have been expressed regarding the origin of the Alaskan peoples themselves.

#### OPINION, THEORY, AND EXPLANATION

It is simpler to begin with past opinion regarding the Alaskan Indians, chiefly because they have received so much less direct attention from prehistorians than have the coastal Eskimo-Aleut. From their northerly position, they have been thought to represent one of the later arrivals to the New World, thought by some to be even later immigrants than the Eskimo-Aleuts (e.g., Birket-Smith 1930). They have been suggested to be related linguistically to Asian groups, specifically Altaic (e.g., Swadesh 1964) and Sino-Tibetan (Shafer 1952). Little more begs to be said.

The prehistory of the Eskimo-Aleuts has received the greater share of attention. First encountered in Greenland by the Vikings sometime in the eleventh or twelfth centuries, scientific study of these related peoples has flourished since the nineteenth century. Views on Eskimo-Aleut origins and development have been varied, concerning on the one hand the origin of the people themselves in a physical sense, and on the other hand the origin of their way of life, characterized by that remarkable adaptation to the northern coasts.

Physically, the Eskimo and Aleut populations are the most Mongoloid of the native American peoples. And because they and they alone are firmly positioned on the Alaskan coast where it most closely approaches Asia, these people must be among the most recent Asian

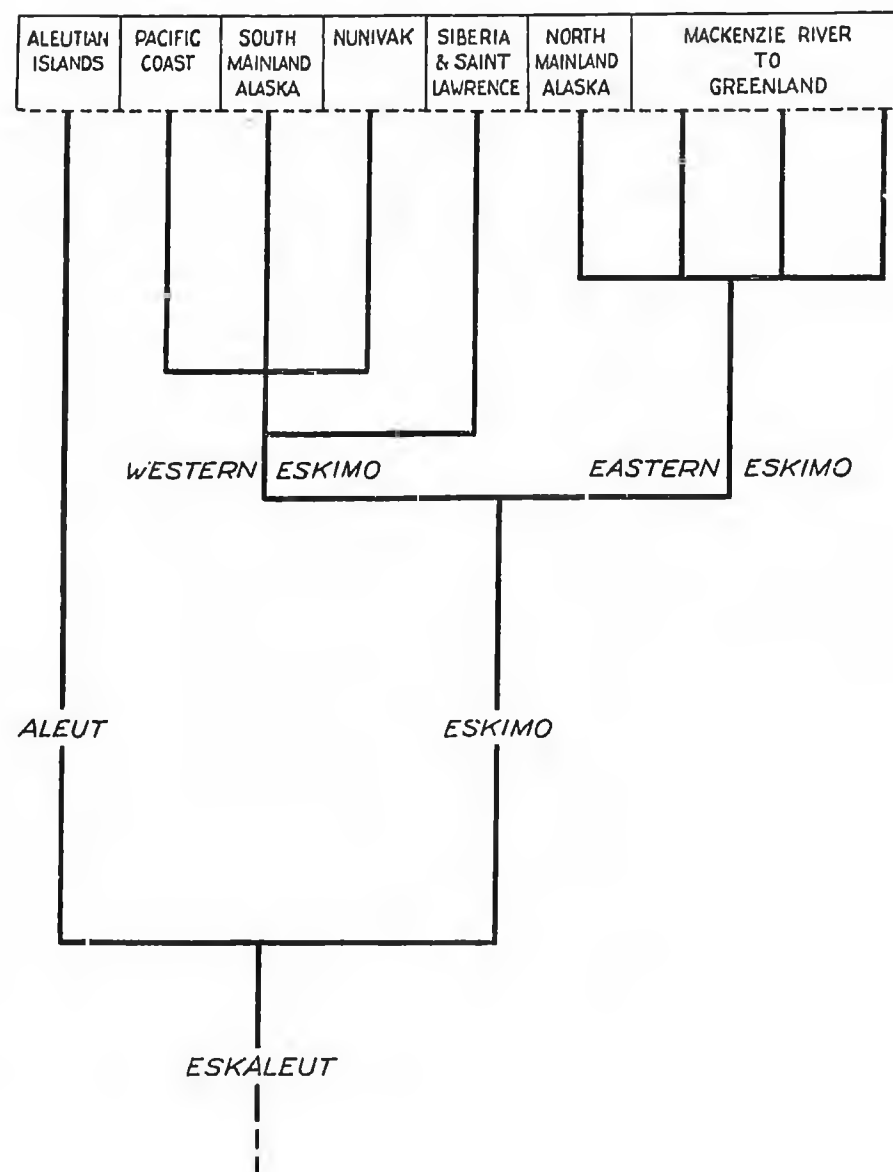


Fig. 2. — Family tree of Eskaleutian languages.

definition. That this may be as much the result of historical accident as of theoretical rigor is beside the point. What is important is the anthropologist's self-conscious employment of an assumption that explanatory relationships between facts must be systematic, must be susceptible to a measure of successful prediction — prediction not, to be sure, in the sense that prehistoric events would be expected to repeat themselves in the future, but in the sense that research results can be predicted beforehand.

Anthropological prehistory is approached, then, by means of inductive generalizations drawn from ethnographic evidence provided by living peoples, or from archaeological facts consisting of specific tools found in specific contexts. From these generalizations are deduced hypotheses regarding other specific areas of fact. These hypotheses are then tested by that most uncomfortable method, digging, or by that only slightly less uncomfortable method, a survey of relevant literature.

Clearly, the preconceptions regarding human behavior which the prehistorian must hold as a result of his anthropological training are of controlling importance in the systematization of his data — that is, in the formulation of his hypotheses and the construction of his prehistory. And as the body of anthropological thought changes through time — as all such bodies of theory change — so do his preconceptions.

It is fair to say that not long ago the dominant American anthropological view of culture was that it was a thing of "shreds and patches," and the prehistorians who held that view were simply aligning themselves according to the spirit of the times. Now, increasingly systematic explanatory models are stressed; anthropologists talk more and more in terms of "systems": Culture is a system, parts of culture are systems, society is a system, there is a socio-cultural system. It is little wonder that prehistorians are becoming less interested in tracing individual cultural traits, in "building culture," and more interested in isolating prehistoric social units and analysing social behavior, in pursuing systematic relationships between people and their physical surroundings, or between different groups of peoples (e.g., Binford 1962; Chang 1966; Deetz 1965; Hill 1966; Longacre 1966). So, of course, the focus has come to be less on "culture" as a superorganic entity, and more on societies as definable units. It is here that linguistic relationships are especially important, for if two groups of people once spoke a common language, then they must have formed a common social group.

With this out of the way, we can turn again to consideration of Alaskan prehistory, to the imposition of yet another set of preconceptions upon this portion of the world.

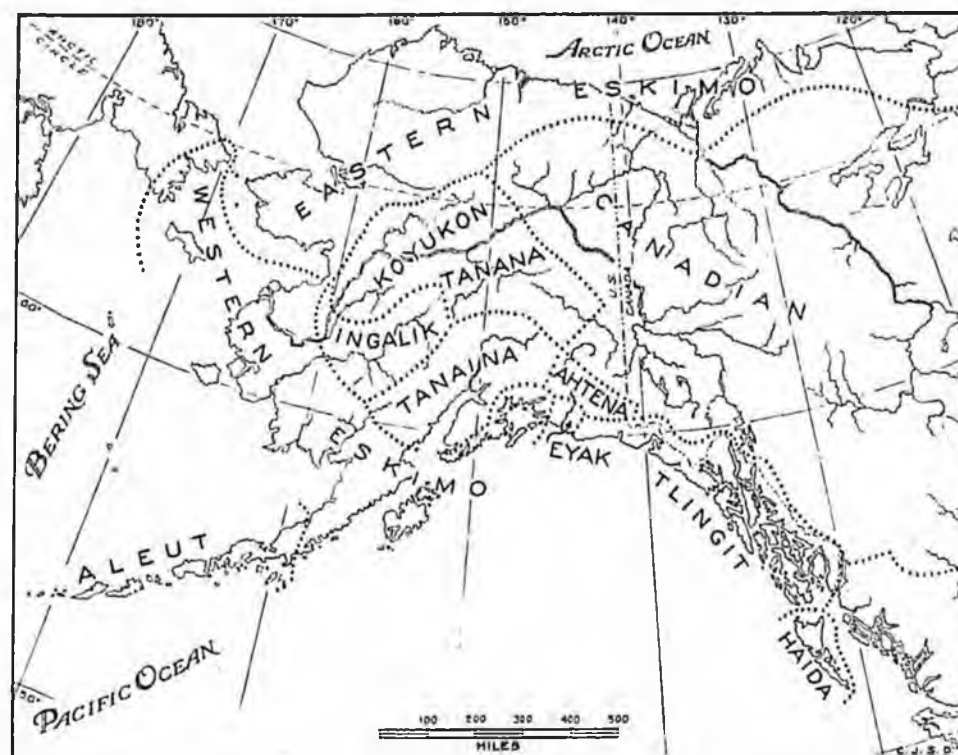


Fig. 1. — Distribution of speakers of native Alaskan languages. Linguistic designations are those of Figures 2 and 4.

immigrants. Doubtless it is for this reason that so many varied attempts have been made to relate their speech to so many Old World language groups — to Ural-Altaic, to Indo-European, or to Paleo-Siberian (e.g., Collins 1951: 425, with references; Swadesh 1962; Voegelin and Voegelin 1966). In short, there has been general agreement on the ultimate Asian origin of the people themselves.

By no means so general, however, has been agreement about the exact path by which these people or their ideas might have entered the New World. Some, including the missionary Veniaminov, have seen the Aleutian Islands as a bridge (e.g., Heizer 1943; de Laguna 1946:19). Others, including W. H. Dall (1877), have insisted that Bering Strait was the only entry. Still others argue that all significant entrance had been made before the final flooding of the Bering Platform, the land bridge which once joined Asia and Alaska (e.g., Laughlin 1963).

Even less general has been agreement on the place which the specific adaptations to the environment, so fundamental to the Eskimo-Aleut cultural identity, were developed. Briefly, these views may be said to have included locations in Alaska (e.g., Rink 1891, for an early view), in Canada (e.g., Birket-Smith 1959, for a recent statement), or in Asia (e.g., Larsen and Rainey 1946: 157-161). To complicate the matter further, argument has concerned not only the place at which this specific way of life was developed by ancestral peoples, but also the source of individual ideas which went into the makeup of this whole way of life. One particularly influential scholar, for instance, has argued that although the Eskimo way of life as a whole was developed around Bering Strait, the individual pieces of technique which composed it may be traced to Asia and indeed ultimately to the late Paleolithic of northern Europe (Collins 1951; 1959; 1960).

These differences of opinion are not necessarily based on completely different sets of facts. The stock of facts does change with each new piece of significant research, of course. But changes also occur in the preconceptions from which prehistory is imposed upon those facts. These preconceptions derive from the theoretical stand of the prehistorian, a stand which varies from individual to individual, from decade to decade, and from continent to continent. And now another set of elements must be brought into the discussion — the explanatory mechanisms which are used by the prehistorian to relate his facts one to another.

Prehistorians have frequently spoken of the "building of culture," tallying evidence for what they consider the passage of ideas. They thus reckon not people but ideas as manifest in tools, and speak of "culture drift" — a stream of ideas — without ever committing themselves to

enunciation of a precise means for its transmission. The "culture" which is the focus of attention in this view is "superorganic" in the sense that it may be considered without reference to its carriers. It is an entity in its own right, this view holds, which grows by accretion of miscellaneous ideas in a fashion almost haphazard, a thing of "shreds and patches" as one earlier anthropologist called it (Lowie 1920:441). As it may "drift" like snow, so its elements may "diffuse" like molecules of gas.

And of course it is easy to switch from speaking of a drift of culture to speaking of a drift of people. Why things in one place look like things in another place can be explained in terms of migrations. Certainly this mechanism has been used freely by interpreters who favored quite different heartlands of the Eskimo-Aleuts. Ideas are seen to spread as people migrate. In this way, for instance, the rather sudden appearance in late prehistoric Alaska of some implement forms common earlier in the Eskimo region of Canada was explained as the result of a late migration from the east (e.g., Collins 1937: 369-371). Yet we know that people do trade, after all, more often than they migrate. And they exchange ideas as they exchange goods.

The reliance on this migration device has been strong enough to give rise to its counter position. The countermovement was most evidenced by a man who until his recent untimely death was without doubt the single most productive archaeologist working in Alaska — James Louis Giddings. Insisting upon long-term continuity of population, he applied to the Bering Strait region what American prehistorians have referred to as the "area co-tradition" concept. In this view, three adjacent areas — Asia, the Bering Sea coast, and the Chukchi Sea coast — shared a common core of tradition, while each maintained almost complete stability of population as far back as the record of archaeology has gone, exchanging ideas but not population (Giddings 1960). "Diffusion" of ideas was the primary explanatory mechanism. Yet we know that people do change residence, *do* migrate, even though economy in explanation may lie in minimizing the reliance on migration.

It is high time now to mention another fact important in the understanding of the development of a prehistory of Alaska. And this is that prehistorians in the United States are predominantly anthropologists by training, as is also true of those European prehistorians who have concerned themselves with Alaska. Alaskan prehistory, then, is an anthropological variety of prehistory.

By repute, at least, historians are relatively free to consider themselves to be either social scientists or humanists, as they choose, free to consider the formulation of history either as science or as art. Anthropologists are not so free, because anthropology is science by

to begin to relate archaeological facts from North America and archaeological facts from Asia in a meaningful way. Increasing knowledge of the archaeology of Siberia and northern North America is changing that which seems possible to the prehistorian. We may expect evidence of the cultural connection of Asia and America at some time before 11,000 B.C. to be ever more systematically set forth.

And so, although we are left without the ability to answer the questions with which we began, and which seem so simple, we nevertheless may hold the expectation that prehistory will be inflicted upon early times in Alaska — not finally, but over and over again, as we work toward not one but many prehistories of the area. With the growing number of students of Alaska's prehistoric past, this attempt will certainly proceed with vigor, with intelligence, and — hopefully — with imagination.

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## ESKALEUTIAN SPEAKERS

A family tree embodying a genetic classification of the Eskaleutian languages is given in Figure 2 (see Dumond 1965 for discussion and references). We may consider that each vertical line should represent a single social group which exists now or existed at some time in the past. Proceeding from latest to earliest, one would infer the previous existence of at least these groups:

1. A group ancestral to the modern speakers of the closely related Eastern Eskimo dialects, which now extend from Norton Sound to Greenland.
2. A group ancestral to the not-so-closely related Western Eskimo dialects, which now extend from Norton Sound to Prince William Sound, adjoining the speakers of Aleut on the Alaska Peninsula.
3. A group ancestral to both the Eastern and the Western Eskimo languages.
4. A group ancestral to speakers of all Eskimo languages on the one hand, and speakers of Aleut on the other.

One may phrase these expectations as hypotheses, to be tested by archaeology or by a resort to existing archaeological literature. For if there were groups such as these, each of them would be expected to have had a single set of tools; and when each group first broke up and spread — as implied by the horizontal lines — the tool assemblage of the first migrant generations should have been virtually identical, no matter how much the tools of their descendants changed thereafter.

Figure 3 presents a family tree of archaeological collections — drawn with a certain amount of freedom — which has resulted from a search of existing literature (Dumond 1965, with references). It is clear that the figure created by the shadowed lines is not altogether different from that formed in the linguistic diagram. The most noticeable differences in the figure as a whole are caused by the fact that while groups of tools may be considered to have had multiple parents — and it was this fact which enticed those interested in the "building of culture" — a similar multiple parentage is not expressed in a genetic classification of languages. The lines which are shadowed, in Figure 3, are done so simply to indicate those points at which archaeological horizons seem most nearly to coincide with linguistic ones.

These two diagrams embody linguistic and archaeological facts. To begin to make prehistory of them, one may argue that at least the horizontal lines which are attested both by linguistic and archaeological evidence must indicate population spread or migration. In Figure 3, there remains one additional horizontal line, the existence of which was not

hypothesized on linguistic grounds; this is that designated the Arctic Small Tool horizon. This is also taken to represent a migration, for the very good reason that before the people represented by this line had moved into the eastern American Arctic and to Greenland, those areas were uninhabited. This horizon is taken by most prehistorians at this time to represent a movement of ancestral Eskimos. The descendants of these first migrants to the east — the Dorset people — were apparently swamped by their migrating cousins of the Thule horizon three thousand years later. A similar swamping may have involved the people of the Pacific coast at about the same time.

Lacking in Figure 3 is a crossbar which would represent the dispersion of the speakers of Eskaleutian. Should this crossbar exist? We may still hypothesize so, on the basis of the linguistic evidence. Should it perhaps connect with the bottom of the vertical which leads ultimately to the Koniag of the Pacific Coast? Perhaps it should. We lack facts upon which to build an answer.

At any rate, the Aleuts and their direct ancestors appear to have occupied the Aleutians for at least 4000 years. And it seems reasonably safe to think that by the beginning of that time, 2000 B.C., an ancestral form of Eskimo was spoken in an area stretching from Bristol Bay to Greenland. The spread of these people coincided with the maximum rise of sea level since the end of the Pleistocene geological epoch, a rise which coincided with the warmest period since the end of the Pleistocene. Ever since that time, as the climate cooled, the Eskimos and their direct ancestors have inhabited coasts which freeze in winter. More than that, they have inhabited *all* of the American coasts which freeze in winter, from the Alaska Peninsula to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, which are inhabited by anybody at all, with the exception of the southern coast of Hudson's Bay.

But during that time, the changes which took place in the forms of the tools were such that no one first finding a camp of the Arctic Small Tool people of 2000 B.C., would think that the tools were made by the forebears of those people around Bering Strait, say, who were visited by E. W. Nelson in the 1870's. For the proponents of the "building of culture" have been right, ideas do flow. Makers of the diminutive stone tools which gave the name to the Small Tool horizon next acquired the Asian idea of pottery, then moved on through successive styles of stone implements and pots to the objects of hard ground slate familiar to Nelson. All this *without* a break in the continuity which most of us would consider sufficient to indicate a break in the social unit, to evidence a population replacement.

guesses, but still guesses not supported by enough hard evidence to convince hard-headed critics. Second, it has not yet been possible systematically and convincingly to relate these collections to Asia on the one hand and to the heart of North America on the other. And, of course, those rising sea levels destroying early evidence have not helped the cause.

On physical grounds, the American natives are Asian. That they passed over a water-free Bering Platform conforms to the dictates of geology, of geography, and of common sense. But the fact remains that the evidence for an early movement into America from Asia is not Alaskan evidence. If it is yet known anywhere, it is from farther south in North America.

There, the presence of people has been securely dated at about 11,000 B.C. (Haynes 1964), and although people may well have been there earlier, the putative occupation sites are without exception subject to question. In Alaska, on the other hand, the earliest radiocarbon date, as yet unpublished, is short of that 11,000 B.C. by several millennia. The next earliest are those dates from the site on Anangula Island in the Aleutians, to which I have already referred, of only 6,000 B.C.

But attempts to relate the supposedly earliest Alaskan material to that in more southerly America and in Asia go on, of course. The later tendency is to play down the idea of repeated migration, in the expectation that all or nearly all of the peoples and languages of America, north and south, will be found to be related. One especially sweeping linguistic formulation would set up a "Bask-Dennean" group to include Basque in Europe, the Ural-Altai languages spread throughout northern Eurasia to the Pacific, and the American groupings of Eskaleutian, Nadene, and Wakashan (spoken on Vancouver Island) as well (Swadesh 1964).

A related movement has been toward conceiving of much of early aboriginal American knowledge, as manifested in the forms of tools, to be a local American development — knowledge arrived at after the earliest immigrants had already reached their new home (Tolstoy 1958). This particular conception has been derived from the absence of comparable archaeological material in Asia on the one hand, and, on the other hand, from the apparent fact that radiocarbon dates for the American industries in question have been earlier from sites in the south of the United States than in the north. But still more recently this view in its turn is being questioned and some vestige of early American stone tools is being sought in Asia (e.g., Haynes 1964; Mueller-Beck 1966). This new questioning betrays not so much an interest in repeated migration as a growing feeling that it is now nearly possible

in other sites not only in interior Alaska, but in Canada as well — an area which exceeds that now inhabited by speakers of northern Athapaskan languages (see Ackerman 1964; Campbell 1961; MacNeish 1964: 345-346). It is by no means unlikely that some of these do in fact represent ancestral Athapaskans (e.g., Harp 1962:73), but it seems not yet possible to relate them systematically. Fortunately, work now underway by Alaska Methodist University in interior Alaska (Frederick Hadleigh West) may throw more light on this subject.

We have even fewer facts with which to approach the description of relationships between the coastal Indians and the interior Athapaskans, or indeed of the past of the coastal Indians at all. Such efforts as have been made in that area by archaeologists have provided little information from prehistoric times (e.g., Drucker 1942; de Laguna 1960; de Laguna and others 1964; see also Ackerman 1964-65), and the arguments which have been made regarding the prehistory of the area have proceeded largely from ethnographic comparisons (e.g., Borden 1951; Drucker 1955).

#### THE PEOPLING OF AMERICA

The approach I have been illustrating up to this point is one designated as the "direct historical" approach, in which one works at prehistory backward, by proceeding from the historically known into the prehistorically unknown. And in doing this, I have been able to sidestep a question of considerable importance. After all, the prehistory of Alaska has been of interest to most American prehistorians not because of an intrinsic interest in speakers of Eskaleutian or of Nadene, but because Alaska is obviously the prehistoric gateway to all America. Knowledge of the peopling of America must include knowledge of the prehistory of Alaska, for there the ancient footsteps of the first intruders in the new land must lie.

I have purposely avoided this question up to now because I have attempted to present the idea of a prehistory as a constructed, systematic relationship of all pertinent facts. There are no such relationships yet convincingly formulated which take account of very early archaeological materials. There are, to be sure, archaeological sites in Alaska and in adjacent parts of Canada for which great age has been claimed. Some of these have been said to be way-stations in the movement of Pleistocene peoples either up the valley of the Yukon or along the Arctic coast, and then down between the Cordilleran and Laurentian ice sheets into Alberta and into the heart of North America.

But there are two things wrong: First of all, all such dates in the north are by guess — some of them informed and probably even accurate

Back to the questions we began with. When did they come? These ancestral small-tool-making Eskimos apparently were present in the vicinity of Bering Strait as early as about 3000 B.C. Where did they come from? We may hypothesize that they came from the south, because of their very early linguistic connection with the more southerly Aleuts from whom they must have separated before their tools had taken on their diminutive character. Why are they where they are? They are living on a coast to which they have become sufficiently adapted that they apparently prefer it to all other places. There is another implication which must be touched upon: for those fond of migrations from Asia, it now seems clear that there has been no major population influx from Asia by way of Alaska within the past 5,000 years.

And what of earlier times? Here we are in more trouble, and it is partly because of that rising sea level. It is not accidental that our sketch of events is so much more nearly complete after that rise of sea level than before. Much of the evidence we seek must be under water.

Pending the arrival of more facts, we must content ourselves with an expectation: an ancestor of the Eskimo and Aleut peoples will be found, he will have lived before 3000 B.C., and he will be manifested in archaeological resemblances linking the Arctic Small Tool horizon products with those of the earliest Aleuts.

Interestingly, the date of the earliest-known site in the Aleutians (Laughlin and Aigner 1966; McCartney and Turner 1966) is about 6000 B.C. But there is no completely convincing evidence to tie that site closely to any other site now known, either in the Aleutians or elsewhere. Still, our pursuit of prehistory takes an important turn here. William Laughlin has argued that the site on Anangula Island represents the earliest Aleuts (Laughlin 1963). And he has suggested that they were there because they were a remnant of a group of people who had lived around the northern edge of the Pacific coastline before the inundation of the Bering Platform, an event placed by geologists somewhere around 11,000 years ago. This hint seems suggestively borne out by the linguist Swadesh who is inclined to connect Eskaleutian and Chukotan, the language of the Chukchis and related people of northeastern Asia (Swadesh 1962; see also Voegelin and Voegelin 1966). Now a new dimension has been introduced, because it is possible to conceive of the Eskimo-Aleut peoples as descended of an ancient north Pacific people who lived before the formation of Bering Strait, who spanned the distance between Asia and America, and who undoubtedly had relatives extending still farther south along the coasts both of America and Asia. But now we are in the realm of vaster speculation, and we have still to consider our second Alaskan people.

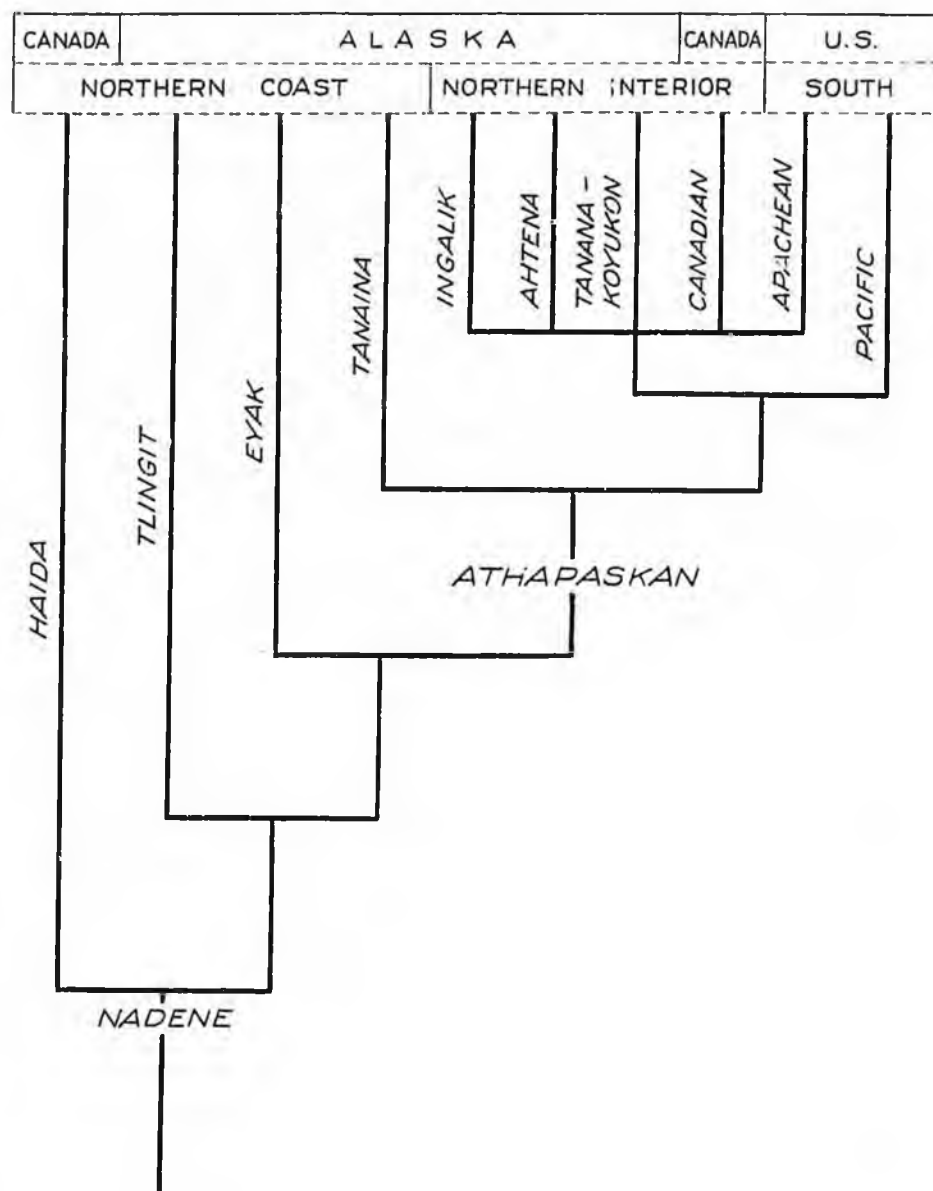


Fig. 4. — Family tree of Nadene (Indian) languages.

## NADENE SPEAKERS

If we present a somewhat simplified diagram of Nadene linguistic relationships (constructed after Hoiyer 1956; 1962; 1963; Krauss 1964; 1965; Pinnow 1964) as in Figure 4, we can hypothesize the existence of these social groups directly relevant to the prehistory of Alaska:

1. A group ancestral to all Athapaskans, except for the Tanaina.
2. A group ancestral to all Athapaskans.
3. A group ancestral to all Athapaskans and to speakers of Eyak.
4. A group ancestral to speakers of Athapaskan, Eyak, and Tlingit — this would, of course, include all Indians of Alaska itself.
5. A group ancestral to all of these and Haida as well. (Indeed, Haida is linguistically divergent enough that it may not be properly Nadene, but for the present purposes it will be so considered; see Pinnow 1964.)

Immediately, one is drawn to the interesting fact that the most divergent of these languages, Haida, is the farthest south; the second most divergent is Tlingit, which is second farthest south; the third most divergent is Eyak which is immediately north of Tlingit; the fourth most divergent, standing out from all other Athapaskan, is Tanaina, which is just north of Eyak (Figure 1). If one follows the procedure which is recommended by some linguists (Dyen 1956), one would look for the ancient home of Nadene in the region of greatest divergence. This would be, fairly obviously, somewhere in British Columbia—to the south, rather than west across Bering Strait.

Could it be, one might ask, that as a group of people moved north in the wake of a retreating Cordilleran ice sheet at the end of the Pleistocene, perhaps nine or ten thousand years ago, some of them began to work their way westward to the Pacific Coast?

A resort to archaeological evidence at this point is futile. The only fairly secure published sequence for Alaskan Athapaskans, at the site of Dixthada on the Tanana (Rainey 1939), probably extends back no farther than a hundred years or so before the advent of Europeans. Time coverage for Athapaskans outside of Alaska is about equally poor (e.g., MacNeish 1964:348). There are sites which have been reported upon, indeed, but they do not seem relatable in a systematic way either to each other or to modern ethnic groups. A few of these sites are beginning to be dated, such as components in the sequence now being worked out on the Kobuk River by Brown University, following the lead set by Giddings (1962; Douglas D. Anderson, personal communication), in which some presumably Indian (or at any rate, presumably non-Eskimo) occupations of the site occurred earlier than 2000 B.C. Some implements found there may be related to specific implements found

limited extent to which this material has been utilized by anthropologists in the past.

Remember that we are dealing with three methodological dimensions; historical, ethnographic, and archaeological. Taking the historical dimension first, it is worth noting two large collections of archival materials, both of vital importance to anyone undertaking ethnohistorical research concerning Russian America. The first is the records of the Russian-American Company in the National Archives. With the help of Professor Raymond Fisher of the University of California, Los Angeles, and one of his graduate students, Oswalt and I have been going through these materials systematically. We have extracted and translated, at the present time, everything dealing with the Kuskokwim and the Nushagak, particularly with the activities around Aleksandrovsky Redoubt at the mouth of the Nushagak River from which most of southwestern Alaska was opened to the fur trade. This source is tremendously valuable as far as it relates to the mechanics of the fur trade and the way in which the Eskimos of southwestern Alaska were brought into the trade. I think that the time will come when we, as students of this area, may know as much about the fur trade as do those students of northern Canada who have utilized the records of the Hudson's Bay Company. There is other material in the Russian-American Company records, of course, including population information and a good deal of ethnographic data. There is also much information concerning relationships between traders, missionaries and the Eskimos. Only a very small amount of this relates to the Nushagak-Kuskokwim and the records are also particularly valuable for students of the Kodiak Eskimos and the Aleuts.

Another important source for the Russian period of Alaska's history is the Alaska Russian Church Archives deposited in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in 1,062 box-portfolios. This material, except for the vital statistics, has not been microfilmed, nor is there an adequate index. The vital statistics for the Nushagak mission provide a complete record of baptisms and various other rites in the Orthodox Church from 1841 until 1931, invaluable material for population studies that can be used in many other ways as well.

In addition to these two important archival sources for the Russian period, I also relied heavily on published materials, particularly the writings of Tikhmenev, Zagoskin, Veniaminov, Wrangell, Khromchenko, Etolin, and others. All of this material is more readily available, of course, because it is published.

For the American period, U.S. government records have been extremely useful. These include the Fish Commission reports for the

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to as various "agents of contact" upon the Eskimos of the area. This turned out to be a very rich area for such study because of the abundant documentary materials available. The presence of people who could be relied upon to provide some ethnographic information, and the possibility of carrying out archaeological research in nineteenth century sites were also factors in the selection of this region. In effect, I have attempted to utilize the research methods of ethnography, history and archaeology to elucidate the impact of explorers, traders, missionaries, commercial fishermen, miners, reindeer herders, education and health services, etc., on the people of a particular area from the time of earliest contact up to the present. This involved, first, a rather extensive study of published and archival materials from this area. I attempted to obtain all the information I could from the various published and archival source materials on population, locations and names of settlements, subsistence patterns, etc.

Then, in 1964, I went into the field and visited as many of these old settlements as possible, particularly those for which I had names and population estimates. In addition, I stopped in the three present day villages along the Nushagak River and discussed with informants the location of old settlements and tried to get as much ethnographic information as possible that would apply to my nineteenth century interests. This enabled me to start out with a reasonably accurate idea of population distribution in the region and a background of ethnographic facts.

In the following years I have continued this type of research along the Nushagak and, at the same time, have initiated archaeological excavations at sites occupied during the nineteenth century. In 1965 I excavated a site in the Tikchik Lake area for which there is good documentation. It was visited first by I. F. Vasilev in 1829, and abandoned at the time of the influenza epidemic of 1899-1900. In addition, there was one individual still surviving who had been born in the settlement, and it was possible to bring him to the village during the excavations. I thus had the unusual opportunity for an archaeologist of being able to talk to a former inhabitant of an archaeological site while excavation was in progress. Excavation of another nineteenth century site, this time along the middle Nushagak River, was undertaken during the summer of 1967.

But I am not here to discuss my own work in detail. What I would like to do, using my Nushagak work as an example, is to suggest to you some of the kinds of research materials that are available to the student of nineteenth century Eskimo culture and to stress the very

New World either have been or eventually will be answered on the basis of prehistoric archaeological research in Alaska. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the bulk of the archaeological attention has been turned toward the most ancient cultures and that late prehistoric and historic problems have been neglected.

It is also true that ethnographers, no longer being able to study the so-called "un-touched" Eskimo cultures, have turned their research attention toward community studies and the community as an on-going entity in Alaska today. Particularly noteworthy in this regard is the work of Charles Hughes on St. Lawrence Island, Wendell Oswalt on the Kuskokwim and my own work in northwest Alaska. These studies are, for the most part, lacking in an historical base of any kind. Very frequently the community under discussion seems to exist in a kind of vacuum. One does not see its relationship with the outside world very clearly, nor does one see it as the end-point in a long process of cultural change, the most significant aspects of which, perhaps, took place during the nineteenth century.

At any rate, ethnohistorical work has not been vigorously pursued, but neither has it been totally neglected. I will mention examples of the work that is being done and then move on to a more detailed discussion of my own research in order to suggest some of the problems the ethnohistorian faces and the tools with which he works.

Initially, it is necessary to mention the work of Frederica De Laguna among the Yakutat Tlingit. She is the real pioneer among Alaska ethnohistorians, and the first person to systematically utilize the research methods of history, ethnography, and archaeology for the purpose of understanding culture change. Her studies of the Yakutat area, begun in 1949, give a very complete picture of the Tlingit of this region from late prehistoric times to the present. Another notable example of ethnohistoric research is the work of Wendell Oswalt along the Kuskokwim River. Oswalt's studies began in 1954 with traditional ethnography reconstructed from discussions with Eskimo informants. He then moved on to the study of a modern community, Napaskiak, and lately has worked backward in time, emphasizing the problems of culture change during the nineteenth century. One of the published results of this has been his book on Moravian activity along the Kuskokwim. Oswalt's work, and my own on the Nushagak River, also in southwestern Alaska, are closely related because of our common interest in nineteenth century culture change, and our utilization of some of the same research materials.

In 1963 I began ethnohistorical research in the Nushagak River region for the purpose of assessing the impact of what I have referred

## ETHNOHISTORICAL RESEARCH IN ALASKA

JAMES W. VANSTONE

Anthropologists commonly think of ethnography as that branch of cultural anthropology which treats cultures systematically in space and time. It differs from archaeology mainly in that it derives its perspectives from, and is primarily concerned with, the life of living peoples. Ordinarily in the study of ethnography, the ethnographer himself is the observer — that is, he goes and lives among a group of people and observes their ways. He questions them, talks with them, studies their way of life, and bases his report upon his own observations. This is not the only kind of ethnography, however. If the ethnographer himself is not the observer, he may attempt to study, evaluate, and interpret the observations of others; primarily of earlier explorers, missionaries, government officials, and those who saw the group in which he is interested and left written records. This is often the only kind of research method that can be used in an area where it is no longer possible for a present day ethnographer to study a group of people. One thinks immediately of the eastern United States where almost all traces of aboriginal Indian life have disappeared. Our knowledge of the Iroquois and Algonquin groups is based almost entirely upon the study of documentary evidence.

It is this type of ethnography that is frequently referred to as ethnohistory. The ethnohistorian differs from the ordinary historian only in that he is primarily interested in what we consider the primitive peoples of the world, and also because he often has at his disposal certain research methods which the ordinary historian does not. Namely, what we might call traditional ethnography — that is observer-type ethnography, and archaeology, which in spite of its orientation toward prehistory, can be used to elucidate historical problems as well.

Dr. James W. VanStone is associate curator, department of anthropology, Field Museum of Natural History.



JAMES W. VANSTONE, of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, received his doctorate in anthropology from the University of Pennsylvania. He has taught at the University of Alaska and the University of Toronto. His books include, *Point Hope, an Eskimo Community in Transition* (1962), and *The Changing Culture of the Snowdrift Chitpewyan* (1965). His *Ethno-Archaeology of Crow Village, Alaska* is now in press. Founder and first editor of the *Anthropological Papers of the University of Alaska*, he is on the Advisory Committee of the Arctic Institute of North America. Two manuscripts have been accepted for publication: "An Annotated Ethnohistorical Bibliography of the Nushagak River Region, Alaska" and "An Ethnographic History of the Nushagak River Region, Alaska." Another manuscript, "Tikchik Village: A Nineteenth Century Riverine Community in Southwestern Alaska," has been submitted for publication. He has written some thirty articles, which have appeared in, among other places, *Arctic*, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, *Anthropologica*, and *Arctic Anthropology*.

What, then, are the aims and purposes of ethnohistorical studies? It seems for our purposes they are three-fold. First of all, a primary aim of ethnohistory has been to use the ethnological present to throw light on the archaeological past. This is one end of the direct historical approach that Dr. Dumond was talking to you about. It involves working backward in time from present day cultures to those of the more ancient past. This type of ethnohistory, I think, has been particularly useful when applied in areas where ethnography of the observer-type is practically impossible. Much of the data we have on the proto-historic cultures of the northeastern United States, for example, derives from ethnohistorical data. This is a type of work that has not, unfortunately, been pursued extensively in Alaska, although it is every bit as logical and important here as elsewhere.

A second aim of ethnohistory is to elucidate particular historical problems and events that arise out of the contact of Europeans and aboriginal peoples. With reference to Alaska, a study of the mechanics of the fur trade is an example of this type of approach. Another might be the relationship between Eskimos, Indians, and fur traders; or the relationship between people and missionaries and the changes affected by the latter. One of my own particular interests is the role of Eskimos in the Bristol Bay commercial salmon fishery.

Third, we often use ethnography, as we do other methods of anthropology, to gain insight into cultural process. We gain access to the problem of cultural stability and change by using records to measure the duration of conservatism, for example, and to detect innovation when it occurs. These kinds of data frequently occur in records and provide a means of projecting the problems of culture stability and change backwards in time from the present and the recent past. The methods of archaeology can be used in the same manner because historical archaeology, in a sense, is simply the excavation of ethnography and it provides the same valuable information about changing material culture — stability, the selection process — as do historical records.

Prehistoric archaeology, as Dr. Dumond has told us, is a branch of anthropology that is being vigorously researched in Alaska. Programs of ethnohistorical research, on the other hand, have been carried out only to a very limited extent so far. For that reason, I am very glad to appear before you at this time to plead the cause of ethnohistory and perhaps to awaken your interest in it. It is not really difficult to see the reason for this neglect. As Dr. Dumond has pointed out, we know that many of the most basic questions about the peopling of the



RICHARD A. PIERCE, Professor of History, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, is a specialist in the Russian eastward expansion. Recent books include *Russia's Hawaiian Adventure* (1965) and *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (1962). Currently he is editing a new edition of P. A. Tikhmenev's *Historical Review of the Russian-American Company* (1867), and working on a study of the post-Baranov period of Alaskan history. His articles have appeared in, among other places, the *Journal of the West* and the *Pacific Historical Review*. Recently, he was a Fulbright research fellow in Finland, Russia, and England. In 1968 and 1969, he will be on a sabbatical leave which will be spent in Finland, the USSR, and Alaska, doing further research and writing.

Bristol Bay area, census reports, the Geological Survey reports, annual reports of the Governor of Alaska, and the publications of the Moravian Church.

Turning to the ethnographic dimension, we are on much less happy ground. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it is about thirty years too late to be carrying out ethnographic work in this area. There are very few people alive who remember even the end of the nineteenth century, and much of the ethnographic data that is collected must be obtained second-hand. Actually, this is not completely out of the question. There are many historically minded people in the Nushagak villages, as there are in other parts of Alaska, who remember very well what they learned from their fathers and elderly relatives. They can often provide reliable information on the locations and names of settlements and settlement pattern data generally. The informant I worked with while excavating in the Tikchik Lake area was able to give valuable information on the trapping areas of the region, trips to the Nushagak post and the hunting cycle through the years. When one takes this ethnographic work and combines it with the historical data, it is possible to obtain a rather complete picture of traditional Eskimo life in this region. But it must be admitted that it is really too late to carry out the kind of ethnographic reconstruction that one would like.

The archaeological dimension has also been less useful than one might think, although at the same time, when taken together with the other methodological approaches mentioned, it has been extremely helpful. Much useful information has been recovered about the nature of change through a detailed study of the trade goods recovered for archaeological sites. The study of bottles, tin cans, crockery and like materials may not seem very edifying, but it is surprising how much data these objects provide about stability and changes in material culture.

One of the problems that has concerned both Oswalt and myself as far as our Kuskokwim-Nushagak work is concerned, has been our failure to be able to differentiate stratigraphically between the Russian and American periods of occupation in the sites which we have excavated. This has been true of the Tikchik Lake site in the Nushagak area where I worked and also at Crow Village on the Kuskokwim which Oswalt and I investigated together. It has seemed to us as if, in some ways, the techniques of archaeology are too gross for dealing with the very short time periods that we have here. After all, the period with which we are dealing only runs from approximately 1830 to 1910, this may be too short a time period to be dealt with by normal archaeological methods. However, at Kolmakovski Redoubt

on the central Kuskokwim, where Oswalt has been working for the past two years, it may be possible to separate the Russian and American periods stratigraphically and to obtain some insight into the types of trade goods belonging to each period.

But I do not want to belabor these points. I would suggest that there are other areas in Alaska where ethnohistorical research might profitably be carried out and where some start has already been made. I think particularly of the Cook Inlet region where Joan B. Townsend of the University of Manitoba has been working. There is much documentary material for this area to go along with the information that can be obtained by means of ethnography and archaeology.

Seward Peninsula may be one of the best regions in the north for ethnohistorical studies. The work of Dorothy Jean Ray on settlement patterns in that region is a good start toward our understanding of nineteenth century culture change there. The Lower Yukon should be an excellent area, particularly in the region of the Eskimo-Athapaskan boundary near the mouth of the Innoko River where we have Zagoskin's extremely detailed descriptions of settlements — their sizes and related ethnographic data — and where Frederica De Laguna, many years ago, carried out an important archaeological survey. The Aleutian Islands, of course, and Kodiak suggest themselves immediately because of the large amount of published historical data by various explorers, information in the Russian-American Company records, the works of Veniaminov, etc.

In conclusion, I hope I have made the point that by combining several research methods, we can go a long way toward establishing a firm historical perspective from which to view contemporary Eskimo and Indian culture in Alaska. I think that is the main value of the type of research described here. The ethnohistorical approach may seem simplistic, but it does give us a good background for understanding contemporary cultures, something we do not have at the present time.

These are comments that I should be addressing to a gathering of anthropologists as well as historians, because it is to both groups that one must make a plea for the importance of the nineteenth century in Alaska. It is an interesting period, and one in which most of the vital changes in Eskimo and Indian life took place. These were far reaching changes about which we at present know very little. It is my hope that, in the future, as historians and anthropologists are attracted to ethnohistorical research, the results will be embodied in the classroom approach of people like yourselves who will be encouraged to "spread the word" about Alaskan culture history. I remember how disappointed I was a number of years ago when I was working in an Alaskan coastal town

## THE RUSSIAN PERIOD OF ALASKAN HISTORY

RICHARD A. PIERCE

Like other fields of history, the study of Russian America may be approached in several ways. These approaches differ widely; each having its own justification and its own devotees. The pragmatic approach seeks to connect the past with the present. In what may be called the humanist approach, it is maintained that any period of man's endeavor is worthy of study as an aspect of human behavior and experience. Finally, there is the antiquarian approach, with interest in knowledge for its own sake.

The Russian period of Alaskan history might at first glance seem to have little relation to the present. The Russian era, though long, ended abruptly, its trends broken off, its influence apparently enduring only in minor degree.

Yet, as may be seen by a look at the map, this is far from true. The very shape of modern Alaska is Russian. The Russians accomplished considerable exploration, laid claims to territory, and established settlements which became the Alaskan towns and communities of today. This influence was reflected in the agreements of 1824 and 1825 with the United States and Great Britain. Had the Russians done less, the Alaska of today would have been smaller. Had they done more — and recall that the ambitions of Shelikhov, Baranov and Rezanov extended as far south as San Francisco — Alaska might now be much larger. Had the Russian government sent out more men of the caliber of Baranov, and backed them up with funds, colonists and ships, the shape of the Pacific coastal states and British Columbia might now be much different.

Russia also laid the basis for the Alaskan economy. Her colonists made the first tentative experiments with agriculture. They began the exploitation of timber resources and fisheries. The geologists Doroshin and Furuhjelm began the investigation of mineral resources, particularly coal, which was mined on the Kenai peninsula. The fur trade became established quite early and gained a considerable share of the world market.

Dr. Richard A. Pierce is professor of history at Queen's University.

and a local high school student told me that his teacher had said the area had no history! A comment like this suggests that ethnohistorical studies have been neglected too long. I hope that I have suggested here some of the possibilities that are inherent in this type of research.

...  
I love the pomp of Nature's fading dyes,  
The forests, garmented in gold and purple,  
The rush of noisy wind, and the pale skies,  
Half-hidden by the clouds in darkling billows,  
And the rare sun-ray and the early frost,  
And threats of grizzled Winter, heard and lost.

Each time that Autumn comes I bloom afresh;  
For me, I find, the Russian cold is good;

...  
My horse is brought; far out onto the plain  
He carries his glad rider, and the frozen  
Dale echoes to his shining hooves, his mane  
Streams in the keen wind like a banner blowing,  
And the bright ice creaks under him again.  
But day soon flickers out. At the forgotten  
Hearth, where the fire purrs low or leaps like wind,  
I read, or nourish long thoughts in my mind.

...  
And thoughts stir bravely in my head, and rhymes  
Run forth to meet them on light feet, and fingers  
Reach for the pen, and the good quill betimes  
Asks for foolscap. Wait: the verses follow.  
Thus a still ship sleeps on still seas. Hark: Chimes!  
And swiftly all hands leap to man the rigging,  
The sails are filled, they belly in the wind —  
The monster moves — a foaming track behind.

It sails, but whither is it our ship goes? . . .

— Alexander Pushkin  
"Autumn" 1833



Herman Slotnick (top left) and Orlando Miller (bottom right)



(left to right) Senator Gruening, Morgan B. Sherwood, Robert Frederick, Mrs. Sherwood and President Frederick P. McGinnis (AMU)



(left to right) Victor Strash, Jeannette Nichols, Herb Hilcher, and Eugene Short (Director, Anchorage Community College)

## RUSSIAN ALASKA

Other questions deserving further study are the relations of the Russian-American Company with other areas, particularly Siberia, California, and Hawaii, and with the Hudson's Bay Company.

Then, there is the question of why Alaska was sold. Quite a bit has been done on different matters concerning the purchase, but more could be learned concerning personalities, such as the Grand Duke Constantine and his followers who strove for years to get rid of Alaska, until they finally succeeded.

More could also be learned of the details concerning the transfer, of Prince Maksutov's activities in 1867 and 1868, of the liquidation of Company holdings, and of the various individuals and groups who profited therefrom. According to *Golder's Guide*, there exists in the Russian archives quite a fund of Company correspondence with government ministries concerning the sale and transfer. This will doubtless be of great interest when examined and analyzed.

I have tried to review, briefly, some of the materials on Russian America, and what may yet be done in this field. However, interesting though these questions may be, certain prerequisites must be met before the study of Russian America can begin to develop as it deserves.

First of all, more personnel are needed. Not many, but if there were at least several in a generation to specialize in this study, it could go forward. The schools may be able occasionally to turn some talented and interested youth in this direction. The universities should give Alaskan history, including the Russian period, adequate attention.

Also, more specialists in Alaskan history should learn Russian. This language does not present an insuperable barrier — Clarence Andrews learned it by himself, when in his sixties — but it is essential to competence in the earlier period.

In addition, more outlets for scholarly writing are needed. There is particular need for a journal of Alaskan history. That requires an adequate subsidy, perhaps foundation support. Such a journal would provide a central outlet for historical work instead of having it scattered far and wide as at present, among many journals, often overlooked, and with no feeling of community among interested scholars. Such a journal would provide a clearing house for knowledge of development in the field, a vehicle for criticism, and a key to current bibliography. Fortunately, the University of Alaska Press and the University of Washington Press now promise an outlet for worthwhile longer works, including original studies, translations and reprints.

In addition, more bibliographical research is needed, with further development of archives and libraries. Instead of having to visit various places in the United States, and to travel to Finland and the U.S.S.R. to

During the later period of Russian rule, some effort was made at conservation of fur resources. In addition, coastal shipping was established, communications were maintained between the far-flung Russian posts and settlements, and trade carried on with Victoria, San Francisco and other points.

The basis of race relations was laid in the Russian time. The native population became accustomed to contact with outsiders and with modern trade and transportation. Many worked for the Russian-American Company; many were converted to Christianity. The surviving presence of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska even today is an indication of the efforts of the early missionaries and the support they received from the Russian-American Company.

This groundwork made it easier for the United States to assume rule over Alaska in 1867. As we know, however, the natives came out second best in the change of masters, for many were conspicuously worse off under American rule than they had been under the paternal Russian rule. As a matter of fact, we of today might well study the Russian period in this regard. The Russians have always been freer of racial feeling than other peoples. Thus, the large Alaskan "creole" population — the products of mixed marriages between Russians and natives — met no prejudice and produced a number of highly useful individuals.

For example, A. F. Kashevarov (1808-1866), the son of a teacher on Kodiak, was sent to Russia, trained in navigation and commanded ships of the Russian-American Company for many years. In 1838, he headed an expedition which went 30 miles east of Point Barrow, and he later helped prepare maps for an atlas of the Pacific coast. Andrei Glazunov, another creole, explored the lower Yukon in 1835. Two other creoles, Arkhimandritov and Kadin, also commanded company vessels. Others were cartographers, interpreters and minor company officials. Clearly, there was a human resource in Alaska which the Russians could use, but which has been neglected ever since, just as it has seldom been used properly elsewhere in North America.

Other very concrete uses of the past may be seen in the evidence drawn from the Russian records to support the cases of the contenders in the disputes over sealing in the Bering Sea and over the Alaska boundary, both involving questions of great importance for Alaska.

The humanist approach, the study of the region in isolation, for its own sake, simply as an example of human endeavor, is also applicable. Thus we may form a picture of a region which until then was untouched by outside influence. From the Russian accounts we can learn much about the native culture before it was modified by later settlement and contact. Unfortunately there was only one Veniaminov, but many details

about native life may be gleaned from the accounts and reports of the early voyagers, of Company officials, and of visiting scientists.

From the same materials we can also learn how the Russians adapted to their New World environment, how they used it, and to what extent they studied it. Much more attention could be given the work and writings of the agent of the Russian Academy of Science, I. G. Voznesenskii (d. 1871), who was in Alaska and California from 1840 to 1845, collecting specimens and making copious notes, none of them yet published.

A great deal more could be learned of the exploration of this region under the Russians, of their attempts at education and medical service, and of the history of the Russian Orthodox and Lutheran churches.

The antiquarian approach also lends itself to the study of this region and of its history, though the results may be uneven. The researcher along this line may occupy himself with practically anything — historical figures of local significance, details of wearing apparel, weaponry or diet, or the rigging or tonnage of ships. He may lose sight of larger questions. Of course, the person undertaking this type of research, untrained, with misplaced enthusiasm, may actually prove detrimental to the very cause he seeks to serve. Thus, in anthropology or ethnology the pot-hunter or skull or arrowhead collector may spoil sites deserving more sophisticated study. In history, the amateur may disregard what is actually significant, or may sit on source material until his house burns or heirs dispose of his possessions. Even at best, his work may still suffer from his lack of training enabling him to relate his efforts to larger questions, from lack of communication with other researchers, or from lack of an outlet for his findings. If these can be provided, however, the local investigator may do work of real value in producing information, and in building up evidence. If enough small facts are accumulated and are made available to others, they can lead to larger conclusions.

Therefore, there is merit in the work of the sharp-eyed amateur who discovers relics or new sites, or who finds new facts in historical literature. One sees the fruit of this in the work of the local historical societies, whether in publications, or in the placing of historical monuments, or in preparing restorations. Much more can be done, in the study of Alaskan place names; more can be done concerning the identification of sites, such as where the Russians put their copper plates and crests by which they laid claim to the country, where their posts were located, and where they travelled. The survival of Russian words in the native languages also merits local study.

All three approaches, then, have their place in the study of Russian America. It is clear that there are many links connecting Alaska's present with its Russian past, and ample reasons why that 140-year period

Baron Ferdinand Wrangel wrote a great deal concerning Alaska; his works deserve closer study. Chief managers Etolin and Furuhjelm both left manuscript materials. Quite a bit can be pieced together concerning Prince Maksutov, the last chief manager. All of the others — Hagemeister, Murav'ev, Chistiakov, Kupreanov, Teben'kov, Rosenberg, Rudakov, and Voevodskii — remain shadowy figures, on whom there are only a few biographical details, and who are remembered in Alaska only through the name of some glacier, headland or islet.

Much more should be known about other figures — the physicians Govorlivyi, Blaschke, and Frankenhäuser; the naturalists Voznesenskii, Sahlberg and Holmberg; men who mapped the Alaskan coasts, like Vasil'ev and Ingenstrom, and many others of an assemblage unique to this continent. Details concerning such men can provide clues as to their character and achievements and enable us to assess what they did here.

More could also be done on the maritime fur trade. Dominated by New Englanders, this trade made the Pacific a lake, uniting Sitka with such far-flung places as California, Hawaii, Canton, and Boston. Each voyage was an epic in itself, and although details are often scanty, some of the story can be retrieved. F. W. Howay laid the groundwork for study of these voyages a quarter of a century ago, but little has been done on this subject since his day.

We need also to give closer attention to earlier times, especially to assess the considerable literature put out by Soviet scholars. Thus, in 1948 the Soviet historian A. E. Efimov, in a book concerning early Russian geographic discoveries in the North Pacific, cited a report issued in 1937 by Governor John Troy. This report mentioned the find on the Kenai peninsula of the remains of a village consisting of 31 house sites, obviously very old, and not of native origin, which an American writer of the time suggested might have been built by Russians from ancient Novgorod. Efimov suggested that the houses might have been erected by men lost from the Dezhnev expedition, which penetrated Bering Straits in 1648, and that their intermarriage with native women might have produced a mixed population in the Kenai region which preserved certain Russian culture traits down to the time of Russian occupation, giving rise to rumors of Russians, not connected with later endeavors, to be found in the region.

This story is wild and improbable, yet it appears again in an article by the Soviet historian of the Arctic M. I. Belov, in a recent issue of the *Alaska Review*. This is an item of Alaskan history which requires attention by North American scholars, if only to be laid to rest. However, it would appear that no one has ever investigated further the village site which gave rise to the story.

Berg's valuable works on Bering and Chirikov, A. V. Efimov's works on early Russian explorations of North America and M. I. Belov's works on eastern Siberian explorations are all based on archival sources. The *Atlas of Geographic Discoveries in Siberia and in Northwestern America in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, which appeared in 1964, contains many highly interesting old maps not previously published.

In addition, new finds are still being made. In the 1930's, about 15,000 documents were found in a barn at Vologda, U.S.S.R. These documents had belonged to Buldakov, G. I. Shelikhov's son-in-law and a director of the Russian American Company. None have ever been published and although two Soviet scholars I talked to last year dismissed them as being "of little value," containing a great deal of petty detail about business and family matters, one could expect that a careful sifting of this mass of material could reveal useful facts.

A similar find was made at Tot'ma, where the personal papers of Ivan Kuskov, assistant of Baranov, one time manager of Fort Ross in California, with a total of thirty years of service in North America, came to light. One may conclude from such examples that a great deal of new material on Alaskan history may yet be found.

After this brief survey of the materials available, one may ask what, specifically, needs to be done with regard to the Russian period of Alaskan history? The answer is — practically everything. The primary need is to develop early Alaskan history to the degree achieved long since by historians of other parts of this continent. It is a task requiring painstaking effort and attention to detail. Bancroft and later writers have given us the broad outlines of the story, and in general this story is probably largely correct. However, this information is at best second-hand. We miss out on details concerning many things, from which may arise new insights, and new problems.

More research should be directed toward development of biographies of personages of Russian America. Rezanov and Baranov have been given separate but not definitive treatment. Shelikhov has yet to have a book devoted to him. Lebedev-Lastochkin, his rival, who established the first posts on the mainland, would be worth an article at least. Veniaminov and his extensive writings merit much more attention.

All too little is known about the chief managers of Russian America after Baranov, although they ruled Alaska for forty years, until the transfer, and many rose to high rank in the Imperial navy and administration after returning to Russia. Ianovskii, who married Baranov's daughter and later took monastic vows, left an account of his voyage to America and his stay at Sitka which should be most revealing if one could find it — it was put out in Russia in a very limited edition of 50 copies.

must be known if we are to understand the present. In crass terms alone — and these must sometimes be cited — history has been involved to an important degree in the year-long round of centennial observances, and is of perennial worth in attracting national attention and in captivating tourists. The study of early Alaskan history can help to foster regional pride, and to put the Alaskan story before the world. Through history, we give the life of any region depth, a third dimension. Life then becomes not just tonight's TV program or tomorrow's clambake, but is enriched by the revival of past decades.

Assuming, then, the study of Russian America to be worthwhile, what equipment have we at hand with which to pursue it? There has accumulated, first of all, a sizeable amount of material in the English language, with which anyone may begin and, for those a little better situated linguistically, some material in French and German. One of the earliest works on the Russian effort in Alaska was that of a young British clergyman, William Coxe, who toured in Russia and in 1780 published his *Account of the Russian Discoveries between Asia and America*. In it he describes the movement along the Aleutians which occurred after Bering, with extracts from the writings of the naturalist Steller, reports of some of the Russian skippers, and in later editions an extract of Shelikhov's description of the first permanent post on Kodiak. Coxe is sometimes inaccurate, but his book is still valuable, presenting the first unified account of the Russian endeavor in the North Pacific, including its main economic motive force, the Russo-Chinese trade at Kiakhta.

After Coxe's work came those of various explorers sent to investigate the Russian efforts. Thus, the accounts of Cook, Vancouver, Portlock, Broughton, Meares, Dixon, and La Perouse. Still more was conveyed by the translation of G. I. Shelikhov's book into English (1795), and by translation of the work of Martin Sauer, who was with the Billings expedition of 1784-1794. More came with translation of works by leaders and participants in Russian round-the-world expeditions — Lisianskii, Kotzebue, Golovnin, and Langsdorf. Another body of material is found in accounts of trading voyages to the Northwest Coast, by James Colnett, Amasa Delano, Richard Cleveland, and Peter Corney, to mention only a few.

From the 1820's until 1867 relatively little material was published on Russian America. Sir George Simpson's *Narrative of a Journey Round the World during the years 1841 and 1842* with his impressions of the Russian colonies, the seldom used work of Baron Kittlitz, and a few shorter accounts are all that have appeared until the accounts of Whympere and a few others written at the time of the sale of Alaska.

In 1885, appeared the first major American work on the subject,

Bancroft's *History of Alaska*. Systematic, well supported by research in printed sources and manuscripts, it is still indispensable, in spite of errors and much that is omitted or inadequately covered.

Later, came the works of Frank A. Golder, and subsequently of Clarence Andrews and Hector Chevigny, dealing specifically with the Russian period, and the general Alaskan histories by Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, and others. We also have English translations of Soviet works, such as S. B. Okun's *Russian American Company* (1951) and of A. I. Andreev's collection of documents concerning Shelikhov.

All of these books give the historian interested in Russian America a good start. They contain a wealth of facts; and there is still much to be found in them.

Such materials only open the way, however, to the essential and much greater store of works in the Russian language. There are many works on the Siberian origins of the thrust of Russian enterprise to Alaska. V. N. Berkh, and K. E. von Baer in the 19th century and L. S. Berg and other writers in the 20th century tell us much of the Bering expeditions and of the exploration of the Aleutians. K. T. Khlebnikov, writing in the 1830's, did valuable service with his biography of Baranov, his shorter articles on Shelikhov and other figures, and two lengthy descriptions of the Russian American Company and its history. None of these have been translated into English.

One of the most valuable Russian works, however, is Tikhmenev's *Historical Survey of the Formation of the Russian American Company* (St. Petersburg, 1867-1868, 2 vols). This massive account, written in an effort to justify Russian-American Company rule in Alaska, is not only a detailed history but presents many documents, including long letters and reports by Shelikhov, Baranov and Rezanov, which give fascinating glimpses of the personalities of these men.

A great deal of other material may be found in Russian periodicals. The *Morskoi Sbornik* (Naval miscellany), published from the 1840's to 1917, includes many articles regarding Russian America and the Russian America and the Russian round-the-world voyages. There are, however, only two sets of this journal in the United States — one at the Library of Congress and the other at Harvard. The *Zapiski* (notes) of the Russian Hydrographical Department, another valuable source, appears to exist nowhere but in the U.S.S.R. There are a great many other articles in short-lived Russian periodicals of the 19th century, often very hard to find.

The main problem of working with this material, whether in Russian, as well as English or other languages, is rarity. No one library, anywhere, has even a sizeable fraction of the total material on Russian

America. There are bibliographies (some of which are themselves rare), but even after he knows what he is looking for the researcher must lose valuable time in getting to where the material may be found. Inter-library loan is slow and cumbersome, microfilming and xeroxing demand special funds, and most old newspaper and periodical files can only be used in the libraries where they are located. The researcher on Russian America must therefore plan his work around somehow getting to Cambridge, New Haven, New York, Washington, Berkeley, Seattle, Vancouver, Helsinki, or Moscow and Leningrad if he is to master his subject.

Manuscript sources, essential to scholarship in this field, are of course mostly in Russian. We are fortunate in having a large portion of the Russian-American Company *Journals of Correspondence* kept by the Company at Sitka, containing copies or digests of incoming and outgoing correspondence from 1817 to 1867. Unfortunately, the materials before 1817 are missing, probably taken to St. Peterburg when Baranov departed Sitka, and finally destroyed, with most of the rest of the Company files, a few years after the sale of Alaska. The materials from 1817 to 1867 were turned over to the U. S. authorities at the time of the sale, retained by the State Department for many years, and eventually placed in the National Archives. Now anyone can get the entire set on 77 rolls of microfilm for about \$325. The rub, of course, is in reading this material, and in finding one's way through it. A calendar of the documents has been started at the University of California at Los Angeles, but has proceeded slowly because of lack of funds and personnel. A program for selecting, translating and publishing documents of particular interest is badly needed.

There is also a collection of documents from the Russian archives of which Frank Golder obtained photostats, now at the University of Washington, and never published. There is also the 15-volume typescript, *Alaska History Documents*, at the University of Alaska and in the Library of Congress.

Other manuscript materials connected with Alaskan History may yet be found in the United States or in Europe. Some manuscripts left by Russian-American Company personnel who originated in Finland when it was under Russian rule, are now in the archives there or in the hands of their descendants.

However, the greater part of manuscript materials on Russian America, as one would expect, is to be found in the U.S.S.R. Frank Golder's *Guide to Materials for American History in Russian Archives* (Washington, D.C. 1917, 1937) indicates some of this material, and there is undoubtedly much more. S. B. Okun's *The Russian American Company*, A. I. Andreev's collection of documents concerning G. I. Shelikhov, L. S.

The formation of the Russian American Company was the work of Grigorii Ivanovich Shelekhov who had during the reign of Catherine acquired far-reaching interests in the fur trade in the North Pacific. He had finally set about acquiring a monopoly so extensive as to exclude rivals but this Catherine consistently refused as she was a firm believer in free trade. But the accession of her son Paul, gave Shelekhov's ambitions more favorable conditions. Shelekhov died in 1795 but his wife and associates carried on and in 1799 the Russian company took shape and its first charter granted a complete monopoly in Alaskan waters and set forth conditions under which it was to operate, one phase of which regulated relations with the natives.

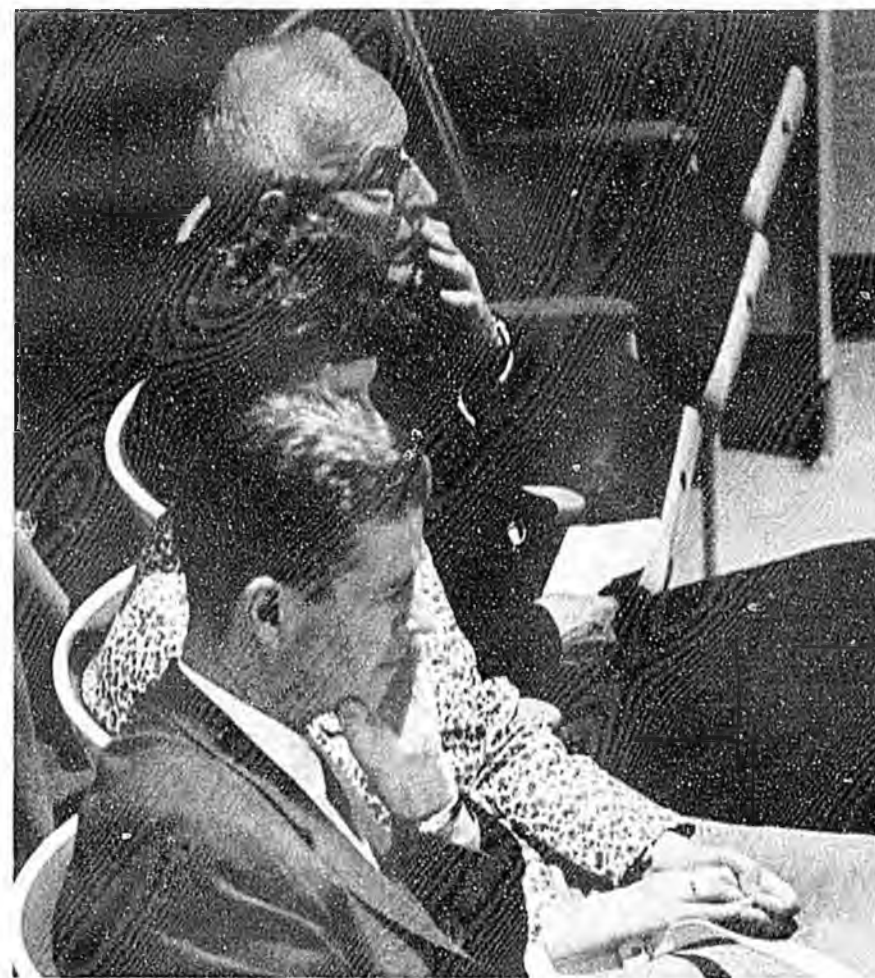
I think I probably should digress a bit here. The relations of the natives to the Russians was not finally cleared up till it was set forth in some detail in the Charter of 1841, which Mr. Pierce will know as he is editing Tikhmenev. However, these relations were peculiar and we might make rash generalizations which would probably be wrong. The Russians undoubtedly did not regard the native population of either Siberia or Alaska as the English-speaking people looked on the native populations with whom they came in contact in America. Some experience of mine in Siberia brought this home to me. I discovered that the Russian population associated on terms of easy familiarity with the non-Russians with no apparent sense of racial superiority. The Maritime Province or Oblast' as it is now called, in which Vladivostok is situated, has a population made up of Russians, Chinese, Mongols, and Koreans in what would seem equal numbers. They all work side by side, as tellers in the banks, as clerks in stores as *izvozchiki* in the queues of cabmen. However, what happened during the conquest of the Aleutian Islands should be borne in mind. The Russians unquestionably used the most savage means to crush the native population and reduce them to a condition bordering on servitude. By the terms of the third charter the practice of the Russian American Company of enrolling Aleuts in their service for taking pelts of the sea otter and other furbearing animals was given official sanction. The result was the Aleuts and not the Russians hunted the sea otter, not only off the coast of Alaska but also that of California. It is probable that the government had no intention of tolerating ill treatment of the natives but it was very difficult to prevent the unruly *promyshlenniki* from using harsh measures.

One other thing must be kept in mind. While the Aleuts and, to some extent, the Eskimos, were in a condition of dependence on the

Reference is to P. Tikhmenev, *Istoricheskoo obozryenie obrazovanlya Rossiisko-Amerkan-skoi Kompanii*, 2 V., St. Petersburg, 1861-1863.

find required materials, it would be of great help to researchers to have one or two centers develop a collection of most of the major works, in the original and on microfilm or microfiche.

In these endeavors, which would advance the study of all periods of Alaskan history, it may be hoped that Alaska itself will play an important role. It is Alaska which should produce more of the specialists in its history, with all of the insight and enthusiasm which birth there or long residence may provide. A scholarly journal, book publishing, and the development of a major historical research facility should logically appear in Alaska. One may hope that the Conference on Alaskan History will have been the first step toward early realization of these goals.



Stuart Tompkins (top), Mrs. Pierce (hidden), and Richard Pierce (bottom)



Richard Carignan (teacher at Kona High School) leads conference members to the coffee urn.



Orlando makes a point! (left to right) Joannette Nichols, Ted Hinckley (facing camera), Morgan Sherwood (back to camera), Orlando Miller

A list of these portfolios is given in Muller's *History of Siberia* and attention is drawn to the fact that only a very few of them have been used. Until Russian scholars themselves get around to using and perhaps publishing them, we will have to wait.

While expeditions undertaken for the considerable profit to be obtained from the furs secured went far towards giving Russia a foothold in America, they did little to clear up the cartography of the northwest coast. It was, therefore, not the Russians but two English navigators, Captain James Cook on his voyage of 1778-79 and Vancouver in the years 1791-1795, who first charted the northwest coast of North America with some degree of accuracy.

To get the background of the expedition of Cook, it is necessary to bring up the subject of the erroneous ideas of cartographers of his time on the geography of the North Pacific.

There had appeared in publications of the early eighteenth century stories of what was alleged to be a strait (or two straits) by which ships had actually been able to pass from the Pacific to the Atlantic with comparative ease. The Hudson's Bay Co. had shown some interest in the stories and various English explorers had sought to locate the Atlantic entrance to such a strait. The Spanish, too, had sent out expeditions on similar quests in the Pacific. To clear up this point, the British Admiralty decided to dispatch the experienced navigator, Captain James Cook, with instructions to endeavour to locate this passage if it existed or to prove its non-existence. A similar expedition was directed to Hudson's Bay in the attempt to locate the eastern entrance. Cook, therefore, examined the northwest coast up to the 60th parallel of latitude and concluding [correctly as it turned out] that there was no such "Strait of Anian," proceeded into Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean, according to instructions. Though he missed the mouths of the Yukon and the Kuskokwim rivers, he did plot accurately the rest of the coast as far north as Bering Strait. His work was carried on some twelve years later by Captain George Vancouver who filled in most of the details and outlined the map of Alaska as far north as the Arctic Ocean, much as it is today.

If the Second Expedition of Bering in 1741 is the first landmark in the history of Alaska, the second is the formation of the Russian American Company in 1799. But before that happened we have the rather unexpected turn of events by which it was not Russia with which Spain had to contend but Great Britain who managed through her clash with Spain to establish a hold on the coast and thus interpose herself between Russia and Spain. This had only an indirect bearing on Alaska.

lapse but was revived in 1761 when Spain entered the Seven Years' War on the side of France. One result was their renewal of diplomatic relations with Russia which had been discontinued in 1730. The results of Bering's expeditions had gradually become known largely through the efforts of foreign members of the Russian Academy of Science, as well as the efforts of some non-Russian scholars [particularly Wm. Coxe and Wm. Robertson the Scottish historian] and some from the continent. There was reason for Spain to fear that Russian activity in the North Pacific would involve a challenge to her claims to an exclusive monopoly in that area. The Spanish ambassadors were, therefore, instructed to exert themselves to find out just what the Russians were up to. Hence some light is thrown on this otherwise obscure period of expansion and exploration by documents in Spanish records both in Seville and in Mexico City. With all these sources we are enabled to piece together an account of the penetration not only of the Aleutian Islands but after the supply of sea-otter there became exhausted, the further prolongation of their voyages, eastward to the Alaska peninsula, the islands lying off shore, including finally the island of Kodiak.

One further possible source which may help us to clear up the uncertainty by which this period is obscured are the portfolios of Gerhard Friedrich Muller. The great plans drawn up for the second Bering expedition included a survey of the natural resources of Siberia, its fauna and flora, as well as a search of the local archives of Siberia. This work was undertaken by two German members of the Academy of Science. These were Johann Georg Gmelin and Gerhard Friedrich Muller, the former to report on the natural resources, the latter on documentary material to throw light on the country's history. These men travelled together for some years. It was then that Muller was able to tap the priceless stores of the local archives many of whose documents were transcribed by him and sent back to St. Petersburg. Since most of these collections have disappeared, many of them destroyed by fire, the value of these efforts is almost beyond description. It was thus that Muller discovered records of a voyage made by a Cossack named Dezhnev who claimed to have passed around Eastern Cape, from the Arctic Ocean to Bering Strait and Bering Sea. This account of the alleged voyage of Dezhnev is not universally accepted. It was not accepted, for instance, by Professor Frank Golder. Nonetheless it indicates that there exists a considerable body of literature on the activities of the *promyshlenniki* and the Cossacks in this early period. While much of the material deals only with Siberia, some of it, we know, has reference to voyages made by fur-hunters eastward to the Aleutian Islands and the coast of America.

## ANOTHER VIEW OF RUSSIAN AMERICA

A COMMENT

STUART RAMSAY TOMPKINS

Mr. Pierce has covered the ground of Alaskan historiography very thoroughly and there is little to criticize, but my approach to the subject is somewhat different, as is inevitable, and perhaps all to the good. I tend to regard Russian expansion across the Pacific, at first, as an extension over northern Asia. A new factor, however, was interjected by Peter when (urged on by the French Academy of Sciences and Leibniz, who had been taken into the Russian service) he agreed to undertake explorations to find out whether Asia and America were joined.

But it was the lure of the pelts of the sea-otter that drew the hardy fur-hunters or *promyshlenniki* out into these uncharted seas. They had pushed across Siberia in pursuit of sable, ermine, marten and the otter but now they heard of the fabulous prices paid by the Chinese at the ports of entry recently opened on the Russian frontier, and though they were land-lubbers, unskilled in navigation and quite unlettered, they used the vessels left behind by the Bering expeditions, and when these were wrecked, built their own crude homemade craft which they piloted by trial and error, steering by the sun and the stars across the stormy waters of the Pacific in pursuit of the pot of gold. A few became rich; most of them either perished at sea or wore themselves out without attaining the dreamed-of riches.

The Bering expeditions were carefully recorded and full reports were deposited in the Russian archives. Most of the material on these has been translated into English by Golder and others. But it must be borne in mind that these maritime voyages were but one part of the vast scheme foreshadowed by Peter and undertaken and carried out by Bering, *viz.*, the charting of the whole northern coast of Siberia, as well as a sur-

Dr. Stuart Ramsay Tompkins is professor of history, emeritus, at the University of Oklahoma. Canadian born, he now resides at Victoria, British Columbia.



STUART RAMSAY TOMPKINS, born in Lyn, Ontario in 1886, received his doctorate from the University of Chicago, and is now emeritus professor of Russian history for the University of Oklahoma, where he taught for many years. He is the author of *Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough* (1940). His other books include, *The Russian Mind: From Peter the Great Through the Enlightenment* (1953), and *Russia Through The Ages* (1940). He has written many articles for learned journals, including his long and thorough "After Bering: Mapping the North Pacific," which appeared in the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly* in 1955. He now resides in Victoria, British Columbia, where he continues to write.

vey of Siberia's natural resources and of what records there were in existence of the history of Russia's expansion into these vast solitudes. It is only recently that the Russian government has got around to publishing this material which is now available but of course, has not been translated into English.

This may be of slight interest to Alaskans but I think it should be mentioned because it draws attention to the supreme greatness of Bering. The voyage across the Pacific from the eastern coast of Siberia in which he made a landfall on the American coast was but a small part of what Bering had to carry out. He had already before this spent nearly four years in arranging the voyages down the various Siberian rivers and along the Arctic coast with a view of mapping with some degree of accuracy the more obscure regions. Bering died a miserable and tragic death on a remote Island and I think that his outstanding achievement prior to his American voyage ought to have attention drawn to it, since it is a material proof of his greatness.

Records of Russian activity in these regions for the half-century after Bering are few and far between and what there are give but a meagre picture of what was going on. Yet ships sailed almost every year bound for the remote Aleutian Islands where the sea-otter was to be found in great numbers. Their crude ships piloted by unskillful hands, often came to grief but a few returned with fabulous catches of fur which was sufficient to urge others to emulate their daring. But many, perhaps most of these voyages were either unrecorded or the reports on them were written by unlettered landsmen with no knowledge of navigation or of cartography so that they could not locate accurately where they had been or the distance they had traversed. Not till 1768 was the task undertaken by Catherine to clear up the uncertainty and vagueness of the knowledge of these regions. An expedition under Krenitsyn and Levashev in that year dispatched to the Aleutian Islands, actually pinpointed the exact location of the Fox Islands (as the eastern Aleutians were known). The reports of these voyages have not been recovered but information on their discoveries was soon public property. But the effective occupation of these remote regions was the work of the fur-hunters. There are two sources of information of this phase of Russian activity; the work of Bishop Innokentii on the Aleutian Islands gives us some insight into the means by which the Aleuts were subdued. The other source curiously enough is the reports of Spanish Ambassadors sent back from St. Petersburg from time to time.

The Spanish Bourbon monarch had entered into the so-called "Family Compact" with the France of Louis XIV, providing for reciprocal support of their respective foreign policies. This had been allowed to

One of the other important gaps to be filled in, I would think, is the relations of the Russian American Co. with the Hudson's Bay Co. particularly after the agreement of 1839 by which the *lisiere* or pan-handle of Alaska was leased to the Hudson's Bay Co. The recently published history of that company by E. E. Rich hardly touches on this phase of the company's history. While the task of providing a calendar of each volume is still not complete, it is a problem of some difficulty to locate material for which one is searching. Still it can be done. I myself was fortunately able to locate all the documents dealing with the incident at the mouth of the Stikine when Ogden was turned back and prevented from ascending the river.

A postscript might be added at this point with regard to the foothold Russia had established on the California coast at Fort Ross and the neighbouring ranchos. This post which had been occupied in 1812 was effectually cut off from her northern possessions when she signed the treaties of 1824-1825 with the United States and Britain which rendered it little more than an outpost. One attempt only was made to secure recognition of Russian sovereignty — that by Governor Wrangell in 1836. Henceforth its isolation was all but complete and the treaty of 1839 with the Hudson's Bay Company was an admission that Russia had written off its California holdings and, in 1841, they were sold to Sutter.

It will be seen from the above examples that there is still much to be learned of the period of Russian occupation to occupy the attention of future historians. The discovery and utilization of fresh materials will, it is to be hoped, enable them to clear up many of the points that the absence of records has, thus far, left wrapped in obscurity.

Russian American Company, that was not the case with the Indian tribes who fiercely maintained their independence. The most truculent of these — the Tlingit, or the Kolosh as the Russians called them — had captured and destroyed the Russian post at Sitka in 1800. Their relations with the Russians appear to have remained little better than an armed truce after Sitka was recaptured in 1804. On the sale of Alaska to the United States, it was provided in the treaty of cession that the whole native population — Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians, should retain the same rights as they had enjoyed under the Russians.

This provision had an interesting aftermath of which I learned one summer when I was working in the Library of Congress. Some dispute having arisen between the Tlingit and their white neighbors, the former had invoked the above provision and the delegate from Alaska was requested to refer the matter to the Justice Department. As a result the Law Department of the Library was instructed to search the documents — in this case the charter of 1841 — to ascertain exactly what the status of the Tlingits had been under Russian occupation.

The end result of the long series of negotiations and intrigue are of course embodied in the *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov* (Complete Collection of Laws). The work of Shelekhov in the course of which he established an advanced base on the island of Kodiak is contained in his own account, one of the rarest and most prized bits of Alaskan literature. The various events and negotiations that finally led up to the establishment of Shelekhov's monopoly are to be found in a mass of photostatic material brought back by Frank Golder and now in the library of the University of Washington in Seattle. I have used two volumes only of this and it is quite probable that much information on Russian activity in the late eighteenth century is to be found in these. Apparently but slight use has been made of this material.

The arrival of Baranov in 1791 at the Three Saints' post in Kodiak is important in the history of Alaska. At first he was merely the factor of a fur-trading post, trading with the natives and struggling to hold his own against rival companies. It was not till the formation of the Russian American Company in 1799 under the Emperor Paul that Baranov became something more than a mere fur-trader and assumed a political role with wide responsibilities. One of his first acts was to establish a new post in the Alexander Archipelago on or near the site of modern Sitka and here he reigned supreme for almost twenty years.

There is ample material on Baranov's activity from the non-Russian trading ships that put into Sitka and with whom Baranov dealt. A life of Baranov was written by Khyebnikov, containing a goodly amount

of material. There is also some manuscript material on Baranov at the University of California at Berkeley in the Bancroft Library. However the main source in which one would expect to find records of his activity during the early years of the Russian American Company would be the records of the company itself. But for some unaccountable reason the records of the company's headquarters in St. Petersburg have disappeared. Mr. Pierce speaks of their having been destroyed which may be the case. However, when I was in Moscow there was wide speculation as to the fate that had overtaken them. The story then was that when the capital was transferred from St. Petersburg to Moscow in 1918 there had been great confusion. Many boxes were left on the freight platforms of the railway awaiting transport, exposed to the weather, to depredations by the population. In the panic consequent on the threat of the German advance on St. Petersburg, some were put on trains and shipped east to Vologda or some other place and were eventually lost.

There remain the Archives of the Sitka station which (according to the Purchase Treaty) were turned over to the United States and deposited with the Department of State. Within fairly recent times they found their way into the National Archives and the latter institution has had them reproduced on microfilm. In that form they are available to any library wishing to purchase them. Unfortunately the records for the years 1801 to 1817 are extremely scanty, leading to the conjecture that when Baranov left Sitka in 1818 he took the records with him; since he died and was buried at sea, there was no one to look after the documents when the ship arrived at St. Petersburg and they too disappeared. Otherwise the records of the Sitka post down to 1867 are complete together with the logs of some of the company ships.

We are not entirely dependent on the Russian archives for all that happened during the regime of the Russian American Company. In 1812 the Russian government issued an *ukaz* designed to exclude all non-Russians from participating in the exploitation of the fur-trade in Alaskan waters, a blow, if not rebutted, to the claims of Britain and the United States. This made it imperative that the disagreement between Russia and the other interested powers be settled by diplomacy. The result was the treaties of 1824-1825 between Britain and the United States on the one hand, and Russia on the other. The records of these negotiations were deposited in the archives of both countries and brought out and published at the time of the Bering Sea controversy in 1892 and the Alaska Boundary Tribunal in 1903. These documents are readily available in printed form.

The other occasion for which we can draw on non-Russian sources was the crisis that occurred in 1834 when the representative of the Hud-

Reaching the mouth of the Koyukuk, a river flowing into the Yukon from the north, he made his way up that tributary for a considerable distance. On returning to the main river itself, he passed over a portage to the Kuskokwim, at a point where that river approached within a short distance of the Yukon. He managed in his ascent of the Kuskokwim to trace its course, to a point roughly comparable to those reached in traversing the other rivers. Russian posts had already been established at Russian Mission (Ikognute) and Nulato. One Russian, Lukin, was rumoured to have reached the Yukon Flats and penetrated as far as Fort Yukon, the post built at the junction of the Yukon and the Porcupine rivers by the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1817. But the company apparently made no attempt to dispute the foothold which the British company had secured in the Upper Yukon.

We are left with no definite record of later penetration of the valley of the Kuskokwim and the southern interior of Alaska. However, it is known that a beginning had been made by the Lebedev-Lastochkin company one of Shelekov's early competitors, without our knowing much about what the Russian American Co. did in its later years. Traces of Russian activity in these regions were found in the Copper River country by Klondike stampedes at the end of the century, but we still await fresh light on this obscure phase of Russian penetration. After the discovery of gold in California, the Russian American Co. (which now had been turned into what was really a department of the government) turned its attention to the search for natural resources and some traces of gold were found. However it was on Birch Creek that the first signs of the placer gold that later led to the great gold rushes, were found by an employee of the Hudson's Bay Co. at Fort Yukon. The Russians, did, however, tap the coal seams and marketed some shipments of coal in San Francisco. Ice, too, apparently from the glaciers, was shipped to that port and for some years found a ready market.

A further possible source of material on the Russian period which has been recently tapped, must not be overlooked. Some years ago the Library of Congress sent a man north to visit the various parishes of the Orthodox Church (many of them, of course now defunct) with a view to examining and, if possible, securing for the Library their early records. After surmounting great difficulties in visiting out-of-the-way places in the Aleutian islands, he returned with an almost incredible amount of material. While the work of sorting and providing some sort of an index of this vast accumulation is still under way, it is safe to say that something can be gleaned that will throw some light on the early period of Alaska history and of the life of the people, both Russian and Aleuts under Russian occupation.

in the archives of the Academy of Sciences, though primarily concerned with Siberia may yield material on the voyages of fur-hunters who ventured into Alaskan waters. Such records can be further supplemented by accounts of voyages of English, American and Spanish mariners at the turn of the century to give us rather full information on these international rivalries. But perhaps a more serious gap in our knowledge concerns Russian penetration of the mainland. Shelekov had at first established a post in Yakutat Bay, for farming, a location found to be quite unsuitable and abandoned. But, in any event, the interest of the Russian American Co. was primarily in the fur trade and, of course, the most valuable fur consisted of the pelts of the sea otter. Till the exhaustion of these there was little to tempt them to look further for a profitable fur-trade. But after Baranov's time, they began to look more and more to the mainland for other resources. It will be recalled that Captain Cook missed the mouths of the Yukon and the Kuskokwim with the result that this part of the coast remained unmapped for half a century. While Glazunov and others entered and explored the Yukon delta and the lower river, it was not accurately mapped till this was done by two Russian sea-captains, Vasiliev and Kromchenko. Details were filled in by other naval personnel. The north coast of Alaska was, of course, explored and charted by Parry a British sea-captain and other officers of the Russian-American Company.

I might point out at this stage that after the death of Baranov, the Company became practically a department of the administration. The government decided to install naval personnel as governors to take over the company and manage it. The result was that the commercial operations of the Company ceased to be a matter of prime concern. Towards the end the state had to foot a deficit of some \$200,000 a year if the company was to be kept on its feet.

But the first actual penetration of the valley of the Yukon was the work of Lieutenant L. A. Zagoskin who in the years 1842-1844 passed over from Unalakleet on the coast to the Yukon river above the delta and began the ascent of the river in *baidars*. This was a type of craft used on the Siberian coast but it was found to be quite unsuitable for navigating a river. (If you have travelled the Yukon in a small boat you will realize that any kind of craft with a high freeboard is quite unmanageable on a large river where you have to cope with both wind and current.) However, Zagoskin managed to make his way up the river to somewhere below the mouth of the Tanana, where he turned back. He gives, of course the astronomical readings which indicate that when he decided to turn back, progress had been slow and painful.

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These negotiations were recorded in documents by Otto Klotz on a visit to London at the turn of the century and by him published in a book a copy of which is to be found in the Canadian Archives and apparently nowhere else (at any rate, the Library of Congress did not, on my enquiry, have a copy of it). The title, I believe "Correspondence of the Foreign Office with the Hudson's Bay Company." The lease of the panhandle or *lisiere* was renewed several times up to the sale of Alaska to the United States.

Two things might strike one as odd about these proceedings. Ogden had been in the old roistering days of the Nor'-westers [North West Company] one of the most implacable foes of their London rival. At points where both companies maintained posts, he had terrorized the Hudson's Bay factors and their servants so effectively that when the two companies amalgamated, the Hudson's Bay Company had refused for some years to employ him. Once he had entered his old rival's employ, however, he had used his rare gifts to advance their interests and no difficulty seemed to discourage him. But the Hudson's Bay Co. had no authority over the coastal Indians as they had over those of the interior; moreover, the coastal Indians jealously guarded their trade with the tribes of the interior, which Shakes informed Ogden they proposed to maintain at all costs. Ogden like all in the fur trade had a healthy respect for the Tsimshian Indians and their chief and Ogden was not prepared to try conclusions with them.

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made them appear. "Empire," William Seward had observed, "moves far more rapidly in modern than it did in ancient times." <sup>19</sup> Correct, but the failure of the Sitka boom demonstrated how reluctant Americans were to immigrate to noncontiguous regions.

If Billy Yank was guilty of anything it was hoopala. The fantastic acceleration of every phase of American life during the Gilded Age, whether it was in communications, city construction or the volume of immigration, invested the land's articulate forces with a windy confidence that a more pessimistic age can hardly accept. Ofttimes the bombast reached rank absurdity. The Alaska promoter Miner Bruce, possibly with Anchorage's climate in mind, featured as the frontispiece picture for his book on Alaska, a Polynesian girl. The fact that she is hugging a palm tree did not dissuade him, or was it the publisher, from labeling the photograph "An Alaskan Indian Girl." <sup>20</sup>

Nothing was so unpopular as someone who spoke dour reality. Maybe this helps explain why Sheldon Jackson did not receive the contemporary recognition which he so well deserved. In any case, what was popular was boosterism. When the well-known Southwesterner John P. Clum moved to Alaska he wisely identified his new land with notorious Tombstone, Arizona. Clum vaunted the future prospects of the Skagway "metropolis." Other Alaskans, also no doubt largely cheechakos, proposed that the entire Yukon Valley be designed into a new territory named Lincoln. This mid-90's extravaganza was sure to succeed for:

The influx of population into these gold fields is so great that the residents of the interior of the present Alaska, and all who have investments there, are unanimous in their demands for such recognition from the Governr.ent . . . There are mines of gold, copper, coal, iron, silver and lead within the proposed Territory of Lincoln and to these must be added the recently rich oil fields. Organization will immediately follow the territorial creation, and it is likely 'the delegate from Lincoln' will soon be recognized in Congress. <sup>21</sup>

The golden years of America's small town were passing, but not to acclaim the virtues and thrilling prospects of one's hometown was shameful. *The Alaskan* bragged that Sitka was "The most charming town in Alaska for a residence . . . It also has the best climate, the prettiest residences and churches, the smallest number of saloons and less vice and crime than any other place in the territory." *The Juneau Mining Record* replied, "And we might add less population." To which

## AMERICAN ALASKA

End the song, end the song,  
 For now the flood goes west, the rushing tide,  
 The rushing flood of men,  
 Hundred on hundred, crowding the narrow ships . . .

Exile, rebel, men against fortune, all  
 Who are driven forth, who seek new life and new hope  
 . . . they are coming now  
 To the exile's country, the land beyond the star . . .

A rolling, resistless wave of seeking men,  
 Settling and planting, creeping along the coast,  
 Pushing up river-valleys to the new ground . . .

There was a wind through the nations, and it blew.  
 Strong, resistless, the wind of the western star,  
 The wind from the coasts of hope, from the barely-known,  
 And, under its blowing, Plymouth and Jamestown sink  
 To the small, old towns, the towns of the oldest graves,  
 Notable, remembered, but not the same . . .

And the west wind blew in the faces of Dickon's sons  
 And they looked to the West and searched it with their eyes,  
 And there was the endless forest and the sharp star.

—Stephen Vincent Benet  
*Western Star*

ever indigenes' rights stood in the way of the invader, the former usually gave way. Attempts by government agencies to protect them proved an impossible task. As David Starr Jordan bemoaned, "the lawlessness of the few forces lawlessness on all."<sup>12</sup> Governor A. P. Swineford bragged how he meted out justice by cutting a shaman's hair, and when the old man proved obstinate, "I sent for a barber and had his head shaved as smooth as a billard ball. We got red paint after that and painted him a nice wig."<sup>13</sup> It is too easy to write off Swineford as a confirmed racist, which he was, for the Governor only exaggerated his countrymen's arrogance. Referring to some 1894 Indian frictions in Alaska, a New York newspaper lamented, "The great branch of the white race is distinctively popular in its internal governmental development, but it is as distinctively imperialistic in its attitude toward all other races."<sup>14</sup>

Regrettably it was so. When Juneau's Treadwell firm imported Chinese labor, local white miners matched the conduct of their peers at Rock Springs, Denver, and too many other Western centers. The orientals were forcefully evicted. By the end of the century white Alaskans had even begun to react to the threatened "Yellow Peril." How seriously concerned the Klondike miners really were at the press accounts of possible piracy by high-binders from "the Chinese slums of San Francisco" is problematical.<sup>15</sup> However, there was no doubt that Americans in and "outside" Alaska harbored imperialistic notions about Canada. In 1871 when Her Majesty's government annexed the Crown Colony of British Columbia, it had proved something of a shock; thereafter the dream of a full *anschluss* with our northern neighbor faded.<sup>16</sup> During the 1890's as Americans caught the disease "imperialitus," Alaskans also succumbed to the vanity of owning other people. The prominent Sitkan John G. Brady was more bearish than most. "Some of us in Alaska," he declared in 1896, "who have been willing to see Cuba and Canada and the Sandwich Islands brought under the American flag are beginning to doubt the ability or genius of our government to manage or control detached portions of territory."<sup>17</sup>

Brady's reservations were the voice of experience. But the Far North frontier, like the Far West, was rarely circumspect, particularly when it came to expressions of nationalistic fervor. Certainly if excessive nationalism is a mainspring of imperialism, then Alaska's press was imperialistic. At the conclusion of the "Splendid Little War," *The Alaskan* commented on the "wily and treacherous" Filipinos and the "brave and energetic" Americans while it gloated over the resultant commercial triumphs. "When it comes to business," boasted *The Alaskan*, "Uncle Sam beats them all, just as he can lick them all in the fighting line."<sup>18</sup> Actually Americans were not so sinister as their jingoism sometimes

later even the Army had departed. Speculators' dreams of matching Colorado or California must wait. After all, wrote the perspicacious editor Samuel Bowles in 1869, Alaska "alarms the love of comfort."<sup>5</sup> Its "promises of pleasure or profit are not yet sure enough to overcome the hardships of travel . . ." Unlike the timely Louisiana Purchase and the Mexican Cession, Alaska had entered the national family before her treasures were either well understood or eagerly desired.<sup>6</sup>

For all of Alaska's snail-like population growth, its late 19th century Yankee settlements reflected much of the aggressiveness and sojourner mentality of the traditional trapper-miner West. The scalped, deforested terrain which surrounded Juneau's famous Treadwell Mining organization duplicated the bleak, exploited appearance of Virginia City and Helena. Not long after the prospector had penetrated the Yukon Valley, according to Mrs. Frederick Schwatka, the supply of fresh game fell off.<sup>7</sup> Emil Teichman had bemoaned the American proclivity for carrying guns at early Sitka. Twenty years later a Kuskokwim missionary noted, "The natives say 'nearly all the white men we see are rough and carry revolvers as though we were wild animals to be afraid of. Why don't you first Christianize those of your own kind, and then their example would help us to do right!'"<sup>8</sup>

Trappers and gold-seekers did frequently exhibit acts of deep humanity and employed such reasonable institutions as the miners' law, however, only a few of this large segment of the District population were seriously interested in putting down permanent socio-economic roots. Sometimes even pioneer Alaska's more stable, small-town business element was in a state of suspended flight. The *Oregonian* told how Juneau's respected merchant, Mr. R. Goldstein, after twenty-four years of freedom had finally been ferreted out by Mrs. Goldstein and their [sic?] six children.<sup>9</sup> And while it is probably true that far more Klondikers equipped themselves with Bibles than they ever did six-guns, Alaska's villains and vigilantes presented essentially the same old Western melodrama, if in a different theater. Instead of robbing gold from the local stage, the steamer *Roanoke* was hit.<sup>10</sup> Likewise when an angered group of Yukon vigilantes wanted to hunt down an Indian murderer, instead of commandeering the best horseflesh, they seized the local river steamer. Certainly Juneau's tourists got an eyeful! Prospector D. A. Murphy recalled how a properly convicted Indian was strung up as "the monthly steamer came in," and later as the *Idaho* pulled away from the wharf, another native was hanged.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, the attitude of the Yankee Alaskan toward the non-white was precisely what it was to the south. The familiar designation of "buck," "squaw" and "papoose" were applied to Alaska's natives. Where-

## REFLECTIONS AND REFRACTIONS: ALASKA AND GILDED AGE AMERICA

TED C. HINCKLEY

You, the citizens of Sitka, are the pioneers, the advanced guard of the population of Alaska, and you naturally ask, when, from whence, and how soon, reinforcements shall come; and what are the signs and guarantees of their coming? The guarantees and signs of their coming to Alaska are found in the resources of the Territory, and in the condition of society in the other parts of the world.<sup>1</sup>

The July 30, 1869 address of Secretary William Seward expressed the platitudes expected of a Washington, D.C. official visiting "out West." Indeed, some members of his Sitka audience may have recalled hearing similar sentiments expressed on earlier frontiers. The neophyte territory, Seward counselled, would have to wait until its resources were appreciated by the older settled portions of the nation. Yet the boldly imaginative expansionist had gone much further. "The guarantees [of Alaska's future]," he declared, also depended "on the condition of society in other parts of the world." Alaska was not merely another western accretion but a Great Land, one so huge, so unorthodox that unlike its Far West sister territories, its evolution to statehood would ultimately, and in no small measure, be determined by global factors.

Those of you who recall how World War II and its aftermath, the Cold War, transformed parts of Alaska are keenly conscious of the visionary validity in Seward's 1869 remarks. For decades few of his countrymen, either in or out of Alaska, appreciated how really unique was the Far North purchase. Historian Walter LaFeber has recently reminded us that by Alaska's annexation America's non-contiguous, "New empire

Dr. Ted C. Hinckley is professor of history at San Jose State College.



TED C. HINCKLEY, Professor of History, San Jose State College, specialist in the early American period of Alaskan history, has excelled in television and classroom teaching as well as writing. He has directed conferences and NDEA institutes on the Westward Movement and American involvement in the Pacific Basin. Recently he co-directed an overseas history institute at Stuttgart, Germany. The University of Alaska Press is publishing his *Alaskan Frontier, 1867-1897* as part of its Centennial Monograph Series. Numerous articles on Alaska and the West by Professor Hinckley have appeared in such journals as *The American West*, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, *California Historical Quarterly*, *Pacific Historical Review*, *Journal of the West*, and the *Journal of American History*.

had started to form." <sup>2</sup> The major implications of Alaska's singular role can be seen by tracing its relationship with the United States from 1867 to 1900. First let us examine these decades as a reflection of the traditional westward movement. Once that has been done, Alaska's distinctive late 19th century historical refractions will prove more comprehensible.

In 1867-68 General Jefferson C. Davis' command, accompanied by a motley group of frontier adventurers, descended upon Sitka. The event approximates episodes at a dozen Western locales from Deadwood to Tulsa. The soldiers quickly created a military cantonment, while the civilian boomers rushed about driving proprietary stakes into the ground, erecting tap rooms and billard halls. With all the bawdy overtones, the newcomers were also confident civilizers. An *Alta California* correspondent who had journeyed north with them reported on an evening shipboard sing-a-long.

[The] manly chorus . . . smote the silence with "The Yankees are Coming, harrah! harrah!" That song was a prophecy and a promise. It was a prelude to the music that shall fill those wastes sublime; the music of the busy world, the hum of the wheel, the scream of the whistle, the clangor of hammers, the ring of the anvil, and the thousand voices of labor. No more shall those quiet waters flow unfettered to the sea; their rising and falling tides shall bear up the thousand keels of commerce and see the going forth of the untiring Yankee . . . [who shall] crown the triumphs of free labor by planting the mills, the church and the school amidst Arctic snows and establishing liberty and law upon lands that stretch nigh to the shores of Ancient Asia. <sup>3</sup>

It was a heady brew. Albeit, the journalist voiced an optimism that had in fact helped to subdue a continent. Now it was going to "stretch nigh to the shores of Ancient Asia."

By hindsight we can only shake our heads. What folly to sing about Alaska in the singular. When Frederick Jackson Turner wrote that the states were artificial in their relation to the national government and what genuinely counted were the sections, what he called "potential nations," he may have been thinking of Alaska. <sup>4</sup>

With typical Gilded Age intoxication, the 1867-68 pioneers chose to forget that Americans were already preoccupied with Reconstruction, and an incredible industrialization and the filling up of the still unoccupied sod house frontier. For all its Colonel Sellers-like hucksterism, the Sitka nucleus failed. By 1873 the city council was defunct, and four years

- 7 Ecology bids fair to become an entirely independent discipline linking science and the social sciences. Before the Forty-Ninth State is covered with whirling, plastic signs, beer cans, and the other evidence of an advanced society, the opportunities for transitional, ecological studies are exciting to contemplate.
- 8 Extract from Mrs. Edith Kilbuck's Diary, Sheldon Jackson Scrapbook, Vol. 15. Sheldon Jackson Scrapbook Collection, Presbyterian Historical Library, Philadelphia, Pa. Collection hereafter referred to as: J. Scrap.
- 9 The Alaskan (Sitka), April 10, 1886. Robert De Armond in his excellent *The Founding of Juneau* (Juneau, 1967), 72ff, reviews the prospectors' very real capacities for initiating law and order. *The Oregonian*, January 1, 1886.
- 10 *Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle), August 31, 1898.
- 11 Herbert L. Heller, (ed.) *Sourdough Sagas: The Journals, Memoirs, Tales and Recollections of the Earliest Alaskan Gold Miners, 1883-1923* (Cleveland, 1967), 56 and 24-25.
- 12 Henry W. Elliott, *Our Arctic Province: Alaska and the Seal Islands* (New York, 1886), 37; David Starr Jordan, *Imperial Democracy: A Study of the . . . Demands of Imperial Dominion* (New York, 1899), 206; Letter from W. W. Warne to Sheldon Jackson, April 28, 1898, Sheldon Jackson Correspondence Collection, Presbyterian Historical Library, Philadelphia, Pa. This collection hereafter cited as: J. Corr. Robert E. Coontz, *From the Mississippi to the Sea* (Philadelphia, 1930), 165; Jordan, *Imperial Dominion*, 197.
- 13 *The Revlon* (Spokane), June 19, 1894.
- 14 *Morning Advertiser* (New York), June 14, 1894.
- 15 Ted C. Hinckley, "Prospectors, Profits and Prejudice," *The American West*, II (Spring, 1965), 59-65; A. C. Harris, *Alaska and the Klondike Gold Fields, etc.* (Washington, D.C., 1897), 77.
- 16 Richard W. Van Alstyne, *The Rising American Empire* (Chicago, 1965), 119 and 176; Milton Plesur, "Rumblings beneath the Surface: America's Outward Thrust, 1865-1890," *The Gilded Age: A Reappraisal*, ed. by H. Wayne Morgan (Syracuse, 1963), 163.
- 17 John G. Brady "Alaska," *Chautauquan*, XXIII (September, 1896), 737.
- 18 *The Alaskan* (Sitka), November 11, 1898; *Ibid.*, November 18, 1899.
- 19 Ray Ginger, *Age of Excess: The United States from 1877 to 1914* (New York, 1965), Chapters II, III, and IV; light reading but on the right track. Stewart H. Holbrook, *The Golden Age of Quackery* (New York, 1959); LaFaber, *New Empire*, 26.
- 20 Miner W. Bruce, *Alaska: Its History and Resources, Gold Fields, Routes and Scenery* (Seattle, 1895).
- 21 *Post-Intelligencer* (Seattle), April 14, 1898; Harris, *Alaska and the Klondike*, 279-280. Illustrative of how Pacific Slope cities reinforced Alaska boosterism is Jeannette P. Nichols, "Advertising and the Klondike," *Alaska and Its History*, ed. by Morgan B. Sherwood (Seattle, 1967), 343-350.
- 22 All found in *The Alaskan* (Sitka), November 25, 1890.
- 23 *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 4, 1887.
- 24 The Sheldon Jackson Correspondence Collection reveals just how insecure the typical Western Gilded Age Civil Service appointee really was. One man's unemployment qualms are found in the J. Judge Papers, Oregon Historical Society, Portland Oregon. See for example: Josh B. Crowley to J. Judge, May 16 and May 24, 1897. *The Daily Standard* (Portland), October 27, 1882.
- 25 *Alaska Herald* (Sitka), October 10, 1892.
- 26 Earl S. Pomeroy, *The Territories and the United States, 1861-1890: Studies in Colonial Administration* (Philadelphia, 1947). Still the best monograph on Alaska's early political history under the United States, and now fortunately reprinted by Russell & Russell, Inc. as Jeannette P. Nichols, *Alaska: A History of Its Administration, etc.* (Cleveland, 1924).
- 27 For a sampling see: Letter from James Sheakley to Sheldon Jackson, Dec. 10, 1892, Sheldon Jackson Letters, Vol. 3, p. 96, Princeton Theological Seminary, Speer Library. Hereafter this collection cited as PTS. William Kelley to Sheldon Jackson, July 21, 1899, J. Corr., Vol 19, p. 90; Sheldon Jackson to Hon. G. F. Edmunds, Jan. 27, 1886, PTS, *Alaska Schools*, Vol. 2, p. 210; *The Weekly Leader* (Port Townsend), July 27, 1893; *Ibid.*, August 10, 1893.
- 28 Henry W. Clark, *History of Alaska* (New York, 1930), 81.

*The Alaskan* snapped back, "Yes and we should have included . . . less typhoid fever, and other contagious diseases which are prevalent in some of our larger northern cities, . . . caused from foul sewers, poor drinking water and dirty streets and back yards," 22

Almost always local politics generated far more heat than did the national presidential contests. In typical Western fashion, politics was extremely personalized, frequently vituperative, yes, even physically dangerous. After one editor of Sitka's *Alaskan* had been given what the *San Francisco Chronicle* described as a "tremendous thrashing," his replacement suffered the ignominy of being "unmercifully" beaten with a bullwhip by an irate woman.<sup>23</sup> Occasionally ridiculous charges were mushroomed into a serious indictment. In an age when the civil service merry-go-round dumped off many of its passengers every four years, public employees had to be careful. All Lieutenant McLean wanted to do was set up a croquet court, "Where," as the *Daily Standard* pleaded, "instead of devoting his time to whiskey-drinking and gambling he proposed to take a little innocent recreation." But after an unfriendly fellow Sitkan and civil servant got through, McLean was recalled.<sup>24</sup> And whenever one editor took out after another, things really warmed up. Listen to the purple prose which the manager of the *Alaska Herald* laid across the back of his competitor.

With a lecherous instinct born of the lowest infamy, and in disregard of all public propriety and decency, he has pursued men with his vicious, dirty pen, nagging them, misrepresenting them, and grossly libeling them, not for any straw they have ever laid in his way, but merely to gratify an insatiable lust of his base born soul, a mind bereft of every principle of honor, every sense of shame, every attribute of manhood. For three long years now this inhuman ghoulish has been busy at his selfish work feeding upon the character of men, and in one instance at least has so succeeded in terrorizing a government official in high standing . . . as to draw . . . "blood money" from him before he would let go.<sup>25</sup>

Understandably District officials soon developed a thick skin.

No different from the other Western territories, Alaska was from the very beginning granted a great deal of administrative freedom. What Professor Earl Pomeroy has written about the Far West territories applies to their northern District sister. "The general principle was that territorial authorities should be left to work out practical details and make all possible use of local resources."<sup>26</sup> Alaska's frontier

politician confronted more ponderous problems than those found in most territories. They frequently became very peevis and censorious because of what they felt was glaring inconsideration from Washington, D.C. Damning Congressional apathy was a venerable Western habit. But Washington was a long way from Sitka. More immediate scapegoats had to be found. The author has yet to find a significant Alaska public official in the years from 1867 to 1900 who was not at one time damned as a "contemptible blackmailer," a fugitive who "left his wife dying in California," an agnostic who "rail[s] against the sabbath" — the expletives were as infinite as man's imagination in a free society.<sup>27</sup>

The result of all this still lingers: pioneer Alaska was, according to historian Henry W. Clark, placed under a "reign of lawlessness and corruption that we [the Federal Government] encouraged."<sup>28</sup> This is balderdash. Considering her size and the room for lawbreaking to take place, Alaska may have suffered less "lawlessness and corruption" than her western brethren to the south. To be sure, Alaska had dishonest officials. Probably the most sensational figure, at least before the rascality of Judge Arthur H. Noyes at Nome, was Edward J. Dawne.<sup>29</sup> In July of 1885 Dawne was appointed by President Grover Cleveland to the post of United States Judge for the District of Alaska. Portland's *Weekly Standard* confidently reported "He will make a good officer." The *Weekly Argus* was not so sure. A political adversary, aware that Dawne had dipped into preaching, medicine and business, referred to him as "a doctor without a diploma, a preacher without a congregation and a money lender without a cent." Judge Dawne soon remedied the latter deficiency. After bilking gullible citizens from Salem to Sitka of an estimated \$15,000 to \$30,000, he made an abrupt retirement, deserted his wife and vanished.<sup>30</sup>

Dawne, or "Thookeydeeds" as he had been known in Oregon for his fatal public mispronunciation of Thucydides, was in one sense typical of pioneer Alaska. As Dr. Jeannette P. Nichols succinctly reminds us, Alaska was a "political preserve for the payment of small debts owed by big politicians to little ones."<sup>31</sup> However, this may be said about most of the Western territories in the late 19th century. If Alaska's officialdom was not always exemplary, neither was it riven with corruption. These public servants reflected the national situation. Professor Ari Hoogenboom believes that in 1875 even the "civil service reform movement reached its nadir."<sup>32</sup> The usual Western judicial system, in the opinion of historian Pomeroy, "was one of the weakest parts of the territorial institution . . . territorial judges were selected with no more deference to local feeling than territorial governors." Why was it tolerable? "Because it fitted loosely though badly, and because

American public would not enthuse over "peculiar situations," as Governor Sheakley described Alaska.<sup>53</sup> A 1901 Government publication reviewed what had happened when we first acquired the vast Northern territory.

Very many people originally went to Alaska with an eager ambition and strong determination to secure some of the riches . . . discovering great hardships to be endured . . . became disheartened, unhappy, and have spent their time in complaint against people who were more fortunate and against the Government for not providing better for their comfort and protection.<sup>54</sup>

The tepid, late 19th century development of the Great Land foreshadowed America's disinterest in activating the spoils of the Spanish American War. In Alaska, as in the Philippines, it would take the threat of foreign invasion to arouse the interest of the man on the street, and by then almost forty years had passed.

In 1900 Mr. Dooley had longed for "th' good old days befor we became . . . a wurld power." A book published that same year, one which trumpeted American accomplishments in the century just ended, said nothing about Alaska except to note it as a distance marker giving the extent of the remarkable United States.<sup>55</sup> Sixty-seven years later American power extends from Pole to Pole and covers the seven seas.

What is to be the future of the Forty-Ninth State? Of one thing her citizens can be certain: skyrocketing world population and transportation break throughs will mean that Alaska's greatest handicap, her geographic location, will become a diminishing liability. William Seward had dared predict that Asian and European civilizations would be reunited in the Pacific. Is it being too bold to hope that here in Alaska, America and her Pacific neighbors can meet, and in peace, and while reflecting the best of each culture, provide richer, more luminous refracted values to light the way for a better tomorrow?

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- 2 Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion 1860-1898* (New York, 1963), 1.
- 3 *Alta California*, Nov. 15, 1867.
- 4 Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York, 1947), 158.
- 5 Samuel Bowles, *Our New West* (New York, 1869), 499.
- 6 In this conjunction see: Donald Marquand Dozer, "Anti-Expansionism during the Johnson Administration," *Pacific Historical Review*, XII (September, 1943), 255ff.

Dall, writing in *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, raised the question, "Is Alaska a Paying Investment?" His reply was a well-researched yes. <sup>48</sup> By the nineties, and despite her minuscule population, Alaska's mining and fish canning industries were famous. Indeed, Juneau's Treadwell Mine had become a prime tourist attraction. Tourism and other money producers, such as timber and internal trade, had at least been tapped. Alaska business, like much of the West's, had been financed from the "outside", it also reflected the pattern of Gilded Age business consolidation. For example, in 1893, a three million dollar deal fused twenty-three independent canneries and gave birth to the Alaska Packing Association. Writing at the century's end, David Starr Jordan believed that except for mining, four great companies controlled Alaska's commercial interests. <sup>49</sup>

So much for the more obvious reflections and refractions which Alaska inherited. Before concluding, it is necessary to recall two deeper historic shifts which further confused Alaska's role in the Union. Historians have reminded us that late 19th century America was a period that suffered from harsh cultural changes. The agrarian way of life was rudely shouldered aside by an urban, industrial society. As historian Robert H. Wiebe has written, this was an age when

countless citizens in towns and cities across the land sensed that something fundamental was happening to their lives, something they had not willed and did not want, and they responded by striking out at whatever enemies their view of the world allowed them to see. They fought, in other words, to preserve the society that had given their lives meaning. But it had already slipped beyond their grasp. <sup>50</sup>

This is surely germane in Alaska where one governor after another reviewed the benefits of the traditional, small, farm-type community. Unfortunately, Southeastern Alaska, as the San Francisco *Chronicle* reminded its readers, was "as good for agriculture as is the tiled floor of the Palace Hotel." The monopoly power of the Alaska Commercial Company might be disturbing, but big business, with all of its ramifications, was the wave of the future. <sup>51</sup> In time technological might would transform the Great Land, but in 1900, this was only dimly appreciated.

What was seen in 1900 was the New Empire. "Economic expansion and political involvement had become so interlinked by 1900," declares Professor LaFeber, that we could no longer escape "world wide political commitments." <sup>52</sup> But international ties notwithstanding, the general

the prospect of early statehood lay always before westerner and easterner alike." <sup>33</sup>

The District penchant for vile name calling and shouting corruption has magnified the image of an unsavory civil administration. In a vain effort to besmirch the powerful missionary-lobbyist, Sheldon Jackson, two Governors even resorted to trumped up Grand Jury charges. For his part Jackson was not adverse to going directly to the President of the United States with his own inflammatory indictments. <sup>34</sup> The truth is more prosaic. Between 1884 when the first governor was appointed and 1906, Alaska had had five heads who were honest and reasonably industrious. Only one knew nothing about Alaska, three had lived there as prior residents; and two of these, Swineford and Brady, became experts on District affairs. Notwithstanding this record, each of the five governors left office under a cloud. The frontier historian Frederic Paxson doubted that any "American ever made a reputation founded upon his knowledge of territorial affairs and his success in administering them." <sup>35</sup> If this is so, part of the reason was the frontier's flagrantly abusive partisanship.

Professor Pomeroy has written that the American pioneer did not always wait "for what was legal and safe." He impetuously pushed out of the settled region and made ceaseless demands on the Federal Government. Concurrently, according to historian Thomas D. Clark, frontiersmen

developed a remarkably self-pitying attitude toward themselves because of their treatment by the remainder of the country. Isolation blinded them to general national conditions; they had only limited intercourse with people of other sections, and they were dependent upon their own slender intellectual and political resources in the solution of their everyday problems. <sup>36</sup>

These Western characteristics were blantly evident in Alaska.

Recently the highly perceptive Juneau historian Robert De Armond has reminded us of the relatively convenient accessibility of Southeastern Alaska to the "outside." <sup>37</sup> But neither a monthly nor a daily steamer could ever match the communication-transportation regularity of the West's ubiquitous locomotive. And for Alaskans "to the westward" the solitude was sometimes unendurable. One Point Barrow doctor reportedly went "from bad to worse . . . gambler, whore-monger and sluggard." <sup>38</sup> Reports of mental break downs in the vast interior were not uncommon.

The Great Land's immensity not only confounded District politicians but magnified the West's sanctimonious self-pity. The result was that Alaska's geo-political handicaps were thus too often diagnosed as administrative cancer. Commander Robley D. Evans fulminated, "The whole condition of Alaska so far as the execution of the law is concerned, is a disgrace to our Government, and I shall so report; but it will not do any good."<sup>39</sup> Commander Evans' frustrating game of hide and seek with the "fur seal pirates" about the enormous Gulf of Alaska may in part account for his wild denunciation. The truth was that by the early nineties Southeastern Alaska had two rather sophisticated towns, a scattered system of churches, courts and schools, in other words, a veneer of law and order. But how typically American — if lawlessness exists anywhere, it must be the fault of governmental system. Those Far North public officials who echoed Evans' rash generalization that in Alaska lawlessness was regent are legion.

Students of the Great Land have thus confused Cassandra for Clio. Listen to the result:

For seventeen years she was without any form of civil government and almost without law of any kind for thirty-two years . . . and without any effective machinery for the . . . fair trial of offenders against the law; for thirty-nine years without a Delegate in Congress . . .<sup>40</sup>

George W. Spicer's 1927 study was useful, but it cries for qualifications. His exaggerations of inoperative Panhandle legal machinery is bad enough, but the picture which he conveys of a mute Alaska unable to make its needs known in Washington, D.C., is far fetched. The territory had a half-dozen men who assumed the job of unofficial representatives to Congress. Sheldon Jackson was the most prominent, and *he was heard*. Regrettably his penchant for lurid lectures to stateside audiences helped perpetuate the sensational stereotype of a land that knows neither the "law of God or man."<sup>41</sup>

"You are improperly treated," declaimed Washington Territory's governor to a group of Alaskans, "because the people of the country are in great measure ignorant of your condition." Yet was this not the embryo West's traditional burden? And had not a swelling number of eastern missionaries, journalists, tourists, junketing Congressmen, as well as a rising flow of Alaska literature given the American public at least a general idea of what was going on in the Panhandle?<sup>42</sup> Alaskans preferred to believe otherwise.

We see still another reflection of Alaska's historic inferiority complex in the aggressive manner which it damned Uncle Sam as "penny-wise-and-pound-foolish."<sup>43</sup> Indisputably the District did not receive the kind of Federal aid which her present society has come to take for granted. Yet in a relative sense, Congress was probably no more parsimonious with its Alaska largess in the late 19th century than it was across sections of the older contiguous West. In 1892 the veteran Alaskan Ivan Petroff bluntly stated, ". . . until the country gives proof of further development, and until it shall have been decided whether any further revenue will flow from Alaska as an offset to expenditures, we have granted [her] enough . . ." About the same time Sheldon Jackson stated the bald truth when he declared that of Sitka's approximately two hundred white inhabitants, "they are nearly all connected with the government in one way or another. The entire town, Indians and all, live off the federal salary list." In Alaska, as in the Dakotas, government was what Professor Howard Lamar has rightly called "an important paying business."<sup>44</sup>

The indispensable pioneer cornerstone which the Alaskan frontier lacked was a burgeoning population. In this respect Alaska did not mirror the contemporary West nor the nation at large. In 1870, for example, Dakota Territory had 14,181 people. Twenty years later the Dakotas boasted a population of over half a million. Nebraska rose from 122,993 citizens in 1870 to top a million by 1890. In the latter year Alaska confessed to a total of 4,198 resident whites.<sup>45</sup> And although the 1890's mining activities in the Yukon Valley, Klondike and Nome regions abetted her growth, nothing approaching the famous California or even Colorado booms ever materialized.

From this critical deficiency everything else suffered. And because it was basically a problem that could not be remedied by Alaskans, they blamed their government, lack of information, inadequate land survey (when had the lack of a prior survey really blocked frontiersmen?), and a long list of complaints, some of which were contradictory.<sup>46</sup> Territorial ballyhoo made the glacier-like population advance doubly humiliating. In 1878 S. Hall Young had exuberantly predicted Wrangell's "future is assured and its rapid growth is certain . . ." Ten years later he gladly retreated to Long Beach, California, as weeds thrived along Wrangell's main street.<sup>47</sup>

How ironic that despite her woes, both real and fancied, Alaska from 1867 to 1900 enjoyed considerable socio-economic progress. As already noted, it was confined largely to the Panhandle. Like the unrolling of the historic American frontier, Alaska was not going to be subdued in a generation, nor in a century. Five years after the purchase, William H.

In conclusion, I would observe that we are indebted to Dr. Hinckley for aerating our concepts on Alaska. Certainly it is helpful to be reminded that older assumptions need to be questioned, and that hitherto scarce-detected relationships influential in determining the past of this vast State need to be recognized. Surely, Alaska is destined to achieve an importance now unimaginable. Meanwhile, Dr. Hinckley might well occupy some of his time during that interim by making a broader application of his measurements of difference. He might well place historians in his debt by producing a scholarly work covering the wide and important field of "Comparative Territorial Experience in the American West."

Let us do him the honor to consider our own obligation to contribute to verifiable Alaskan history. Each of us can contribute if we continually keep in mind the fact that accurate understanding of Alaska requires preservation of the raw materials of its history. In a long (and misspent?) life spent largely in search of elusive records, I have continually noted two facts of prime historical importance. (1) Most people imagine that only memorabilia left by important, well-known personages are important, when in fact the ordinary minutia of everyday life may determine the acts of the personages and therefore can have significance. (2) Most people fail to go exploring for data concerning experiences within their own families, and fail to galvanize other people to ferret out sources of information available to them.

Therefore, let me leave with you this plea. Ask yourself, "What can I do to build up Alaskan history?" Direct venturesome thoughts to possible locations of sources near and far. Ask questions of elderly persons (often flattered by the notion of importance) and immediately write down very carefully precisely what they think they remember. Make your "pestering" so delightfully stimulating that other persons will imitate your effort and climb on the historical bandwagon. Whatever tune they play, be sure to direct the records toward a public library or historical society committed to preservation against fire, flood and thieves. In Alaska we are fortunate that we do not have the hot, torrid climate in which actual worms devour records with relentless and phenomenal speed. We humans need to become active propagandists for our state's history. Thus, in a better sense, we become a vigorous, humanly purposeful breed of glorified Alaskan bookworms, which substitute for destruction intelligent preservation.

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- 30 Assorted Clippings, *J. Scrap.*, Vol. 17, p. 30ff; *The Alaskan* (Sitka), January 23, 1886; S. Hall Young, *Hall Young of Alaska. An Autobiography* (New York, 1927), 277-279.
- 31 Nichols, *Alaska*, 92. Cited in Senator Ernest Gruening's very useful *The State of Alaska* (New York, 1954), 82.
- 32 Ari Hoogenboom, *Outlawing the Spoils: A History of the Civil Service Reform Movement, 1865-1883* (Urbana, 1961), 135.
- 33 Pomeroy, *The Territories*, 61.
- 34 For a more reasoned judgment on incompetent Alaskan civil officers see: Jordan, *Imperial Democracy*, 194-195.
- 35 Frederic Logan Paxson, *History of the American Frontier* (Boston, 1924), 565.
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- 38 M. Loop to Friend (S. Jackson ?), Aug. 23, 1893, *J. Corr.* Vol. 25, p. 648.
- 39 Robley D. Evans, *A Sailor's Log: Recollection of Forty Years of Naval Life* (New York, 1902), 341.
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- 41 *Alaska Appeal*, March 15, 1880; Lyman E. Knapp to W. T. Harris, Dec. 20, 1889, *J. Corr.*, Vol. 15, p. 240; Ted C. Hinckley, "Sheldon Jackson, Presbyterian Lobbyist," *Journal of Presbyterian History*, XL (March, 1962), 1-18.
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- 43 *The Sitka Post*, November 20, 1876; *The Alaskan* (Sitka), April 24, 1886.
- 44 Ivan Petroff, "Twenty-five Years of Alaska," *North American Review*, CLIV (May, 1892), 63; Clipping, *J. Scrap.*, Vol. 27, p. 88; Howard Roberts Lamar, *Dakota Territory 1861-1899: A Study of Frontier Politics* (New Haven, 1956), 276.
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- 46 For the most informed contemporary synthesis of how Alaskans felt about their land and its needs, see the various *Governors' Annual Reports, 1885 to 1900*.
- 47 S. Hall Young to S. Jackson, Nov. 11, 1878, *J. Corr.*, Vol. 9, p. 137.
- 48 William H. Dall, "Is Alaska a Paying Investment?" *Harpers' New Monthly Magazine*, XLIV (January, 1872), 252-257.
- 49 Jordan, *Imperial Democracy*, 213; *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 9, 1893.
- 50 Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York, 1967), 44.
- 51 *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 4, 1887. An excellent review of some of the elementary questions raised by this shift is Hal Bridges, "The Robber Baron Concept in American History," *Business History Review*, XXXII (Spring, 1958), 1-14.
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- 53 J. Sheakley to Sen. George Perkins, March 28, 1896, *Alaska Governors' Papers*, Box 6, Manuscript Collection, GSA, Depository, Seattle, Washington. Foster Rhea Dulles, *Prelude to World Power: American Diplomatic History, 1860-1900* (New York, 1965), Chapter XIII.
- 54 *Commercial Alaska*, 4013.
- 55 Dulles, *Prelude*, 221; J. W. Hanson, *Wonders of the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, 1900), 452.



JEANNETTE PADDOCK NICHOLS, the "First Lady" of the American historical profession, received her Ph.D. from Columbia University and taught for many years at the University of Pennsylvania. She has been chairman of the Graduate Group in Economic History at the University of Pennsylvania and presently is a research associate. A Fulbright lecturer in India and Japan, and lecturer at the University of Birmingham, England, Professor Nichols is a consultant to the U.S. Treasury Department. She is the author of *Alaska During Its First Half Century Under the Rule of the United States* (reprinted 1963), the classic political history of Alaska during the early American period. Her other works include: *Growth of American Democracy* (with Roy F. Nichols) (1939), *The Republic of the United States* (with Roy F. Nichols) (1942), *A Short History of American Democracy* (with Roy F. Nichols) (1943), *Twentieth Century United States* (1943), and editor (with James G. Randall) of *Democracy in the Middle West* (1941).

I suggest that a more inclusively accurate image of the variety which is Alaska could not be refracted as long as the refracting agencies were severely limited as to their experience, information and constructive imaginativeness. Since the location, climate and vastness of the territory frustrated officialdom, complaining was indigenous. Badgered administrators subsisting on a remote island (for the lack of aviation and the Alcan highway long kept Alaska an island) suffered from feelings of inescapable confinement. Where escape is difficult, judgment is likely to be distorted.

All governments (and administrations) are of course fed more reports than they can, or wish to, digest; and anyone who has cooked up a report knows the chagrin ensuing when it is not ingested. But it unfortunately happened that while some valuable reports stuck in pigeon-holes some mistaken reports proved influential in inhibiting development. As Dr. Hinckley reminds us, some territorial officials and some missionaries acquired the habit of making various official and unofficial reports which refracted to the disadvantage of Alaska. This type of report exaggerated lawlessness and corruption, minimized advances in the social order and overlooked the contributions made by government funds to the territorial complex. As regards the corruption our speaker reassures us; at least five of the governors were on the whole "honest and reasonably industrious."

The image difficulty was compounded by the fact that economic opportunity was very slow to be envisioned over a broad range by investors. Prior to the Klondike, most wealth-seekers trod the familiar avenues of furs, fish and accessible metal. Lacking vigorous impetus to spend heavily very far afield, they did not delve deeply into the mines of information opened up by reports of the more explorative federal agencies. In other words, while unrealistic policies failed because the foundations for them were absent, realistic development lagged for lack of perceptive program-planning.

As regards such official reports as are inaccurate and intentionally or unintentionally deceptive, I would add that they can strikingly illustrate one of the means by which individuals fabricate history. Fortunately, there is now current among historians the realization that they need to check official documents (once considered sacrosanct) with unofficial sources. This is implicit in Dr. Hinckley's paper as a whole, and this is a particularly valuable service to historians. In his forthcoming biography of Governor Brady we surely may expect to find a sharp acclimatization of Brady pronouncements with various and sundry documents penned by other hands.

reality — the basis for further unfortunate decisions. This sort of self-deception has emerged as an inclusive, over-riding handicap of Alaska throughout the Gilded Age, repeatedly revealing itself. A very interesting study might be made of the effects imposed upon Alaskan problems by abusive partisanship and miscalculated history. It could lead one to ponder the advantages and disadvantages of deliberate deceit and secret diplomacy practiced in her affairs, in both the Gilded Age and later years. I recommend this intriguing exploration to the perceptive Dr. Hinckley.

In his preachment for the much-needed critical re-examination of Alaska's past, our speaker follows his consideration of those reflections by Alaska of the non-unique aspects of territorial experience — with discussion of her refractions, the inaccurate images which have been transmitted to the outside from this particular territory. I note that they sometimes have grown out of the notion that Alaska was not unique; again, that she was. Among the unfortunately inaccurate images based on the assumption of non-uniqueness was that favored by governors who preached that Alaska was an hospitable land for general homesteading. In this they were sadly mistaken in that era; their realization that Alaska's great need was for an access of population blinded them to the fact that she could not readily duplicate conditions which had justified and supported the homesteading traditions of many other pioneer states.

The concept of uniqueness, in its turn, could inspire its own inaccurate images. In this frame is pictured the well-meaning, laborious and costly effort to import a Lapland, reindeer-herding economy for the benefit of Esquimaux who lacked the skills and motivation essential to compensate for the investment. Likewise the disastrous effects upon Indians and Esquimaux of the white man's introduction of liquor-currency inspired the belief that prohibition here was eminently desirable and (long before 1918) the faith that it was enforceable.

I suggest that herein, as in other misconceptions of the uniqueness and non-uniqueness of the area, Alaska sometimes suffered from the sincerity, persistence and vociferousness of well-meaning protagonists, where these attributes were no guarantee of well-rounded understanding of the total situation. Their influence in part of their endeavors could be magnified because they served as something of a foil, as the territory came to be known for its more obvious resources. Clad in their bright garments of righteousness they contrasted with the exploiters clothed in the dark habiliments of competitive cupidity. The welfarious projects could turn out to be a cruel disappointment, but they could not honestly be denounced as nefarious, aggrandizing exploitation.

## THE SEARCH FOR A USABLE PAST

A COMMENT

JEANNETTE PADDOCK NICHOLS

We of the staff for this historical conference at Alaska Methodist University are much indebted to the thoughtful and foresighted officials who have made the days here both intellectually stimulating and thoroughly delightful. Therefore, now that we are near the close of our next-to-the-last session, I find myself in a grateful, happy and comradely state of mind. In this condition of beatitude, I am moved to open with a light-hearted comment.

We live, of course, in the computer age, and investigation of it has verified what I noticed through the years. We college professors learn to speak fifty minutes, except when "enthraling" a graduate class, when we speak one-hundred-and-ten minutes. This is a hazardous situation, threatening professors with the loss of their "terminal facilities", unless they adopt devices to curb their enthusiasm for elucidation. In all humility, therefore, I bethought myself to bring from the City of Brotherly Love this travelling alarm clock (which now I show you) to ensure retention of my treasured terminal facilities, which otherwise might weaken in the stimulating atmosphere of Anchorage.

If you of the audience were closer to my reading desk you could each ascertain that I have set this clock to read at the end of a human introductory period of thirty minutes, thus to give me due warning that at that juncture I have but twenty minutes left for making what speakers like to call their "closing remarks". Now, I would commission the possibly astounded Dr. Sherwood to take charge of the clock, so that no bored victim can tamper with it; it should fulfill its bounden duty and ring at the end of thirty minutes from now.

Dr. Jeannette Paddock Nichols has been chairman of the Graduate Group in Economic History at the University of Pennsylvania and presently is a research associate.

(As the speaker handed the timepiece to the chairman of the session, it let out a piercing clangor, to the astonishment of all present, without exception. Making the best of the embarrassing situation, the speaker turned to her sympathetic listeners.) All teachers sometimes conclude, at the end of a tiring school day, that they have been talking in their sleep. Surely, you have already heard my introductory remarks. Therefore, I turn to my concluding pages.

"The American Period of Alaskan History" could be taken as embracing an extensive portrayal of experience between 1867 and 1967 — surely too broad a canvass to paint at one session of a conference. Therefore Dr. Hinckley wisely has set limits to his discussion — two limits, one chronological and the other substantive. In chronology, his analysis is limited chiefly to the years between 1867 and 1900, the period embracing what is called "The Gilded Age." In substance, he concerns himself principally with "Reflections" and "Refractions" between Alaska and United States territorial experience in general.

Here Alaska appears in two roles: — first, as reflecting frontier experiences normal in westward expansion, rather than unique as frequently claimed: second, as refracting aspects more peculiar to herself and refraction (the dictionaries remind us) can involve deflection of light from a straight path, in passing obliquely from one medium into another in which its velocity is different and an accurate image cannot emerge. At any rate, Alaska's reflections and refractions became commingled. The correct "image" is of course the primary objective of present day politics, business, education, and government. Therefore, should we not inquire about Alaskan images, particularly those which are inaccurate? Whence come these images and what is their real nature?

Whether discussing reflections or refractions our speaker adopts the role of a pioneer in Alaskan history, as befits his subject. Anyhow, pioneering is natural to vigorous, productive scholars for they, being normal human beings, like to build a reputation on discovery of the unique, craving satisfactions and rewards such as inventors derive from patents. Indeed, scholars once possessed of reputations can retain repute only by maintaining the pioneer spirit. At any rate, Dr. Hinckley, in the reflections sector of his presentation, aims momentarily to build his reputation in reverse; he gently but firmly proceeds to emphasize that many characteristics long ascribed as peculiar to Alaska, were, in fact, not unique.

Alaska became in part a reflection of American territorial experience, he reminds us, because her basic predicament resembled that of other territories — a sparse population in a large area located far from Washington and suffering from laggard government appropriations.

These typical elements are noted as having induced in pioneers impatience, self-pity and, sometimes, mental breakdown. Among the other non-unique aspects of Alaskan territorial experience singled out for special mention to us are: — the boom psychology immediately after acquisition and the boosterism for chosen localities; the imperialistic yearning; the aggressiveness and sojourner-mentality of the trapper-miner West; the racist attitudes toward Indians and Orientals; Washington's habitual dumping of local problems upon territorial appointees; and "flagrantly abusive partisanship."

For long-range, trouble-causing, potential, I would wager that rank partisanship was, and remains, among the front runners in the race for governmental obfuscation. Nor is it an attribute peculiar to territories or to the Gilded Age, although its expression may be more subtle in mid-twentieth-century. Abusive partisanship remains today a prime sport throughout the United States, at least every other year and often in between. Most citizens know this well enough to discount it (if they so choose) while they enjoy it.

Partisanship can be very inclusively defined. It is something much more pervasive than mere loyalty to one party. It colors deeply regionalism and factionalism; in fact the outstanding historical revisionists through a number of years have been erecting their reputations on the very sound foundations of what we might call "miniscule" partisanship. Articles and books abound which clearly prove that loyalty to a specified political party, like loyalty to an economic doctrine, differs in various regions and under the leadership of various individuals. This helps to account for the otherwise unbelievable waste and inefficiency of government, whether royal, democratic or military government. It exposes its naked self in the "shopping" by foreign suppliants among the departments at Washington, in interdepartmental rivalries, in intra-departmental infighting, in flouting of executive orders: — in sum, in the general chaos which characterizes government both in peacetime and wartime. Through that chaos suppliants from Alaska always have had to grope their way, as Senator Gruening and other Alaskan protagonists have reminded us, time and again.

However, we must note that this politico-social pastime is not to be lightly dismissed as a territorial influence, especially when unintentional or deliberate misrepresentation readily recognizable on the local scene, may be interpreted as fact, at a distance. Policy based on such misrepresentation leads to what I term "miscalculated history." In it the annals abound, as any student of Washington reactions to hinterland phenomena well knows. This kind of history forces policy to operate in a distorted sequence, creating, consequently, an ill-founded

matter of collecting a mass of details and from this collection piecing together a larger whole, [in accordance with a ready made model], but a process of elimination of all details which are already there except those which naturally force their way in and are strategic to the purposes being served.

'This is not an interdisciplinary approach (at least at the outset). . . . Nor is it intended as a case study in the application of some recent and explorative new discipline such as regional science or human ecology . . . The task of dealing with an entity as complex as a region requires a broader and more flexible initial approach. By combining something of the spirit of scientific open-mindedness with a subjective and impressionistic approach acquired directly from experience of the subject region itself, it should be possible to make a more pertinent selection of the strategic variables than would be possible through an approach which to a large extent predetermines this.' 5

My Alaskan research and writing were undertaken as a regional economist focusing upon the general study of economic phenomena and the underlying causative or conditioning factors as they might be discovered *geographically*. I was concerned with the time-dimension, of course, because the subject of economics must be considered in dynamic, as well as static terms, to be meaningful. But my initial preoccupation was not with the past, the popular conception of the special domain of history, but with the present and the future as the title of my two books declare.

The preparation for this Conference, however, has given rise to the growing suspicion that I am after all really an economic historian. Not only an economic historian but, in Professor North's designation, a *new* economic historian! Consider first that my work is the result of applying the two essential qualities of North's revolution. My judgments as to what is going on in Alaska and the probable shape of its future were derived from the type of submersion in historical detail (for anything that is recorded must be history) called for and my analysis upon the fashioning of what this preparation suggested as more appropriate tools than those which come ready-made. Consider further that elsewhere in this book and in my other works I pledge allegiance to the credo of the revolution in striving through my work to gain basic analytical insights into the workings of economic development and change in general.

Pursuing Professor North's career through my dusty piles of back issues of the *Review* I found we were following a roughly parallel course, he taking the high road of the United States as the geographic unit of study and I, more modestly, the low road of the Territory, later, State

## ALASKAN ECONOMIC HISTORY



Justin J. Stauter, AMU Archivist and Alaskan historian, puts a question.



Conference members check periodical literature and compare notes.

"A revolution is taking place in economic history in the United States. It is being initiated by a new generation of economic historians who are both skeptical of traditional interpretations of U.S. economic history and convinced that a new economic history must be firmly grounded in sound statistical data. Even a cursory examination of accepted 'truths' of U.S. economic history suggests that many of them are inconsistent with elementary economic analysis and have never been subjected to — and would not survive — testing with statistical data." The reconstruction of U.S. economic history required first of all that the "new men" saturate themselves in the "wealth of material available in the form of early price data, official documents of many kinds, local historical materials, and state statistics." Comprehensiveness and breadth of investigation were the first essentials for, "While any single time series may be subject to a wide range of error, the gradual accretion of many independent series lends greater confidence in our ability to arrive at careful judgments." The second essential was an openmindedness in "development of the theoretical hypotheses." A major result claimed for the revolution was "to disabuse the economic historian of any simple ready-made explanation of U.S. economic growth, and to encourage more intensive investigation of the varying sources of changing productivity in the economy." Beyond this North saw the "new economic history" not as a sterile study of the past for its own sake, but as holding promise of revitalizing whole areas of the general discipline of economics. "The economist can expect that the quantitative research and analysis of the economic historian will provide him both with improved data to test hypotheses and with a cumulating number of analytical insights into the process of past economic change which are the essential prerequisite to evolving sound theoretical propositions about long-run economic development." <sup>4</sup>

This was mighty heady stuff after the thin fare I had come upon so far, but the words also carried the further excitement of a shock of recognition. Writing in 1959, four years before the appearance of North's comments, I had expressed similar sentiments in the opening chapter of my *Alaska in Transition* describing my own approach and methods.

"To present a clear and balanced picture of a region or to treat any regional problem in its proper perspective, the investigator must first somehow get the general 'feel' of the subject region. To properly grasp the unity and wholeness of his subject, the investigator must steep himself in the background of the region until it becomes a natural part of his own surroundings and experience. The sense of 'experience' of the over-all background should then reduce anything set against it to its right proportions. The conduct of a regional study thus becomes not a

promised to rise above the specific and trivial – "Williamson, H. P., Business History and Economic History." The abstract in its entirety read:

"The first objective of this paper is to outline the circumstances that lead to the development of business history as a special field of study in the United States. The second is to indicate how this development adversely affected the relationships between business historians and economic historians. The third is to suggest the extent to which scholars in both fields have interest in the same subject area. *Jour. Econ. Hist.* Dec., 1966, 26 (4) English." <sup>1</sup>

This indicated that there still might be some life in the ruins, at least enough individuals left to find their relationship "adversely affected" by developments. But can a house divided against itself long stand?

This impressionistic approach to discovering my subject was not promising, but before jumping to premature conclusions an attempt at "quantitative research" was needed. Fortunately, this was met by an article on trends in economic writing in the May 1966 issue of *The American Economic Review*. <sup>2</sup> The source for most of the statistical analysis in the article was (the six volumes of) the *Index to Economic Journals* extending from 1886 through 1963, a sufficient time for developing trends and even cycles. The subjects of professional papers listed in the *Index* were classified into 23 categories one of which, fortunately, was "Category 5, Economic History." The volume of writings in this category accounted for about 1.5% of the total over the entire period never going outside a range bounded by 1.2% on the low and 1.6% on the high side, and in terms of output it ranked from number 22 to 19 in the total list of categories. The classification of the members of the American Economic Association in terms of sixteen subject-matter categories, one of which was economic history, indicated that only 2.5% of the membership had designated this area as their field. Only two other categories reported a smaller share. <sup>3</sup> In quantitative terms (i.e. volume of scholarly output and number of economists engaged in its pursuit) economic history appeared to be of minor importance.

All of this left me in despair, but before I could give notice to resign from the Conference, my evaluation was dramatically reserved by a 1963 article by Professor Douglass C. North of the University of Washington describing the "new Economic history." It also led me to a startling discovery. But first, to quote Professor North.

## ALASKAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

GEORGE W. ROGERS

"An Evaluation of Alaska Historical Writing" is the announced purpose of this conference. My assigned topic is Alaskan economic history. The purpose of this paper, therefore, should be an evaluation of Alaskan economic history writing. This seems a simple enough assignment. (1) Look up all the entries in the card index under "Alaska, Economic History", (2) Check off all items with which you are already familiar and glance through the balance, (3) Evaluate. But there were no listings under this classification, although there should have been. Before I engaged on my assignment of evaluating Alaskan economic history writing, therefore, considerable detective work was needed to define and discover my subject. Once embarked upon the formulation of basic questions of identity there logically followed the further basic questions of evaluation, not of the writings, but of the subject itself – why should there be any investment of scholarly energies, if not talent, in the study of economic history or, more specifically, Alaskan economic history? Given the dominant professional concerns and interest of the audience, what relevance has this subject to the teaching of history in Alaskan high schools?

If you are ever to get any work done, you should never ask such questions, particularly at my age. The formulation and tentative answering of these questions took up all the time I could possibly allot to the preparation and writing of this paper and left me in a somewhat unsettled state since. Consequently, I never got to the evaluation of the writing, and you will have to accept the fall-out from my personal search for answers to these questions.

The subject could be defined in a crude way by defining each word separately and coming up with something like "economic history is the story of how man satisfied his material wants in the past." But

Dr. George W. Rogers is professor of economics at the University of Alaska.



GEORGE W. ROGERS, Professor of Economics, University of Alaska, received his Ph.D. in political economy from Harvard University. He is the author of *The Future of Alaska* (1962) and *Alaska in Transition, The Southeast Region* (1960), and is now completing a book on the Bering Sea as an international natural resources region. It is based upon research jointly financed by the University of Alaska, Arctic Institute of North America, and Resources for the Future, Inc. With the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska he has prepared a study on "Alaska-Northwest Canada Development Relationships." He has written many reports, articles, and studies on the economy of Alaska. During the current year he is on research leave at Clare College, Cambridge University.

this can't be accepted as anything more than a weak start. At any rate, because this has to do with history, I turned around and looked back. The vista was not so broad and varied as that exposed by Senator Gruening last night, but it served a purpose.

Returning to my own student days, no mean historical effort in itself, I remembered that the undergraduate major in economics required six units in economic history, either a European or United States type course. I do not have any memory of enthusiasm or even interest in the subject at the time. A short history course for busy economics students who would not get around to taking a real history course is not a very memorable thing. But probably my reaction was due to the fact that the burning issues of the time were far off in another corner. This was still the era of the Great Depression before complete involvement in World War II put our economic system back on its feet. As students in the late 1930's we were preoccupied with the present breakdown and the threat of future continuing stagnation of the economy and the urgency of shifting our discipline from its classical and moribund concern with long-run equilibrium analysis to a more immediate and vital concern with the diagnosis of the contemporary ills of an unstable economic system and prescriptions for their cure.

How had the courses fared since my student days? A 1965-66 college catalogue discarded in my office by my daughter still listed two familiar economic history courses, European and United States, but instead of six units each they were now only three. The course descriptions indicated that surgery had been applied by lopping off anything before the end of the Middle Ages in one and before the Civil War in another. But something had been added. Each course now carried a prerequisite in the form of a course from the Department of History, History of Western Civilization or United States History. From my remembrance of the very scrawny state of its existence of a few decades ago, the subject courses seemed on the point of slipping entirely from the scene into the maw of History Proper.

What of the writings on the subject since my earlier contacts? The latest issue (March 1967) of *The Journal of Economic Abstracts* included two journals of economic history, one at the University of California at Berkeley and another at the University of Texas, and listed the contents of recent issues together with brief abstracts. Almost without change there had survived titles from my youth — *The Management of a 16th Century Ironworks*; *The Population of Dedham, Massachusetts, 1636-1736*; *Production for the Market on a Small 14th Century Estate*; and so on. In the combined contents of both journals, only one article



WILLIAM H. WILSON, now on leave with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, is writing a history of the Alaska Railroad. Formerly an associate professor at the University of Alaska, he will join the history faculty at North Texas State University. He presented two papers recently, "The Alaskan Engineering Commission and a New Type of Agricultural Frontier" (Pacific Coast Branch, American Historical Association) and "The Alaska Railroad and Territorial Development" (American Historical Association). The *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, July, 1967, carries his "The Founding of Anchorage: Federal Town Building on the Last Frontier." In 1964 he published *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City*. A specialist in urban history, he has published many articles on the subject.

of Alaska. In 1966, Prentice-Hall published his *Growth and Welfare in the American Past - A New Economic History*. A copy of the book is not yet in my hands, but a 1967 review article concluded that it "will provide a guide to the direction of quantitative economic history and the tools it employs, as well as to some of its accomplishments and the frontiers it has opened up." There was the usual registration of disappointments we expect from reviews in professional journals, but in this case the reviewer (whose name appeared in the Association directory under 2. Economic history) bore down heavily upon Professor North in his role as critic of the established school. "While some complaints have merit, others have been unfair and irrelevant. To help resolve at least some of these doubts, it would seem all the more imperative for new economic historians to build analytical frameworks upon which the elements of their work can be grafted, and given meaning . . . Disappointment is thus compounded when his latest book suffers from a lack of a clear theoretical structure." <sup>6</sup>

Professor North and I appeared to be following similar paths in the development of our work, but there now appears to be two important differences in the light of this review. The first, that as I was not conscious of being a new economic historian I had not indulged in attacks upon the establishment. I had forgotten it existed until this Conference. Secondly, in my second book published in 1962, I had recognized the need for "analytical frameworks" upon which the elements of my work could be "grafted and given meaning." In the introductory chapter the note on approach given in the first book was enlarged upon and described in "an analytical approach" which in turn was fully developed as Part I, a major part of the book, from the Alaskan materials. This was used to give meaning to what followed, not only in this book but in almost everything I have done since. <sup>7</sup> This should definitely qualify me, not merely as a new economic historian, but as a member of the *avant guard*.

I have now done with my strawman, "economic history", and exchanged him for the flesh and blood variety. But before departing the subject, I must confess to you that this distinction was not being taken very seriously by me. You do not make straw men of academic disciplines even if you do find straw men engaged in them. Nor do I rate the "revolution" as even of the bloodless variety. The reviewer of Professor North's book was too much of a gentleman (of the old school) to point out that what North considered to be revolution was nothing of the sort. There have always been economists who were generally known as belonging to a "historical school" because of their pursuit of the historical

method in their work (i.e., the induction of principles from facts as derived from statistical and non-statistical historical data). There have always been empirical research economists who seek "truth" through continuing observations, experience and experimentation. We would certainly find many of both these breeds hiding under the label of "economic history", old and new, just as I have been discovered under the label of "regional economics".

Professor North's writings derive their real value from focusing attention upon empirical, quantitative research as important to an understanding of past history as a means of gaining insights into the working of long-range economic development in general. This is a critically important matter. In the words of a former Alaskan, Professor Hans E. Jensen, now at the University of Tennessee: "Today there is an interest in the problems of economic growth which has not been matched since the days of Adam Smith, Thomas Robert Malthus, and Ricardo. The urgency of economic advancement in the underdeveloped regions of the world; the problem of maintaining in our country growth rates which will enable us to realize potential increase in welfare; and the challenge to the international position of the United States emanating from developed and underdeveloped countries alike, all have combined to create a new concern for economic growth on the part of American businessmen, workers, political leaders, social scientists, and educators." <sup>8</sup> In a series of articles on the general subject of economic growth he reviews the thinking of economists on the general subject of economic growth over a period of 200 years and the revival of interest in this subject as it has emerged as the burning economic issue of our times. The key person in the research effort is someone who sounds vaguely like the economic historian.

In a recent collection of essays on the history of economics, George J. Stigler of the University of Chicago, who is drawn upon by Professor Jensen, defines this role and puts its importance most clearly. He states that the "empirical study of economic life is the only way in which one can get a real feeling for the tasks and functioning of an economic system. The completely formal theorist does not know the range of subtlety of economic problems that arise each day . . . The formal theorist therefore has a much simplified picture of the world and of the complexity of the scientific theorems required to explain its operations." The "empirical research economist, who collects and systematizes the . . . facts of economic life" and who "has had the complexities of the economy burned into his soul" is the "only source of information for the specialized theorists (because) the only things the theoretical econ-

## LANDMARKS AND OPEN QUESTIONS IN ALASKAN ECONOMIC HISTORY

A COMMENT

WILLIAM H. WILSON

There is considerable interest in the formal study of Alaska's economy. At the University of Alaska the Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research is publishing *The Alaska Monthly Review of Economic and Business Conditions* for the third year, and is sponsoring a monograph series, with individual volumes mostly on the marketing of Alaska products but including other economic topics. Recent issues of the *Alaska Review*, published by Alaska Methodist University, have contained articles ranging from the very careful evaluation of the present economy and its immediate prospects in "Alaska's Economy, the State of the State," by Dr. Douglas N. Jones, to Dr. Rogers' imaginative look at longer-range possibilities in "Avenues to Development." These and other publications and projects indicate the extent of current interest in our economy.<sup>1</sup>

The Centennial celebration has stimulated simultaneously a strong interest in Alaska's history. The presses of Alaska Methodist University, the University of Alaska, the University of Washington, and Yale University, among others, have been and will be publishing excellent historical volumes. Although others have done so, I mention Morgan Sherwood's compilation, *Alaska and Its History*, for the reason that here is a compilation that contains a number of articles on Alaskan economic history and they range from Russian American to the recent past.<sup>2</sup>

The lesson for the economic historian in the coincident concern for Alaska's economy and history is, "Strike while the iron is hot!" Be-

Dr. William H. Wilson, formerly an associate professor of history at the University of Alaska, will join the faculty in history at North Texas State University. The recipient of a research grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities (1967-68), he is now in Seattle, Washington.

topics, such as the few articles mentioned by titles above, could be contributions to our insights and knowledge of long-run economic development.

All of this is heightened in Alaska's case as economic development is a prerequisite to our very survival. There has been a great deal of writing on Alaska economic history, none of which I have discussed, both general and specialized. Some is published, but most is in the form of unpublished scholarly research and government reports or little known reports. Alaskans should become better acquainted with their economic history and scholars have a responsibility to make the means of this knowledge more accessible.

But it is with the teachers of history in the high schools that the greatest challenge is given. Just to strengthen the last report I quoted above, let me restate its final conclusion in terms of the second objective of this conference. The need for widespread understanding of basic economic relationships is urgent, particularly in Alaska. The opportunities for teaching economics through the course in United States history and for teaching its application in Alaska through the course in Alaska history are numerous and exciting. They await exploitation.

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omist knows about economic life are those things the empirical economist tells him. All other sources . . . are unreliable and unrepresentative — in short, unscientific." 9

The increasing post World War II concern for understanding of the phenomena of economic growth has given those engaged in the pursuit of economic history (or empirical research or whatever term you care to apply) a position of critical importance and influence far beyond their numbers and above the level of their scholarly output. If anything, the urgency for understanding in this field is greater in Alaska than in the nation as a whole. Every Alaskan is aware of the need for economic development if our State is to survive and prosper as a viable political entity. The political leaders and candidates of both parties campaign under the same banner of economic development. This was one of the underlying justifications for granting of statehood to Alaska. President Johnson's concern and understanding of its importance was institutionalized following the 1964 Good Friday earthquake in his creation of the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska.

To paraphrase Professor North, in Alaska there is the need for economic historians who are both skeptical of traditional interpretations of Alaska's history and economic development and convinced of the need for a new approach to the subject firmly grounded in sound statistical data. This requires courage and integrity as well as technical skill. We must have the honesty to look at Alaska's present and past development for just exactly what it is, a past highly selective and unstable colonial exploitation of a few natural resources and a presently governmental subsidized development, no more. Only in this way can we begin to gain the analytical insights essential for evolving sound proposals for our long-run economic development. There are other justifications for more intense and diverse activity in the field of Alaska's economic history and that is the contribution this can make to an understanding of phenomena of economic growth and change in general. Because of its relative isolation and simplicity and even its abnormality, the Alaskan economy is an ideal laboratory for gaining insights more readily than would be the case in more complex situations and for testing hypotheses and determining the results of experiments.

I hope these comments have rehabilitated the subject of economic history and Alaska economic history in your eyes. I do not anticipate, however, that any of this will cause a rush of high school history teachers from their present employments into the study of economics. But whether or not you realize it you are engaged in its teaching and you