

ALASKAN LITERATURE
THE FICTION OF AMERICA'S LAST WILDERNESS

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF PH. D.
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

HILTON JOHN WOLFE
1973



This is to certify that the
thesis entitled

ALASKAN LITERATURE:
THE FICTION OF AMERICA'S LAST WILDERNESS

presented by

Hilton John Wolfe

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Russell B. Nye".

Major professor

Date May 4, 1973

ABSTRACT

ALASKAN LITERATURE: THE FICTION OF AMERICA'S LAST WILDERNESS

By

Hilton John Wolfe

When the term Alaskan literature is mentioned, the names which usually rise to the surface of the mind are Jack London, Robert Service, and perhaps Rex Beach; but the number of Alaskan novels actually runs to some 300 and the list of short stories well exceeds 200. Despite the existence of such a large body of fiction, no major and very few minor studies of Alaskan literature have been previously undertaken; the present historical and critical survey attempts to reduce this gap in American literary history.

The survey is historical in its effort to achieve two goals: (1) the compilation of a comprehensive bibliography of Alaskan fiction; and (2) a description of the major literary trends during the three periods of Alaskan history--the pre-Klondike, the Klondike, and the post-Klondike. The bibliography has been gathered from all known published sources containing Alaskana as well as from the shelf lists of the Alaska State Historical Library and the Skinner Collection of the University of Alaska Library. The result no doubt is not exhaustive, but it is the most complete existing list of Alaskan fiction. The description of specific literary works is suggestive rather than detailed, but it is believed that all the major literary

trends have been identified.

The survey is critical in its testing of a hypothesis. Many writers, both popular and academic, have asserted that Alaska is America's last frontier; therefore it would be expected that Alaskan fiction would carry on the tradition of American frontier literature. This thesis is tested by comparing, first, the pattern of Alaska's development with the pattern of settlement on the American frontier; and, second, the relationship between American frontier literature and the realities of the American Wests with the relationship of Alaskan fiction and Alaskan history.

Several conclusions are drawn. First, despite many claims to the contrary, Alaska has not been a typical American frontier; instead, it has closely resembled the Australian frontier in terms of the role of capital in the exploitation of an unsettled region and the Brazilian frontier in terms of the attitude of its pioneers--"get in, get it and get out." Second, however, many Alaskan writers have assumed that Alaska was just another extension of the Western frontier and have merely applied the conventional formulas, especially of Western fiction, to the Northern setting. As has been the case with most American frontier novels, the effect of such popular literature is to create a wide gap between fact and fiction. Third, on the other hand, a few serious writers have focused upon the symbolic potential of the Alaskan wilderness and thus have written a

Hilton John Wolfe

new chapter in American frontier literature. Finally, it may be said that Alaskan fiction marks the development of another new and vigorous American regional literature worthy of further attention from literary scholars.

ALASKAN LITERATURE:
THE FICTION OF AMERICA'S LAST WILDERNESS

By

Hilton John Wolfe

A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1973

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER	
I. FRONTIERS: HISTORY AND ROMANCE	17
Theoretical Aspects of Frontiers	
The American Frontier	
Turner's hypothesis	
Definition	
Geographic stages of frontier development	
Economic stages of frontier development	
The search for gold	
The pioneer	
The closed frontier	
American Literature	
The frontier	
Response to a closed frontier	
II. THE PRE-KLONDIKE PERIOD (1867-1896)	98
History	
Russian America	
United States occupation	
Literature	
Treasure house of exploitable economic wealth	
Endangered treasure house of exploitable economic wealth	
Treasure house of natural wonders	
Treasure house of the Lord	
Treasure house of moral edification	
III. THE KLONDIKE PERIOD (1896-1912)	158
History	
Literature	
The trail	
The code of the trail	
Striking it rich	
The Alaskan frontier myth	
Alaskan frontier literature and Cooper's formulas	

CHAPTER	
IV. THE POST-KLONDIKE PERIOD (1913-Present)	253
History	
Literature	
Historical fiction	
Contemporary fiction	
CONCLUSION	308
BIBLIOGRAPHY	318

INTRODUCTION

When the word Alaska is mentioned, the images which most frequently rise to the surface of the mind are those of Eskimo hunters stalking polar bears, sourdough gold-panners on rich creeks, dog-mushers on winter trails, and thermometers dipping to 70° below zero. Or there may be a recollection of such terms as "Walrussia," "Seward's Folly" and "Seward's Ice Box"--images and phrases all implying that Alaska is a land of pioneer or frontier conditions. And, in fact, Alaska is portrayed as "the land of the last frontier," or if striving for paradox, the "New Frontier," not only by the travel bureaus and airline companies, but also by more academic-minded writers. In the introduction to Jeannette Paddock Nichols' history of Alaska, published in 1924, the Honorable James Wickersham, first and long-time delegate from Alaska to Congress, refers to Alaska as "the last great American frontier."¹ More recently, in the foreword to Herbert L. Heller's Sourdough Sagas (1967), Ernest Gruening, Governor of the Territory of Alaska for fourteen years and later United States Senator, states that the Alaska of the 1880's "was truly 'the last frontier,' as it is still lovingly called by Alaskans," and that the Alaska of today retains "many of its frontier

"characteristics."² Application of the traditional man-land ratio would also support any contemporary labeling of Alaska as a frontier region, for with an area of 586,000 square miles and a population of some 250,000, Alaska's ratio stands at 2.3 persons per square mile--just three-tenths of a person above the limit.³

Whether Alaska is or ever was a frontier is not an issue here. Rather, the fact that Alaska has been and is still considered by many to be a frontier provides a possibly fruitful approach for the student making a survey of Alaskan literature and of Alaskan fiction in particular. If one agrees with the approach used by Arthur Hobson Quinn in his study of American fiction, then a survey of Alaskan literature must show the relation of this body of literature "to American [and Alaskan] life, social, economic, and political. . . ."⁴ More exactly, if Alaskan literature is the literature of a frontier, then attention needs to be focused upon the frontier aspects of "American life, social, economic, and political. . . ."

An initial attempt to gain an understanding of the frontier in American life leads to some expected results as well as to some rather surprising sidelights on the scholarship in this field. One would not, as is the case, expect to find mention of Alaskan life or Alaskan literature in those studies which deal with a period of time before 1867, the year of the Alaskan Purchase, or even 1897, the year in which the Klondike made headlines around

the world: such works, for example, as Frederic L. Paxon's History of the American Frontier, 1763-1893 (1924), Ray Allen Billington's The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (1962), Russel B. Nye's The Cultural Life of the New Nation, 1776-1830 (1960), and Henry Nash Smith's Virgin Land (1950), a study which stops with the formulation of Turner's thesis in 1893. Nor would one expect mention of Alaska in those frontier studies which are either very broad or very narrow in their subject matter, such as Frederick Jackson Turner's essay, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" (1893), Rodman W. Paul's California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (1947), John Walton Caughey's Gold is the Cornerstone (1948), also a treatment of the gold-rush era in the Far West, and Arthur K. Moore's The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman (1957). Likewise, Alaska understandably is not mentioned in strictly literary studies which are limited in scope though very broad in treatment--like Jay B. Hubbell's "The Frontier," published in Norman Foerster's The Reinterpretation of American Literature (1928), and Benjamin T. Spencer's "Regionalism in American Literature," included in Merrill Jensen's Regionalism in America (1951)--or, conversely, in studies detailed in treatment though limited in scope, like Alexander Cowie's The Rise of the American Novel (1948), which is primarily concerned with the American novel up to the latter part of the nineteenth century, and Harold P.

Simonson's The Closed Frontier: Studies in American Literary Tragedy (1970), which, after a lengthy discussion of Turner's frontier thesis and its implications, provides a detailed discussion of Mark Twain, Ole Rølvaag, and Nathaniel West.

On the other hand, Alaska is also missing from works in which the subject might reasonably be expected to appear. Alaska life and literature is not mentioned in such cultural histories as Henry Steele Commager's The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (1950) and Merle Curti's The Growth of American Thought (1964). The same holds for the literary histories: The Cambridge History of American Literature (1917-1921) and Marcus Cunliffe's The Literature of the United States (1961) ignore Alaskan literature altogether, and except for the treatment of Jack London, Alaska finds its way into the LHUS only as an oblique referent in Stith Thompson's chapter, "Indian Heritage." Narrower literary studies repeat the neglect: Horace Spencer Fiske's Provincial Types in American Fiction, published in 1903 and intended to be suggestive rather than exhaustive, seems oblivious to the Klondicitis which had infected the country five years prior to its publication; and Lucy Lockwood Hazard's The Frontier in American Literature (first published in 1927 and then republished in the American Classics series in 1961) looks at the Californai gold-rush of '49 but also ignores the Trail of '98--not even Jack London

is noticed.

If Morgan B. Sherwood is correct in asserting that "Alaska was the westward continental limit of United States territorial expansion, and therefore deserves the attention of historians of the American westward movement,"⁵ we could reasonably expect to find Alaska included in such works as Bernard DeVoto's The Course of Empire (1952), Nelson Beecher Keyes' The American Frontier: Our Unique Heritage (1954), Ray Allen Billington's American Frontier Heritage (1966), and Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset's Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier (1968). Australia and Brazil appear in Hofstadter and Lipset's collection of essays but not Alaska.

It would also seem fair to reverse Mr. Sherwood's directive and to assert that Alaskan literature also deserves the attention of the historians of Alaska; yet Mr. Sherwood's own collection of essays, Alaska and Its History (1967), ignores the literature, as do the earlier histories of Jeannette Paddock Nichols, Alaska: A History . . . (1924), and C. L. Andrews, The Story of Alaska (1944). The very scant notice given to Alaskan literature by its historians--Henry W. Clark summarizes Alaskan literature in three pages of his History of Alaska (1930), and Clarence C. Hulley reviews Alaskan writers and artists in less than four pages in Alaska 1741-1953 (1953)--is usually in the way of a complaint. Henry W. Clark, for example, writes:

This tendency of the people of the United States to look upon Alaska as a land of ice and snow has been aided materially by the proneness of writers, both fiction and otherwise, to describe Alaska as ice-bound, and the home of fur-clad, tallow-eating people. The poems of Service and the books of London, though admirable in many ways, have been leaders in this false gospel, as their scenes are laid near the Arctic Circle.⁶

A similar complaint is repeated in Stuart Ramsay Tompkin's Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough (1945):

The people of the North have yet to obtain full justice at the hands of the literary world. The generation of writers that included Rex Beach and Jack London have written picturesque, perhaps overdrawn accounts of the gold rush. This trend towards the unusual has continued unabated. Hollywood lends its aid to crown with a halo of romance northern prospectors, miners, Eskimos, and mounted policemen. It is time that a note of realism should be struck to redress the balance and to enable us to understand the peculiar problems of the sourdough.⁷

Ernest Gruening's The State of Alaska (1968) is also very brief in its treatment of Alaskan writers, but more sympathetic. He gives a paragraph to summarizing the themes of London's stories and a paragraph for providing historical details behind Rex Beach's The Spoilers,⁸ and in another paragraph remarks the attention generated by the Klondike gold discovery:

It brought Alaska for the first time to the ken of millions of Americans. The gold rush was reported in thousands of newspaper columns, in a multitude of magazine articles, and was more permanently recorded in not fewer than three hundred bound volumes of personal experiences as well as fuller compendia. Not least notable was the fiction of Jack London, Rex Beach and others. They wrote a new chapter, a post-script, to the great American romance of "the West."⁹

If one pauses to consider why the cultural and frontier histories so consistently ignore Alaska, he might

conclude that no Americans live north of the forty-ninth parallel! Or if he considers how scarce are the references to Alaskan literature, two implications seem possible: either regional literary studies have gone out of fashion, or the corpus of Alaskan literature is not great enough to warrant scholarly investigation.

A negative can be given to the first implication by merely citing counter-examples. In addition to the earlier regional studies already mentioned--and some not mentioned, like Alexander Nicolas DeMenil's The Literature of the Louisiana Territory (1904) and Ralph Leslie Rusk's The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier (1926)--there are such later examples as J. Frank Dobie's Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest (1952), Bernard Duffey's The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters (1954), Edwin W. Gaston's The Early Novel of the Southwest (1961), Arthur W. Shumaker's A History of Indiana Literature (1962), and Richard Walser's Literary North Carolina (1970). For additional examples of recent specific regional studies, one has only to open Clarence Gohdes' Literature and Theater of the States and Regions of the U.S.A. (1967). This historical bibliography also indicates that scholars are still wrestling with the theoretical aspects of regional studies.

The second implication--that the corpus of Alaskan literature is too small to warrant attention--can also be answered in the negative, but not so easily. Before giving an estimate of the volume of Alaskan literature, it is

necessary to answer certain questions faced by anyone working with regional materials.

First, what is meant by "Alaskan literature"? The term literature is properly used to denote several types of work: in a general sense, any body of writings in prose or verse; in a more limited sense, a body of written work produced by scholars or researchers in a given field; and, more exclusively, imaginative or creative writing, belles-lettres. James Wickersham's A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature 1724-1924 (1927) uses the term inclusively, and thus we find a broad range of entries. Under "United States Public Documents Relating to Alaska," Wickersham lists Presidential "Executive Orders," "Messages to Congress," numerous reports, letters, and studies within the various departments of the federal government, as well as Senate and House committee hearings and Judicial Department records. Under "General Publications Relating to Alaska," a section which does not include public documents, his bibliography enters publications in nearly ninety categories, from "Baranov" and "Bering, Vitus J." through "Glaciers" and "Roads and Trails" to "Totems," "Volcanoes" and "Whales."

The inclusiveness of Wickersham's use of the term "Alaskan literature" is further indicated by the fact that his bibliography also lists titles, in fact, "is supposed to contain a complete [my italics] list of the titles of all printed books of history, travels, voyages, newspapers,

"periodicals, and public documents," not only in English but also in "Russian, German, French, Spanish, etc., relating to, descriptive of, or published in Russian-America, now called Alaska, from 1724 to and including 1924."¹⁰ Accordingly, in the "Voyages" subdivision of "Russian-America," we find such entries as these:

6099--Bering and Chirikov. (DuHolde, Father Jean-Baptiste) Description géographique, historique, chronologique, politique, et physique de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise. 4 vols, Lemer cier, Paris, 1735. . . .

6110--Bering and Chirikov. Sokrashchenie istoricheskago iz viestila o Kamchatkie, kotoroe kasается do pervago puteshestviia Kapitan-komandora Beringa. . . . Mies, StPbg, 1736.

6197--Kotzebue, Otto von. Entdeckungsreise in die Sudsee u. nack der Beringsstrasse zur erforschung einer nordostlicken durchfahrt. 3 vols in 1, plates, Gebr. Hoffman, Weimar, 1821.

And under "Fiction" we find this surprise:

3074--Swift, Jonathan. Travels into several remote nations of the world. In four parts. By Lemuel Gulliver. To which are prefix'd several copies of verses explanatory and commendatory; never before printed. The Second edition. London: Benj. Motte, 1927, xii, 148, 164 pp. portraits, 2 maps. (Note: Important because of map showing region of Brobdingnag (Alaska) [sic].

The listing of titles in several languages implies something which is true: with the term "Alaskan writer," Wickersham does not mean a writer born in Alaska or one who spent all or most of his life there, but merely a writer who has written about Alaska or has published a book, on any topic, in Alaska--a Russian school text, for example. Wickersham's decision seems well-advised: he avoids the

sticky problems which occupy more than two pages of Arthur W. Shumaker's A History of Indiana Literature.¹¹ And his decision is realistic: extremely few of the authors who have written about Alaska were also born there.¹² It might be added that J. Frank Dobie's view of the significance of an author's birthplace seems similar to Wickersham's; Dobie defines:

By "literature of the Southwest" I mean writings that interpret the region, whether they have been produced by the Southwest or not. Many of them have not. What we are interested in is life in the Southwest, and any interpreter of that life, foreign or domestic, ancient or modern, is of value.¹³

Perhaps one more comment should be made on the inclusiveness of Wickersham's title: Alaskan means more than Alaskan. As used by Wickersham, Alaskan understandably includes the Yukon--the Klondike. Although a narrow clearing now extends for nearly 700 miles due north and south along the 141st west meridian, from the Arctic Ocean down to the St. Elias Mountains on the Gulf of Alaska, and marks the boundary between the United States and Canada,¹⁴ such distinct separation did not always exist. In 1869, two years after Russian America passed into American hands, a Captain Charles P. Raymond journeyed up the Yukon River to request the Hudson's Bay Company to move its trading post at Fort Yukon to a position east of the Alaskan-Yukon boundary.¹⁵ According to Pierre Berton, the mistake of the Hudson's Bay Company traders may not have been intentional. They did not "know, at the time, that their Union Jack,

flying over Fort Yukon, was deep in foreign territory; the land was remote, the boundaries hazy, and the geography uncertain."¹⁶

Besides genuine error, there was another cause for disagreements over the Alaskan-Canadian border. Ernest Gruening describes this cause in The State of Alaska:

The disputes arose over the conflicting interpretations of the wording of the Anglo-Russian Treaty of 1825 by which the boundary of southeastern Alaska was to follow the summits of the mountains parallel to the coast, but not more than ten marine leagues from it. The Canadian contention was that the ten leagues should be measured from the mouths of the bays--the American contention that it was from the heads of the bays.¹⁷

In 1903, six years after the great Klondike gold stampede began, the boundary dispute was finally settled by an international tribunal; but since the American interpretation of the 1825 treaty prevailed, there was considerable hard feeling in Canada,¹⁸ just as there had been over the boundary dispute between the United States and Canada in the Pacific Northwest.

Although controversy may have burned in political circles in Ottawa and Washington, controversy was not the prevailing atmosphere in the Alaskan and Yukon territories. In the first place, most of the prospectors and miners from Canada as well as those from the United States crossed Alaskan territory on their way to Dawson City. Either they disembarked from Skagway or Dyea and then crossed the White or Chilkoot passes, or they made the long riverboat journey up the Yukon River; and those who did go to the gold fields via the shorter routes through southeastern Alaska usually

made the return trip by going down the Yukon River.

Such an easy disregard of boundaries continued to operate once the prospectors were at work along the gold creeks. As Wickersham points out,

. . . most of those who were not immediately successful on the Dawson creeks came on down the Yukon river to Eagle or Circle and began prospecting in Alaska. When the Fairbanks creeks and others in that region were located, there was a large stampede from Dawson into Alaska.¹⁹

As a result, the "Yukon territory was more closely connected, geographically and socially by this moving population with Alaska than it was with any of the Canadian provinces."²⁰

There are also more specific indications of the feeling of unity which existed between the Alaskan and Yukon territories. One is that the mining laws freely permitted citizens of the United States to locate in the Yukon, and Canadians to locate in Alaska. Furthermore, the Arctic Brotherhood did not recognize the boundaries. In their meeting halls the Union Jack and the Stars and Stripes hung intertwined on the walls, and "their motto was: 'There is no boundary line here.'"²¹

It is with justification, then, that Wickersham decided to use the term "Alaskan" to include Yukon:

Because of this intimate connection as prospectors and Arctic Brothers in the earlier and later camps, and their common historical interest in the happenings of both, the common bibliography of the Yukon river . . . and the Yukon Territory . . . have been included with that of Alaska.²²

The inclusiveness of the term "Alaskan literature,"

as used by Wickersham, is appropriate for his admirable bibliography. But considering that Wickersham's bibliography--which lists none of the writings of the last almost fifty years--contains over 10,000 entries, it is obvious that some cutting needs to be done. Like Wickersham, I include Yukon literature with Alaskan literature, although only for the period of the Klondike gold-rush;²³ but, unlike Wickersham, I will give primary attention to only the belles-lettres of Alaskan literature--more specifically, to Alaskan novels and short stories. Like Arthur W. Shumaker, I find juveniles "important and interesting"--almost by accident I have come across nearly a hundred full-length works--but I also consider them "tangential to this study"²⁴ and hence exclude them.

Even after these limits are placed on the bibliography of primary works, there remains a considerable body of literature to be considered. Since a comprehensive bibliography of Alaskan fiction has not been compiled recently--the bibliography included with this study will be the most recent and most complete--any attempt to list totals is necessarily tentative. But the following figures do suggest the literary interest which has been taken in Alaska: between 1889, the year in which the first Alaskan novel was published, and the present, nearly 300 novels have appeared. And in addition to the literally hundreds of short stories and poems which have been printed in newspapers and magazines, there are some twenty collections of

short stories and fifteen collections of poetry, not including the volumes of Robert Service.

If one grants this to be a corpus large enough to warrant scholarly dissection, there is still the problem of how to approach this body of materials. Since I have not read all of the works in the primary bibliography, I cannot at this time give a comprehensive, detailed survey, such as that found in Richard Walser's Literary North Carolina (1970). But I have read enough to attempt a description of the broad, chronological developments in Alaskan literature--the pre-Klondike, Klondike, and post-Klondike periods. And in more detailed fashion I can consider certain literary problems which have engaged such scholars as Lucy Lockwood Hazard, Arthur K. Moore, and Henry Nash Smith.

In The Frontier in American Literature (1927, 1961) Lucy Lockwood Hazard sets two goals: an analysis of "the indirect but powerful influence of the frontier in shaping the conditions of American life and the resultant American philosophies" and an analysis of "the use of the frontier by those writers who, like Cooper and Bret Harte, have deliberately chosen it as a setting."²⁵ Professor Hazard's first goal will not be adapted to this study; that is, there will be no attempt to show a possible influence of the Alaskan frontier on American life. But her second goal--which is similar to Arthur Moore's and Henry Nash Smith's studies of the relationship between the historical

reality and the literary interpretation of frontier America--will be imitated. Finally, again following the examples set by Moore and Smith, I will consider in a comparative way how the literary interpreters of Alaska have handled the problems facing previous writers as they searched for a literary mode adequately suited for the expression of their vision of the American frontier, and how the literary interpreters of Alaska have responded to the fact of a closed frontier.

Notes

¹Jeannette Paddock Nichols, Alaska: A History of Its Administration, Exploitation, and Industrial Development During Its First Half Century Under the Rule of the United States (Cleveland, 1924), p. 34.

²Herbert L. Heller, Sourdough Sagas: The Journals, Memoirs, Tales and Recollections of the Earliest Alaskan Gold Miners, 1883-1923 (Cleveland, 1967), pp. vii, viii.

³Two persons to the square mile would be the limit according to the census reports cited by Frederick Jackson Turner in "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," The Frontier in American History (New York, 1950), p. 3.

⁴Arthur Hobson Quinn, American Fiction: An Historical and Critical Survey (New York, 1936), p. vii.

⁵Morgan B. Sherwood, ed., Alaska and Its History (Seattle, 1967), p. xiii.

⁶Henry W. Clark, History of Alaska (New York, 1930), p. 13.

⁷Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough (Norman, 1945), pp. vii-viii.

⁸Ernest Gruening, The State of Alaska (New York, 1968), p. 338.

⁹Ibid., p. 104.

¹⁰James Wickersham, A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature 1724-1924 (Fairbanks, 1927), p. vii.

¹¹Arthur W. Shumaker, A History of Indiana Literature (N.P., 1962), pp. 16-18.

¹²One of the few is Florence Barrett Willoughby, author of some non-fiction as well as of several novels, e.g., Spawn of the North (1936), Sondra O'Moore (1939), The Golden Totem (1945).

¹³J. Frank Dobie, Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest (Dallas, 1952), p. 13.

¹⁴The Milepost: Guide to the Land of the Midnight Sun, 21st Annual Edition (Juneau, 1969), pp. 114-115

¹⁵Gruening, p. 21.

¹⁶Pierre Berton, Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush (Toronto, 1963), p. 5.

¹⁷Gruening, p. 21.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Wickersham, p. 36.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³For studies of Yukon literature, see Keith Hubbard, "The Klondike in Canadian Literature" (unpublished thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1968), and Carl Klinck, et. al., The Literary History of Canada (Toronto, 1967).

²⁴Shumaker, p. 20.

²⁵Lucy Lockwood Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature (New York, 1927), republished in American Classics series (New York, 1961), p. xvii.

CHAPTER I
FRONTIERS: HISTORY AND ROMANCE

If Alaskan literature is going to be approached as frontier literature, then we will need to understand in what ways and to what extent Alaska was or is a frontier region. And if we are going to be prepared to discuss later Alaskan literature as post-frontier literature, then we will need to understand the nature and significance of a closed frontier. More exactly, we will need to understand the role of the frontier in the total social and economic evolution of a culture.

Since historians of Alaska have not focused sharply upon these problems and since, as Morgan B. Sherwood points out, "historians of the American westward movement" have thus far neglected Alaska as "the westward continental limit of United States territorial expansion,"¹ an attempt to describe Alaska's development might begin with a look at the answers which scholars of American expansion have given to such questions as, what is a frontier, what attractions draw people to frontiers, what characteristics--if any--are common to all pioneers, what role does the frontier play in the cultural evolution of a country? The answers to these questions will hopefully provide a historical and

intellectual framework within which to examine Alaska's role in the westward expansion of the United States. Since frontier conditions are not everywhere the same, it is possible that the Alaskan frontier may vary radically from the pattern discernable in the march of American civilization from the Atlantic to the Pacific; thus, to be alerted to possible peculiarities in Alaska, theoretical consideration will be given to the manner in which frontiers differ. A review of the scholarship on frontiers in general and the American frontier in particular will occupy the first half of this chapter.

The second task of this chapter will be to provide a framework which will allow a consideration of Alaskan literature within the larger context of American literature. To provide this literary framework, a brief review will be made of three topics: first, the use which has been made of various frontiers by American writers, and growing out of this analysis a consideration of the relationship between historical reality and literary myth or interpretation. Then attention will be directed at efforts which writers have made to find a literary mode suitable for the expression of their vision of the frontier. Finally, an appraisal will be made of the literary response of American writers to a closed frontier.

Theoretical Aspects of Frontiers

After highlighting the similarities of the successive frontiers in America, Turner remarked that the

American frontier can be dissected into various frontiers, identifiable by "essential differences, due to the place element and the time element."² He also hinted at the direction which further analysis might take by providing suggestive examples:

It is evident that the farming frontier of the Mississippi Valley presents different conditions from the mining frontier of the Rocky Mountains. The frontier reached by the Pacific Railroad, surveyed into rectangles, guarded by the United States Army, and recruited by the daily immigrant ship, moves forward at a swifter pace and in a different way than the frontier reached by the birch canoe or the pack horse.³

Later scholars, particularly those making comparative frontier studies, have elaborated on the determining factors which lead to divergent frontier conditions, frontier experiences, and frontier backwash in various other countries, especially Canada, Australia, South Africa, and Brazil. As Marvin W. Mikesell points out, the principal variables are only two--man and land⁴--but these can be subdivided into six or seven factors.

One of these is the relationship between the immigrant and the aboriginal peoples. Examples range "from extensive assimilation in Latin America to absolute extermination in Tasmania and near extermination in the United States. The relatively unimpeded advance of the Australian frontier contrasts with the bitter conflicts experienced during the early stages of colonization in South Africa."⁵ A variation of this factor is the relationship, usually competitive, between two immigrant peoples in a given area. Appropriate examples could be found in the history of

American expansion into the Southwest and the Pacific Northwest.

Environmental or geographic differences also play a shaping role in the movement or expansion of given frontiers. Again Marvin W. Mikesell provides examples:

The St. Lawrence River enabled the first Canadian colonist to move into the heart of the continent, but the continuation of that movement was blocked by the Pre-Cambrian Shield. The simultaneous advance of Australian settlement from widely separated points on the coast presents a picture quite unlike the advance of the American frontier. The great, north-flowing rivers of Siberia did not equal the opportunities which the Mississippi and its tributaries offered to the American pioneer.⁶

A more specific example of different frontier experiences stemming from different environmental conditions is given by Seymour Martin Lipset:

In America, each individual attempted to find his own plot of land. The Australian agriculture frontier, on the other hand, was much less hospitable in terms of climate, and family agriculture was less practical. Many of the frontier enterprises involved large-scale cattle and sheep grazing, both of which required considerable capital if the enterprise was to be worthwhile.⁷

Speaking about the same area, Mikesell likewise recognizes the determining role which geographic conditions may exercise on the evolution of a frontier:

. . . a substantial part of Australia was better suited to extensive grazing than to any known combination of crops. Vast open spaces and a meager supply of labor encouraged the shepherd rather than the yeoman farmer. The typical Australian frontiersman in the last century was a wage-worker who did not, usually, expect to be anything else.⁸

But Mikesell also recognizes that the determining force of environmental conditions is not absolute. Certainly the

use which immigrant peoples make of a new frontier is in part shaped by the physical conditions encountered there, but the other side of the coin shows several other forces at work. One of these is implied in the previous quotation: " . . . was better suited to extensive grazing than to any known [my italics] combination of crops." Man's scientific knowledge also colors frontier development: remote frontier outposts in Brazil today are visited not by stage-coach but by diesel-powered Mercedes-Benz buses. A relevant truism is that as man's technology advances, his life style becomes less dependent upon the particular environmental conditions in which he finds himself.

Another factor which can modify the role of geographic conditions is the force of economic goals or necessities. Australia again provides an example:

The Australian frontier thus started, as one author puts it, as a "big man's frontier," in contrast to the American "homesteader's frontier." Thanks to the cooperation of the bankers, the Australian pastoralists were able to occupy the best land and discourage settlement by small farmers.⁹

On the same frontier, the economic variable was cast not only in the role of financier but also of manufacturer:

The persistence of the pastoral oligarchy can be traced to Australia's imperial ties, for British capitalists were more interested in wool for the Yorkshire textile mills than in the successful settlement of small farmers.¹⁰

On the American frontier, however, another determinant upstaged economics or, at least, was equally forceful. In Virgin Land, Henry Nash Smith advances the view that frontier settlement in the American West was shaped not

only by the physical environment but also by "the assumptions and aspirations of a whole society."¹¹ More specifically, he argues that revisions in the Homestead Act which would have permitted a more economical use of the arid lands in the West but which also would have introduced corporate land use as a matter of policy, just as had been the case in Australia, were defeated because the agrarian ideal was so strong: Americans believed in the ideal of the family farm.

The force of ideology has also been used to explain "why Brazil, the largest, most populous, and most richly endowed of the Latin American states has done so much more poorly than the United States":

"Bandeirantes" (flag-bearers") were the explorers and settlers of the interior of Brazil, as "pioneers" were the conquerors and colonizers of the great unoccupied heartland of the United States. The difference lies in their motives and ideals. The Brazilian bandeirantes were perhaps the last wave of colonial conquistadores. The American pioneers, though of all kinds, were predominantly Reformation settlers. The resulting civilizations set up by the two groups of wilderness-conquerors were therefore quite idfferent, despite many elements common to both.¹²

Professor Lipset also attributes the same insight to Vianna Moog's analysis of an essential difference between the United States and Brazilian frontiers:

. . . for three centuries in Brazil the main motive for going to the frontier was to get rich quickly, to find gold or other precious minerals, and . . . labor whether in urban or rural occupations was denigrated as fit only for slaves, while the English and later American settlers looked for new homes based on their own work.¹³

Another form in which ideology may influence the development of a frontier is political. Citing a study of

the Canadian sociologist S. D. Clark, Professor Lipset suggests that even though geographic conditions in the United States and Canada were quite similar, the frontiers of these two countries differed largely for political reasons:

Canada maintained her separate political existence but only by resisting any movement on the part of her population which had the effect of weakening the controls of central political authority. The claims to the interior of the continent were staked not by advancing frontiersmen, acting on their own, but by advancing armies and police forces, large corporate enterprises and ecclesiastical organizations, supported by the state.¹⁴

All of the variables thus far considered which might be used to explain differences in frontiers--the relationship between the immigrant and aboriginal peoples, environmental conditions, the state of technology brought to a frontier, and social assumptions or aspirations of various sorts (economic, intellectual, political)--all of these may be put together under a label which Professor Mikesell calls "basic historical differences" and partly illustrates with these examples:

The American, Canadian, Australian, and South African frontiers were formed during a period of accelerated economic and social evolution. This fact distinguishes them from the German and Russian migrations which were influenced by feudalism. The characteristics of the Latin American frontiers reflect the numerical weakness of the conquistadores, the process of acculturation encouraged by that weakness, and the fact that Spanish colonists were not interested primarily in the cultivation of new land.¹⁵

All of these determinants will need to be kept in mind when the Alaskan frontier is compared with other American frontiers, but first we need a concrete description of the frontier in America.

The American FrontierTurner's hypothesis

Since Turner runs through studies of American civilization like the Ghost through Hamlet, perhaps it is appropriate to first conjure up his thesis as we turn to the American frontier. Turner's hypothesis, as conveniently restated by Ray Allen Billington, may be summarized thusly: the Founding Fathers and the "later pioneers who were lured ever westward by the thirst for furs or cheap land or gold or adventure" found themselves in a new environment where "the old laws governing compact societies no longer applied." The significant features of the new land and the traits or characteristics resulting from an adjustment to the new conditions may be expressed in a series of propositions. First, given a situation in which "men were few and land was abundant" or in which "resources were more plentiful than manpower," then (1) "traditional techniques of production were unsuited" and "innovation and experimentation became a way of life"; (2) "attachment to place diminished" and "mobility came to be a habit"; and (3) "wastefulness was a natural consequence" of profiting "by exploiting nature's abundance." Second, given the primary task of clearing and subduing a continent, then (1) "cultural creativity lost its appeal"; (2) "materialism emerged as a desirable creed no less than an economic necessity"; (3) "hard work became a persistent habit"; and (4) "a democratic social system with greater possibilities for

"upward mobility followed naturally" as "a man's worth to society was judged by his own skills" rather than by inherited titles and traditional class distinctions. Third, given "so much opportunity for the individual to better himself," external controls were unnecessary and "individualism and political democracy were enshrined as their ideals." Finally, these conditions and resulting traits, which were revitalized with each new expansion of the westward movement of the frontier, eventually created "an American way of life and thought that was distinct."¹⁶

These propositions, as Henry Nash Smith observes, no longer seem novel because they have "been worked into the very fabric of our conception of our history,"¹⁷ but they certainly have raised a storm of controversy. Attacks on the validity of Turner's hypothesis have come from several quarters, but most of the criticism has point only because Turner advanced his thesis as an explanation of American civilization, or because the critic believes that Turner offered his views as the explanation.¹⁸ To test or determine the validity of Turner's hypothesis is not a purpose of this study; therefore, the controversy over Turner's interpretation can be ignored.

Here the use of Turner's views is simply to introduce a description of the frontier. Instead of asserting that certain conditions existed on the American frontier, that these conditions attracted certain people to the frontier, that these conditions then transformed or molded the

traits of those who went to the frontier, and, finally, that these new frontier traits determined American civilization--and accepting the burden of proof which goes with such an assertion--one can still structure a description of the frontier around the essentials of Turner's hypothesis. In other words, Turner asks useful questions: what is a frontier, why do people go to frontiers, what characteristics--if any--are common to all pioneers? Of course the answers are interrelated, for an awareness of the conditions which exist on a frontier suggests motivations for going there, and a knowledge of motivations provides insight into characteristics. But for the sake of clarity, these questions will be asked individually.

Definition

Although Turner never clearly defined what he meant by the term frontier--and did, in fact, use the term in a variety of ways--he did seem to have two basic conceptions in mind: the frontier as place and the frontier as process. Place is clearly in mind when he writes: "The most significant thing about the American frontier is, that it lies at the hither edge of free land."¹⁹ And again when he says: "In this advance, the frontier is the outer edge of the wave--the meeting point between savagery and civilization."²⁰ On the other hand, process seems the dominant idea when he writes:

The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people--to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness,

and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life.²¹

The importance of process in Turner's vision of the frontier is emphasized by Harold P. Simonson, who stresses that what Turner "saw being enacted on the frontier was the process of civilization--of people transforming the elemental into the complex, the wild into the cultured, the primitive into the civilized."²²

The twin concepts of place and process are also the determining factors in Ray Allen Billington's extended definition of the frontier. The frontier as place "may be defined as a geographic region adjacent to the unsettled portions of the continent in which a low man-land ratio and unusually abundant, unexploited, natural resources provide an exceptional opportunity for social and economic betterment to the small-propertied individual."²³ The frontier as process is, again according to Billington, "the process through which the socioeconomic-political experience and standards of individuals were altered by an environment where a low man-land ratio and the presence of untapped natural resources provided an unusual opportunity for individual self-advancement."²⁴

Three observations may be made about this definition, two of which Billington himself has noted. First, both parts of the definition include opportunity for individual self-advancement. As Billington says in another place, "The key feature of this [the frontier] environment,

"it must be emphasized, was the degree of [individual] opportunity offered for upward economic and social mobility."²⁵ Given this definition, it becomes necessary to qualify an observation noted earlier in this chapter. Professor Mikesell suggests that the Australian frontier started as a "big man's frontier," in contrast with the "homesteader's frontier" of America. If we accept Billington's definition, then we must conclude that a big man's frontier--a region exploitable only by large investments of capital--would be a contradiction of terms: such a region would not be a frontier at all since it would be missing the element of opportunity for the individual of scant means. Furthermore, if we accept Billington's definition, then we can also conclude that the rise of capitalism or corporate method is as clear a signal of a closing frontier as the disappearance of free land.

Second, Billington's definition excludes the modern "frontiers" of space, technology, and the mind or spirit of man. Such exclusion is not really significant in a substantive sense, but it is in an organization sense. To illustrate the point, brief consideration might be given to Lucy Lockwood Hazard's use of the word frontier. As she glances back over American history and literature, she sees three frontiers: (1) "the frontier of regional pioneering, which is primarily concerned with man's attempts to control nature"; (2) "the frontier of industrial pioneering, which is primarily concerned with man's attempts to control the

"labor of his fellow man"; and (3) "the frontier of spiritual pioneering, which is primarily concerned with man's attempts to control himself."²⁶

Since giving these multiple meanings to the word frontier provides a tidy way of organizing a survey of all periods of American literature and emphasizes a certain continuity--based upon the pioneering spirit--between the periods, it is tempting to adopt Professor Hazard's framework for a survey of Alaskan literature. But there are two reasons for not doing so. One is convention: since her use of the term is exceptional in the scholarship of this field, it seems easier to recast her framework in the terminology of the other scholars than vice versa. The other reason is clarity or emphasis: if the closing of the frontier has been as significant in American life as Turner, Billington, Smith, and others declare it to have been and if we are looking for the reenactment of this process with its consequences in Alaska, then a more appropriate definition is one which alerts us to differences in the way writers have explained or interpreted Alaska at various times.

The final observation to be made about Billington's definition is that if frontier is both place and process, then it should be possible to identify successive frontiers as well as various stages of development within each of the successive frontiers. Such is the case: the movements of the frontier and the different stages of evolution within frontier areas have been traced by scholars of the westward

movement. Since the purpose of this present examination of frontier America is to provide a comparative basis for approaching Alaska, some of the specifics of frontier stages might be examined.

Geographic stages of
frontier development

The march of successive frontiers from the Atlantic to the Pacific is fairly well agreed upon in its broad movements. Geographically and chronologically, American settlement pushed out from the eastern seaboard--the Puritan and Southern frontiers--into the eastern side and middle of the Mississippi Valley. Then, for a while, the center of frontier activity skipped to the Pacific Coast--first to the Northwest, or Inland Empire, and then to California.

Travellers over the Oregon Trail to the Willamette Valley were still predominantly farmers. As Henry Nash Smith points out, the economic distress of the late 1830's and early 1840's in the Mississippi Valley turned pioneering spirits to "the free land and the supposedly better markets of Oregon."²⁷ By 1846, when a treaty was signed establishing the boundary at the forty-ninth parallel, the American agricultural frontier had reached the Pacific, even though the Great Plains were still being crossed rather than settled.

The discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in 1848 drew thousands of additional pioneers across the plains to the mountains and valleys of the lower Pacific Coast. Then, as prime diggings in California became occupied and corporate

effort replaced the small miner, the thrust of settlement turned back to the East:

So it was that when the Mother Lode country underwent the transition from placer to quartz mining in the mid-1850's, thousands of nomads shouldered their picks, hung their washing pans on a mule, and set out to prospect the mountains and deserts of all the West for gold. Most found scarcely enough dust to replenish their "grub stakes," but the few who "struck it rich" touched off rushes rivaling that of the forty-niners. These, in turn, were responsible for the permanent occupation of the Inland Empire of the Northwest, the Fraser River country of British Columbia, the desert lands of Arizona, the western fringes of the Great Basin, and the Pike's Peak region of the Rocky Mountains.²⁸

By the beginning of the Civil War, these prospectors and miners "had scattered islands of settlement over all the trans-Mississippi country. There remained only the task of linking these far-flung frontiers with each other and with the East."²⁹

The reuniting of East and West finally took place in 1869 with the completion of the railroad to the Pacific; and the railroad in turn "opened the way to the full exploitation of the West by all forms of American enterprise."³⁰ After 1869, the agrarian settlement of the Great Plains proceeded as such a rate that by 1890, the American frontier was officially declared closed--despite the fact that Alaska had been a U.S. territory since 1867!

Frequently the rapid rate of settlement is attributed to the effects of the Homestead Act, but some scholars, like Henry Nash Smith, argue that the Homestead Act "did not lead to the settlement of large numbers of farmers on lands which they themselves owned and tilled."³¹ The

reality was quite different:

Vast land grants to railways, failure to repeal existing laws that played into the hands of speculators by allowing purchase of government lands, and cynical evasion of the law determined the actual working of the public land system. Between the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 and 1890, only 372,659 entries were perfected. At most, two millions of persons comprising the families of actual settlers could have benefited from the operation of the Act, during a period when the population of the nation increased by about thirty-two millions, and that of the Western states within which most of the homesteading took place, by more than ten millions. Railways alone, for example, sold more land at an average price of five dollars an acre than was conveyed under the Homestead Act.³²

More important than the failure of the Homestead Act to accomplish its desired effect is the explanation for that failure:

The agrarian utopia in the garden of the world was destroyed, or rather aborted, by the land speculator and the railroad monopolist. These were in turn but expressions of the larger forces at work in American society after the Civil War--the machine, the devices of corporation finance, and the power of big business over Congress. The Homestead Act failed because it was incongruous with the Industrial Revolution.³³

The closing of the American frontier--whether it both happened and was recognized in 1890 or happened a decade or two earlier and was only first officially recognized in 1890--marks a new stage in the evolution of the United States: America had finished its agrarian phase and entered its industrial phase.

Economic stages of frontier development

In a way, the stages of development on given frontiers in America recapitulate the broad pattern of successive

geographic frontiers. At different times and at different places, frontiers were opened and finally closed, that is to say, on a given frontier there gradually developed a social, economic, and technological system which is recognizable as essentially industrial rather than agrarian, urban rather than rural. When this change had taken place, that particular frontier was no longer open. Eventually this pattern of development had spread over so many regional frontiers that the American frontier was considered closed.

Although the major movements of settlement in the United States are quite clear--a spreading out from the East and South into the Mississippi Valley, a leap to the Far West, and then a reuniting of East and West with a resulting settlement of the Great Plains--the stages of development on a given frontier present, at best, according to Ray Allen Billington, a fuzzy picture:

Frontiersmen did not move in neatly arranged columns, each caring for its own task in advancing civilization. Instead they scattered in all directions and mixed so completely that fur trappers and town planters sometimes operated side by side. Nor could the "frontier types" be so exactly designated, for the pioneering process required a complex variety of skills that defied any simple definition. The West was won not only by hunters and herdsmen and farmers, but by miners, explorers, soldiers, lumbermen, land speculators, missionaries, road and railroad builders, merchants, flour millers, blacksmiths, distillers, printers, lawyers, and an uncountable host of others. All played their parts, sometimes in several roles, and all showed little respect for laws of social evolution as they sought opportunity without paying heed to their proper roles in the emergence of civilization.³⁴

Despite the complex reality, it seems useful to

attempt the construction of an idealized model of developmental phases on a given frontier; and Billington, although he repeatedly denies orderly patterns of evolution, does give a limited model based on an ever more sophisticated technology and an ever more complex financial scheme:

They developed these resources at a steadily accelerating rate, determined largely by their emerging technological abilities and incentives. As skills and capital multiplied, generation after generation peeled off successive layers of resources to be fed into the national economy. The first generation removed a very thin slice using primitive techniques; the next a deeper layer employing mechanical processes that were still in their infancy; the third dug still deeper with improved technological means; and so exploitation went on.³⁵

The model provided by Turner--here synthesized by Henry Nash Smith--also assumes an economic basis for delineating four essential stages:

. . . first the fur trader and Indian fighter; then the hunter-farmer who clears a small patch of the forest, puts in a crop or two, and moves on when the country begins to fill up; then the more substantial farmer who buys out the pre-emption rights and "improvements" of the first settler; and finally the "men of capital and enterprise," the first market towns, banks, a rudimentary industry, and so on.³⁶

This model, useful as a starting point, does need elaboration.

First, prospectors and miners are missing. Since we have already seen that it was mineral wealth which gave such great impetus to the westward movement around the middle of the nineteenth century and, furthermore, since it was the Klondike which first drew popular attention to Alaska, we will need to consider how the prospector and

miner fit into the frontier model.

Second, this model seems to include more than frontier evolution. The first three stages--trader, squatter, farmer--all seem to belong to the frontier, but the fourth stage--"men of capital and enterprise"--probably belongs in the post-frontier era. Lucy Lockwood Hazard would say that once the agrarian culture gives way to a technological or industrial culture, once individual or family effort gives way to corporate or capitalistic method, in other words, once a given area passes from stage three of the model to stage four, then certainly there is a closing of the frontier of agrarian or regional pioneering; but, she would continue, a new frontier is then encountered in that same area: "the frontier of industrial pioneering. . . ." ³⁷ However, if we apply Billington's definition of the American frontier, we would need to say that once the captain of industry replaces the hunter and the nester, the most important characteristic of the frontier disappears: man's individual opportunity for economic and social advancement is lost and the frontier is closed. What must then follow, at first in a given region and eventually in all of America, is not, as Professor Hazard would urge, the discovery and development of a new frontier but a trying period of adjustment as American man recasts his idealized vision of the social order.

A third and more important observation to be made about the model is that it implies a sequential relationship

between the frontier and post-frontier periods, between the agrarian culture and the industrial culture. When viewed in light of Turner's notions of savagery and civilization, the model also implies a progressive evolution as a region comes under the hand of the farmer and finally reaches a state of urbanization and industrialization. According to the evidence which Henry Nash Smith presents, earlier writers in the nineteenth century held the same view. In 1824, a British traveler, Adam Hodgson, was quoted as saying, "'I have seen the roving hunter acquiring the habit of the herdsman, the pastoral state merging into the agricultural, and the agricultural into the manufacturing and commercial.'"³⁸

Thomas Jefferson also seems to have held the same view of progressive social stages:

Let a philosophic observer [he wrote] commence a journey from the savages of the Rocky Mountains, eastwardly towards our sea-coast. These he would observe in the earliest stage of association living under no law but that of nature, [subsisting] and covering themselves with the flesh and skins of wild beasts. He would next find those on our frontiers in the pastoral state, raising domestic animals, to supply the defects of hunting. Then succeed our own semi-barbarous citizens, the pioneers of the advance of civilization, and so in his progress he would meet the gradual shades of improving man until he would reach his, as yet, most improved state in our seaport towns. This, in fact, is equivalent to a survey, in time, of the progress of man from the infancy of creation to the present day.³⁹

And Professor Smith reports the same idea in the imaginative literature of Timothy Flint and James Fenimore Cooper.⁴⁰

Despite the precedence which Turner might have drawn upon to support his vision of progressive evolution of cultural stages, there were those who saw conflict rather than an orderly and harmonious progression between an agrarian culture and a mercantile culture. The conflict existed even in pre-Revolutionary times. Professor Smith essentializes that conflict by citing the question confronting the theorists of those times: "Could the fabric of the [British] Empire be made flexible enough to allow agricultural expansion in North America without breaking the economic and political integration centered in London?"⁴¹

After the Revolution the agrarian ideal became a popular assumption, but the conflict between the agrarians and the mercantilists still continued: the main difference was that the center of economic and political integration had shifted from London to the Eastern seaboard. In 1845, the conflict between the two ideals drew attention through a public exchange of letters between Stephen A. Douglas and Asa Whitney, who proposed building a railroad to the Pacific. Professor Smith describes the opposing points of view:

Douglas, spokesman for the West, considered the individual farmer with his primitive agriculture to be the ultimate source of social values and energies--an assumption derived, however remotely, from the agrarian tradition of Franklin and Jefferson. On the other hand, the New York merchant, Whitney, set out from the assumption that the prime source of social values and achievements is commerce. The notion seems at first glance hardly applicable to an agricultural frontier.

But Whitney was as consistent as Douglas. If Douglas insisted that the individual farmer would create the Pacific railway, Whitney was as certain that only the railway could create the far-western farmer, in the sense of making him a useful member of society. The settler in the trans-Mississippi, Whitney pointed out, had no way of getting produce to market. In the wilderness, remote from civilization, destitute of comforts, he was but a "demi-savage." It was true that his labor produced food from the earth: in this limited sense the ideal of subsistence farming was valid. But since he could not "exchange with the different branches of industry," that is, had no place in the commercial system, he was not a source of wealth or power to the nation, and from the mercantilist point of view could hardly be said to exist.⁴²

The complexity of the controversy between these two competing value systems was further entangled by the fact that two agrarianisms rather than one found currency in America. They could be characterized as "the plantation system, with its masters and slaves, and the Jeffersonian ideal of a society of small landowners tilling their own soil."⁴³ The two basic values which were competing in this conflict of agrarianisms were, as Smith puts it, "the virtuous labor of the farmer" and "the leisure of the landowning class."⁴⁴

Historically, the Civil War settled this dispute in favor of the yeoman and free soil, but out of the Old South came a permanent contribution to national literary themes as well as some very relevant criticism of the Western agrarian ideal. Since the Western ideal assumed a basic value in the labor of the yeoman, it was logical that Southern criticism--for example, George Fitzhugh's Cannibals All!--would probe exactly at this assumption:

Agricultural labor is the most arduous, least respectable, and worst paid of all labor. Nature and philosophy teach all who can to avoid and escape from it, and to pursue less laborious, more respectable, and more lucrative employments. None work in the field who can help it. Hence free society is in great measure dependent for its food and clothing on slave society.⁴⁵

Historical developments in the latter half of the nineteenth century were to demonstrate the validity of this criticism. The Western agrarian ideal was given a field test and was found wanting:

The very fertility of the Northwest posed a dilemma with respect to the agrarian ideal. The hardy yeoman came out into the wilderness seeking land, and his search was rewarded: he acquired title to his farm land and reared his numerous children amid the benign influences of forest and meadow. But the land was so fertile and the area under cultivation increased so rapidly that a surplus of grain and livestock quickly appeared, and the Western farmer was no longer content within the primitive pattern of subsistence agriculture.⁴⁶

More important than the yeoman's disillusionment, at least in terms of economic evolution, was the ultimate resolution of the conflict between the agrarian and mercantile ideals. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, "the agrarian ideal had supplanted mercantilist theory" because "it had corresponded more closely to the actual state of affairs in the North American interior and had provided a much more reliable basis for charting the course of Western history in the immediate future."⁴⁷ By the 1830's, however, mercantilist theory was being transformed into a reality that would eventually force the agrarian assumptions into their grave. The greatest force of the new reality was the technological revolution, which

initially harnessed the power of steam:

Steam power hastened the transition from subsistence to commercial agriculture, caused the accumulation of capital in units of unprecedented size, transformed the older western cities, and created new cities on a metropolitan scale like Cleveland and Chicago. These changes spelled the end of the simple economy which in the first stages of settlement had corresponded at least approximately to the agrarian ideal. In the long run the virtuous yeoman could no more stand his ground against the developing capitalism of merchant and banker and manufacturer in the Northwest than he could against the plantation system in the Southwest.⁴⁸

Transition is probably too mild a word to describe the ascendancy of the mercantile ideal. Actually, it was a battle between two basic value systems, between two basic economic and social patterns, and the rise of the mercantilists was not through a sublimation of agrarian energies but through the defeat and subjugation of the agrarian forces:

The steam engine was not only to subordinate the yeoman farmer to the banker and merchant of the new Western cities; eventually it transformed him into a producer of staple crops for distant markets and thus placed him at the mercy of freight rates and of fluctuations in international commodity prices.⁴⁹

To put it another way, the frontier was closed not by the success of the agrarian ideal, that is, by all the Western land coming under the hands of the yeoman farmers; the frontier was closed by the defeat of the agrarian ideal, that is, by the notion of one man or one family to one farm being replaced by the assumptions and methods of the industrial-technological-capitalistic complex.

Keeping this fact in mind, we can turn back to the model of frontier stages. The stages of trapper, squatter,

farmer and industrial captain do describe, in broad fashion, what happened on the American frontier and, in more specific fashion, what happened on particular frontiers in America. But the relationship between these stages, at least between the last two--yeoman farmer and capitalist--was not so much evolutionary, except in the sense of survival of the fittest, as merely successive in time. The industrial stage in America did not evolve from the agrarian stage; rather both ideals coexisted in America from even before the Revolution, and finally during the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century the industrial forces defeated the agrarian forces and thus established a new culture. The industrial stage was not built on the foundation of the agrarian stage; it was erected over the grave of the yeoman farmer.

If this be so, then we can make two comments. First, we have another reason for exercising caution when we view other frontiers in light of the American frontier. Commencing after the industrial stage had already begun in the continental United States, which is to say, after the frontier had closed, the development of Alaska, for example, might not be expected to display the same coincidental pattern: corporate method might characterize the beginnings of Alaskan settlement rather than follow at a later time.

Second, the assertion that the disappearance of free land in America marked the closing of the frontier is really a compressed way of saying much more. If the real

issue is economic organization, in which case free land is only a single example of opportunity for individual advancement, then to say that the free lands have disappeared is actually to say that in all kinds of occupations the opportunity for independent, individual economic activity has also disappeared. We can test this corollary by looking at the role of the gold miner in America.

The search for gold

By 1848, there were some American settlers on the Pacific Coast; we have already seen how Henry Nash Smith regarded the Treaty of 1846 as merely recording officially "the fact that the American agricultural frontier had been pushed out to Oregon."⁵⁰ But the number of settlers was still slight. For example, three years before gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in 1848, there were "less than 700 men in Californai who were not of Spanish blood, out of a total population (exclusive of Indians) that was more than ten times that figure."⁵¹ With the discovery of gold, the slow trickle of immigration across the Great Plains swelled to a flood. It is estimated that by 1851, fifty thousand miners were at work in California; two years later the population had doubled: a hundred thousand miners were digging gold out of the earth.⁵²

Most scholars agree with Ray Allen Billington's view of the significance of the discovery of gold in the development of the Far West: "The rush of the forty-niners was primarily responsible for the conquest of America's

most westerly frontier."⁵³ In California today, however, the production of gold has dropped to an insignificant level. According to John Walton Caughey,

It is common knowledge that California's annual payments of federal taxes far exceed what she once remitted in bullion, that all the gold the states has mined would buy only a small fraction of the total oil production, less than twenty orange crops, only eight or ten years' output of motion pictures, only a part of the airplane manufacture, and no more than the 1946 and 1947 agricultural yield.⁵⁴

If gold can be so important and then so unimportant, perhaps it is worthwhile to look closer at the role which this yellow metal played in the development of the West. Since the first big rush headed for California, we might begin there, too.

During the year following the discovery of gold in California, frontier mining prevailed: the miners were so few, the unprospected streams so numerous, and the technique of placer mining so simple that individualistic mining was the rule. "Working alone with their wash pans, or in groups of three or four with cradles, they could support themselves adequately while waiting to 'strike it rich'."⁵⁵ During this first year, placer mining "was the smallest of small business, with capitalism present only in the aspirations of the diggers, each of whom hoped to strike it rich enough to become a captain of industry, of finance, or at least of a farm."⁵⁶

Throughout the diggings there were daily new stories, some of them true, of miners who had struck it rich:

" . . . of a miner near Stockton who had uncovered a pocket hiding \$400 in gold, of another in the San Joaquin district who found "five pounds of precious metal with the turn of his spade, of a gulch in the Mokelumne diggings that yielded fourteen pounds of dust daily."⁵⁷ And those who did not strike it rich were at least making a good living: statistics show that in 1848, a miner averaged twenty dollars per day⁵⁸--in 1848!

As more and more newcomers arrived, the picture changed. Gold production increased--from 10,151,360 ounces in 1849 to a peak of 81,294,700 ounces in 1852⁵⁹--but individual income dropped as competition for a place to dig stiffened and as the surface riches were skimmed off. In 1848, a miner's daily wages had been twenty dollars; the figure dropped "to sixteen [dollars] in 1849, ten in 1850, less than eight in 1851, and six in 1852."⁶⁰ California's few years of frontier mining were quickly running out:

As competition increased, miners who had in 1849 abandoned claims when the yield fell below an ounce or two a day were glad to find a quarter ounce of dust in their sluice box at the end of ten hours of work. Most kept on digging, living on the hope that sustained all prospectors, but the day when California's treasures could lure increasing hordes to the West was drawing to a close.⁶¹

Only a year after the first discovery, mining methods were shifting to group efforts which allowed untapped ores to be reached and produced greater returns at known mines. In late 1849, miners "turned more and more to 'river mining' and 'coyoting,' and they perfected the sluice box

"as a means of extracting more gold from pay dirt."⁶²

Confronting these miners was the problem of all new mining economies:

All new mining countries seem to start their life with a fanfare of flush times and universal optimism. Usually this prosperity is based upon the presence of rich, virgin deposits that can be exploited by comparatively simple methods. Because in minerals nature gives but does not renew, these deposits presently begin to show signs of exhaustion. The mining country then finds itself facing either one of two fates: decay or transition.

If there are no deeper resources, and if the capabilities of the population are limited, the former condition must prevail. If, however, both the territory and its people have latent reserves, then there is a good chance that the region may yet live to ripe maturity, providing always that it is sturdy enough to survive a long and trying period of transition.⁶³

It was apparent, even to contemporaries, that California was developing away from frontier mining, where a man need only invest the labor of his two hands in order to make a living and possibly even a fortune. Already in 1851, the state's leading newspaper was pointing to the change, a change required by the depletion of the surface resources:

The real truth is, by far the largest part of the gold . . . [mined hitherto] was taken from the river banks, with comparatively little labor. There is gold still in those banks, but they will never yield as they have yielded. The cream of the gulches, wherever water could be got, has also been taken off. We have got the river bottoms and the quartz veins; but to get the gold from them, we must employ gold. The man who lives upon his labor from day to day, must hereafter be employed by the man who has in his possession accumulated labor, or money, the representative of labor.⁶⁴

By 1858, only seven years later, a contemporary observed that the change to corporate mining, and thus the

end of frontier mining, had taken place:

The business of mining in California has been declining constantly since 1851--at least as a source of profit for most of the miners. . . . The main profits now go into the hands of a few who are in possession of rich claims, whereas in 1851 the profits were much more equally divided. Then no capital was required by the miner, and little experience; the best diggings were in the easily-obtained gravel in the beds of brooks and ravines, and on the bars of creeks and rivers. . . . Our gold comes now from deep down in the bowels of the earth, from tunnels, quartz veins, shafts, and hydraulic claims, and when found near the surface, a large proportion of it must go to pay ditch companies for the water used in washing. In 1851 labor pocketed all the profits of the mines; in 1858 capital pockets most of it.⁶⁵

The basic change from frontier to capitalistic mining had several consequences. One was labor problems. Rodman Paul records several strikes, including a bloody one which occurred at Leland Stanford's Lincoln mine after the management tried to force longer working hours on Saturday nights, and then generalizes:

Nothing could have revealed more fully the change that had come over California mining than these ultra-modern strikes that marred its later years. The picture of drawn battle lines between strikers on the one hand and troops and corporate owners on the other might have been sketched out of the twentieth century. So vividly expressive is it of present-day urban industrial conditions that a stranger would hardly have believed that this was the same foothill region into which the brawling, independent, gold-hunting population had rushed a quarter of a century before.⁶⁶

A second consequence was the growth of urban centers of population. As Rodman Paul puts it, "In 1873 its [the former mining frontier's] attractions were only those of an eastern factory town: employment at fixed wages and under set conditions, with no means of bettering them save by the

"hard road of trade unionism."⁶⁷

Having seen mining reach the peak of its development in California, we can turn to two other questions. First, how do the stages of mining development compare with the agrarian model which we have already examined; second, what is the relationship between mining and a more permanent economy based on other industry?

The similarity of agrarian and mining stages seems rather obvious, although at least one scholar emphasizes "that California, in common with several other regions of the mining West, had an early development which deviated sharply from the American norm."⁶⁸ Agrarian frontiers were first opened by the fur trader and squatter and then developed by the more substantial farmer, who in turn became subservient to the industrial captain. The economic stages in mining were similar: the prospector, like the trader and squatter, scouted and located new gold fields but moved on while the working miner stayed, albeit briefly, to reap the first harvests of gold. The working miner, in turn, became a hired laborer in the more intensive mining which was undertaken by the San Francisco or London capitalist after the mining frontier closed.

Historically considered, the real difference between mining and farming was not in the nature of their economic development--both started as individual, frontier enterprise and ended as big business--but in the permanence of the activity: farming is still big business; gold mining

is going out of business. Farming, whether conducted on a subsistence level or as a corporate venture, can continue indefinitely with proper technique; mining, however, always involves a depletable resource. A shift to corporate method permits the application of more sophisticated technology and thus a more efficient tapping of the resource, but a given deposit will eventually be exhausted. Gold mining in California was no exception to this rule. The ghost towns and deserted villages attest to a truth which Rodman Paul neatly summarizes: " . . . mining is a good way to pioneer a territory, but a poor way to hold it."⁶⁹

Since California has grown despite the decline of even corporate gold mining, it is evident that some other transition took place besides that of economic organization. The most powerful stimulus for such a transition was the large market created by a hundred thousand men engaged in mining. At first the demands of this market were satisfied mainly by importations:

As the gold-rush market became a reality, merchants and shipowners in the Pacific exerted themselves to meet the opportunity. Voyages were undertaken to Hawaii and to Oregon to load foodstuffs. Other ships sailed to more distant Pacific ports. At the height of the gold fever it was difficult to get enough men to form a crew, but sailings of this sort increased in number. Hawaii continued to be the most favored destination, but other ships went to the west coast of Mexico, to Peru and Chile, to the Galápagos Islands for turtles, to Tahiti and the islands of the South Pacific for pork and potatoes, and to China and the Pacific Northwest.⁷⁰

Since California was blessed with a suitable climate, soil, and other resources, the demands of the miners also

stimulated local activity. The existing ranches of southern California, which had been raising cattle for tallow and hides, thrived on the new market, and the cattle business spread: "Henry Miller did not become a Swift, an Armour, or a Cudahy, but, with his abattoirs and outlets at San Francisco and his ranches spread from the Mexican border into Nevada and Oregon, he was, without exaggeration, the Cattle King."⁷¹

Other branches of agriculture were also stimulated. Wheat growers, like the producers of vegetables and fruit, first looked at the mining market but soon saw possibilities beyond the boundaries of California: "From a mere 17,000 bushels in 1850, this crop mounted to 5,900,000 in 1860 and went on to make California first in wheat production by 1890. From an importer of flour and ship's bread, California turned to become a large exporter."⁷²

Close on the rise in agriculture came the development of related industries:

From agriculture to industry was only a short step. The grape growers who turned wine makers are a good example. They likewise did not get into production fast enough to become much of a factor in the gold fields, but by the 'sixties they had caught up with the local market and were shipping pipes and barrels round the Horn to the States. Flour milling grew by similar schedule. By 1869 California had some two hundred mills, several with a capacity of a thousand barrels a day.⁷³

Other small industries also flourished: wagon making, tanning, textile mills, powder factories, sugar refineries which processed Hawaiian grown cane, and cigar plants. Even

more important was the development of the lumber industry and of iron manufacturing: "From routine blacksmithing it advanced to the processing of iron into pipe, wire, cables, pulleys, and machinery of various sorts ranging up to locomotives and iron river boats."⁷⁴

All of these industries and commerce in general were stimulated or called into being by the large market of the miners, but industry and trade then continued to develop an existence which yearly became less dependent on the California mining market; therefore, the eventual decline of gold mining did not also result in a general decline in the economy. According to Rodman W. Paul, the reason that California was able to continue growing even as its mining towns became ghost towns was that it was changing "from a predominantly mining state to one in which agriculture, stock raising, lumbering, and commerce were the growing interests."⁷⁵ Billington makes the same point when he says:

Mining had become a big business in which the individual miner had no place. As he drifted away, washing pan in hand, to continue his search for illusive fortune elsewhere, his place was taken by farmers and ranchers, carpenters and bookkeepers, merchants and businessmen, all dedicated to the task of rearing an enduring civilization on the foundations laid by California's gold.⁷⁶

Having observed in detail the California gold rush and its contribution to the permanent, regional economy, we can briefly review gold mining in the rest of the Far West. Once the mining frontier closed in California, those who did not wish to enter the industrial stage as laborers

in a corporate mine began to fan out into unsettled regions.

The first movement was to the north, where gold had been discovered in the Columbia River in 1854. Indian uprisings delayed the rush until 1859, when two thousand prospectors reached the Fort Colville area. These deposits were soon exhausted, and the camps--Colfax, Pataha, and Fort Colville itself--became mere supply bases for the gold country even further north. In 1857, gold was discovered on the sandbars of the Frazer River in British Columbia, and during the following spring and summer thirty thousand Californians left for the new fields. Opportunities there turned out to be disappointing and by the following spring, 1859, "a mass exodus was under way; by autumn once-booming Victoria resembled a ghost town, with street after street of boarded-up shops as reminders of its day of prosperity."⁷⁷

Most of the disappointed miners on the Frazer returned to California, but others continued either to the north, where the Cariboo country strikes were made in 1860, or to the east, where the Kootenai fields proved richer than the Frazer River, but these deposits also went into rapid and permanent decline.⁷⁸

Some of the miners returning from the Frazer River in 1860 discovered gold in southern Idaho and by 1863, a major rush swept into Montana. Unlike the deposits in British Columbia, those in Idaho and Montana proved more substantial; and with the transition to corporate hard-rock mining, a permanent mining and agricultural economy grew up.

Idaho was granted territorial status in 1863 and Montana a year later.⁷⁹

Prospecting in the Southwest produced a strike in Arizona in 1853, and Gila City flourished until 1864, but the Wahoe country in Nevada proved to be the most spectacular of all. Placer mining there had produced some gold from about 1849 until 1855; but with the discovery of the Comstock Lode in 1859, Nevada entered big-time mining. The Ophir vein of the Comstock Lode yielded ore which was "three fourths silver and one fourth gold, and was worth \$3,876 a ton!"⁸⁰ The mineral wealth of this region was fabulous, but it was not available to the individual miner. As John Walton Caughey points out, "Elaborate machinery, capital, and technical knowledge were requisite."⁸¹

In Colorado, gold had been found in 1850 by miners on their way to California, but the showing was not impressive. In 1858, however, small strikes began to draw more attention to this region and by 1861, another mining-based regional economy achieved status as a territory.⁸² But, like Montana and Wyoming, Colorado also developed a cattle industry which would provide the basis for a more permanent economy: "Between 1860 and 1870 the number of head jumped from 11,000 to 520,000 in Wyoming, from 26,000 to 430,000 in Montana and from 71,000 to 791,000 in Colorado."⁸³

We have already observed how the discovery of gold in the Far West altered the pattern of successive frontiers in the westward expansion of American culture. Gold in the

Far West pulled permanent settlers across but not into the Great Plains; however, the lines of transportation and communication which were constructed to unite the East and the West also created the means for later intensive settlement of the Great Basin. Now we are in a position to entertain generalizations about the relationship between gold mining and permanent settlement. We might start with a couple by John Walton Caughey. First, "That gold mining is not the ideal foundation for an enduring economy is suggested by the records for Minas Geraes, Siberia, the Rand, the Klondike, and even California's Mother Lode district proper"; and second, "Of all the localities in the world that have been favored with great gold rushes, California is unique in having used hers as a springboard to rapid and a gratifyingly consistent development."⁸⁴

We have reviewed enough of the details of California's development to be persuaded that the first of these generalizations applies there; but we have not, perhaps, looked closely enough at the development of the other gold rush areas--Washington, Idaho, Montana, Arizona, Colorado, Nevada--to be persuaded about the accuracy of the second generalization, nor, I think, do we need to. The reason for examining the effects of gold in the development of the Far West has been to reach a generalization about gold mining which could be kept in mind when we look at the development of Alaska. If Caughey's seem collectively to say too much, then we can be satisfied with remembering

Rodman Paul's, which claims a little less: " . . . mining is a good way to pioneer a territory, but a poor way to hold it."⁸⁵

The pioneer

Thus far in this chapter we have considered in a general way the manner in which frontiers may differ; we have considered the broad succession of social and economic stages in the evolution of American civilization, and we have considered in slightly more detail the successive stages of frontier development and how these frontier stages fit into the larger picture of America's development. In a moment we will glance at the literary rendering of these historical realities, but first we need to take a closer look at two other subjects: the pioneers who opened and developed the frontier, and the significance of a closed frontier.

That scholars of the westward movement do believe that there is such a character as the American pioneer is clear. Some of the studies which deal with the frontier in America refer only obliquely to pioneer traits or the pioneer spirit. Lucy Lockwood Hazard, for example, after noting how various American regional frontiers have differed in location and primary occupation, asserts that pioneers on all the various frontiers have displayed a common spirit: "a spirit of determination, of endurance, of independence, of ingenuity, of flexibility, of individualism, of optimism. . . ." ⁸⁶

Other scholars, like Allan G. Bogue, give a longer list of traits, but they are acknowledgedly only repeating those characteristics mentioned by Turner.⁸⁷ Lawrence S. Kaplan also sticks with the characteristics enumerated by Turner, but in "The Frontier and the American Character," he attempts a more integrated treatment. Kaplan organizes Turner's scattered itemization into three major strands, each of which includes sub-traits, both admirable and objectionable. The most significant strand, according to Kaplan, is individualism, which includes the positive traits of self-reliance, inventiveness and industry, and the negative traits of violence, lynch law and "a self-centered indifference if not cruelty toward the sufferings of others"; a second trait is equalitarianism, which encompasses not only toleration but also intellectual mediocrity; the third strand is materialism, under which are subsumed the doctrine of success but also the traits "waste, extravagance, and selfishness."⁸⁸

More specialized studies, like Mody C. Boatright's "The Myth of Frontier Individualism," pick a trait that has commonly been attributed to the pioneer and then build a case for the very opposite. Against frontier individualism, Professor Boatright posits the widespread adherence to unwritten laws of hospitality and the cooperation of mutual protection associations.⁸⁹ The conclusion, though provocative, is not helpful: the pioneer was individualistic and he was not.

Ray Allen Billington takes a more comprehensive approach to the problem of describing or defining characteristics even though his strategy is quite simple: categorization and then generalization. First, according to Billington, there were the fur traders and Indian fighters, who "did secede from civilization" or at least "were infected with germs of primitivism by their wilderness life"⁹⁰ Lawlessness spread with the growth of the frontier--from the Delaware into Kentucky, into the Mississippi Valley and beyond: "The disorder and savagery of the mountain men's rendezvous, the mining camps, the cowtowns, and the 'hells on wheels' that housed the railroad construction crews has been too often chronicled to require repetition."⁹¹ The pioneers of the next stage--squatters, backwoodsmen, or hunters--were less violent in their habits, but still indolent, restless, and victims of anomie.

The pioneers of these first two stages of development Billington calls a "handful of outcasts" who were not, even though they have been pictured as such, "typical frontiersmen." Pioneers of the next stage--"small-propertyed farmers, ranchers, and entrepreneurs"--"formed the bulk of the advancing population" and "were of a different breed, in outlook, in purpose, in social philosophy, from the hunters and squatters."⁹² The next pioneers--propertyed farmers and tradesmen--differed mainly in their willingness and ability "to risk security for the chance to grow wealthy."⁹³

Interesting as these studies of pioneer traits may

be, they are not very helpful in getting below the surface of behavior and into the heart of the pioneer spirit. To understand what made the pioneers tick, we need to know more about their hopes, aspirations, and values--their dreams and myths.

Taking a lead from Turner, one writer emphasizes the importance of materialism in the character of the frontiersman and then suggests that materialism "embodies the essence of the American Dream--a dream of success."⁹⁴ With such reasoning, a current American myth is traced back to the beginnings of the American experience on a new continent. Since such a point of view might become useful for comparing the Alaskan pioneer with the American pioneer, it seems worthwhile to elaborate upon this notion.

Turner had remarked that the first two ideals of the pioneer were conquest and discovery,⁹⁵ and later scholars have made the same assertion, although in a more complex context. Once again we can turn to Henry Nash Smith's analysis of the conception and ideals which were operating in America, certainly from the time of her independence and even before. In the late eighteenth century, two outlooks--the mercantile and the agrarian--coexisted in an intellectual matrix of progressive stages of civilization. These two outlooks each assumed different values and generated different visions of an American Empire. The mercantile ideal, which was taken directly from the British, viewed empire as maritime dominion and presupposed "American

"expansion westward to the Pacific"; the idea of a highway to the Pacific, which would open trade with the Orient, drew "upon the long history and rich overtones of the search for a northwest passage to Asia, or, in Whitman's phrase, a 'passage to India.'"⁹⁶ In contrast, the agrarian ideal envisioned empire "as a populous future society occupying the interior of the American continent"; "dependent upon agriculture, and associated with various images of the Good Society to be realized in the West, [this idea] may be called the theme of the Garden of the World."⁹⁷

Although the mercantile and agrarian ideals were eventually to come into open conflict, at first the differences in their outlooks--one for expansion, the other for development--were minimized in the popular imagination. Both ideals were embodied in myth which could move men to action.

For expansion, there was the myth of the Orient:

. . . the idea of a passage to India, with its associated images of fabulous wealth, of ivory and apes and peacocks, led a vigorous existence on the level of imagination entirely apart from its practicability. So rich and compelling was the notion that it remained for decades one of the ruling conceptions of American thought about the West.⁹⁸

By the mid-1800's, however, this particular expression of the mercantile ideal had lost its point because the Pacific had been reached. Formal acquisition was made of Oregon in 1846 and of California in 1848. Then emphasis shifted to development of the trans-Mississippi region, and a myth which had been growing beside the passage to India sprang

into full bloom--the myth of the garden or earthly paradise.

As early as 1796, Moses Austin observed this myth drawing pioneers along the Wilderness Road into Kentucky:

Ask these Pilgrims what they expect when they git to Kentuckey the Answer is Land. have you any. No, but I expect I can git it. have you any thing to pay for land, No. did you Ever see the Country. No but Every Body says its good land. can any thing be more Absurd than the Conduct of man, here is hundreds Travelling hundreds of Miles, they Know not for what Nor whither, except its to Kentucky, passing land almost as good and easy obtain.d, the Proprietors of which would gladly give on any terms, but it will not do its not Kentuckey its not the Promised land its not the goodly inheratence the Land of Milk and Honey. and when arriv.d at this Heaven in Idea what do they find? a goodly land I will allow but to them forbidden Land, exausted and worn down with distress and disappointment they are at last Oblig.d to become hewers of wood and Drawers of water.⁹⁹

The last question which Austin asks and answers indicates that even then the myth was operating independently of geographical fact, but forcefully nonetheless. Arthur K. Moore extends this observation:

The Edenic metaphor became conventional in accounts of frontier Kentucky after the publication of Imlay's A Topographical Description . . . [1792]. The illusion was repeatedly denied by objective reality, for, however idyllic at times, Kentucky was a land visited periodically by extreme heat and cold, drought and flood. That the illusion should have prevailed and even yet sustains the high price of Bluegrass acreage can best be explained by the rich content of the myth of the Earthly Paradise, which has always had power to move men beyond reason.¹⁰⁰

Many years later and farther to the west, the myth of the garden was still being preached:

What then . . . may we legitimately expect of the people in Nebraska in the future? We have a right to expect that our school system will reach the highest possible stage of advancement--that the great mass of the people

will become remarkable for their intellectual brightness and quickness. Along with this natural development and synchronizing with it, there will be developed a healthy, vigorous and beautiful race of men and women. Art culture will then receive the attention which it deserves. Music, painting, and sculpture will be cherished and cultivated for their own sake. The marvelous richness of our soils will give a true and lasting basis for prosperity and wealth. For be it remembered that agriculture in all its branches, endures the tests of time better than any other industry. It is also the best school of virtue for a nation. Happy the children that are trained to industry on a farm. More men and women of high character and endowments come from the farm, than from any other station. It is nearest to the heart of nature and nature's God.¹⁰¹

The common theme of all these preachers was, as a modern observer puts it, that "above all, the frontier was a land of rebirth, of beginning again, of exuberant hope Idealism drove the pioneers onward no less than the hope of material gain; they were dreamers who found in westering a road to the foot of the rainbow."¹⁰² In the West, as in Kentucky, the myth of the garden flourished despite the contrary developments of economic reality; and, assuming unlimited opportunity, the myth not only flourished but also nourished two other conceptions: the doctrine of progress--an assumption of endless economic development as men transformed the wilderness into a civilization--and the myth of the self-made man--the hardy soul who, by the application of his own talents and energy, could reap a fortune while participating in the process of civilization.

Behind the American Dream of Success was more than the doctrine of materialism. Rather, as Harold P. Simonson points out, it was a fusion of numerous mythic elements that created the central American myth:

Whatever else the frontier contributed to American development, it gave people a great myth. As participants in this myth they felt that its colossal meaning ranged from personal and national destiny to human destiny itself. The myth proclaimed that on the open frontier a person could be reborn; he could have a second chance. Freed from the heavy accretions of culture, the frontiersman again could experience the pristine harmony between himself and nature; or, to prove his superiority, he again could battle nature's inscrutable ways and, through strength and resourcefulness, triumph over them. . . .

.
The frontier made America an open society from the beginning. Because individuals could move west--because they had a west to which they could move--social mobility became one of America's distinguishing characteristics. Furthermore, mobility nurtured optimism. In the American consciousness the West symbolized hope; the West figured into the process of civilization, so that the process itself came to mean progress. From this point logic designated the West as synonymous with the American Dream.¹⁰³

A belief in the American Dream would thus seem to be the most significant characteristic of the American pioneer, and the fact that this dream was out of contact with reality by the late nineteenth century did not weaken its appeal. The American Dream filled many heads, even as the frontier was closing, probably because it offered "solace to the oppressed by conjuring visions of limitless opportunity amidst the virgin wealth of the West, and even though few found the pot of gold, the faith that it could be found persisted. Not every gambler must win to keep the faith of gamblers alive."¹⁰⁴

The closed frontier

The conflict between the agrarian and mercantile ideals was generated from their differing assumptions about the source of values in society. The agrarians "considered

"the individual farmer with his primitive agriculture to be the ultimate source of social values and energies" while the mercantilists assumed "that the prime source of social values and achievements is commerce."¹⁰⁵

Complicating this difference in values was the fact that both positions affirmed the priority of their beliefs within a matrix of civilization, that is, adjunctive with "the theory that all societies, including those of successive Wests, develop through the same series of progressively higher stages."¹⁰⁶ The problem which this created, according to Henry Nash Smith, was that "the theory of social stages was basically at odds with the conception of the Western farmer as a yeoman surrounded by utopian splendor. Instead, it implied that the Western farmer was a coarse and unrefined representative of a primitive stage of social evolution."¹⁰⁷ The dilemma in which the agrarian found himself was that he believed "that the highest social values were to be found in the relatively primitive society just within the agricultural frontier," but he also believe in a theory of social stages which "placed the highest values at the other end of the process, in urban industrial society, amid the manufacturing development and city life which Jefferson and later agrarian theorists had considered dangerous to social purity."¹⁰⁸

The contradictions within the agrarian outlook and the essential inadequacy of the agrarian ideal in the face of the new economic forces of a developing industrial society

did not become an acute problem until the latter part of the nineteenth century, largely because both the farmer and the merchant were enjoying the fruits of economic progress. But, according to Smith, the balance was beginning to shift:

. . . after the Civil War Republican policy obviously favored the city against the country, the banker and the merchant against the farmer, the speculator against the settler. Whatever may have been the theoretical advantages of the simplicity of rural existence, the ostentatious luxury of the newly rich in the growing cities was paraded in the press with a kind of prurient fascination as evidence of what a free society might achieve by way of the good life.¹⁰⁹

Billington also asserts that the old patterns of life were changing:

Everywhere, for all to see, were the physical manifestations of the new order: mushrooming cities, complexes of factories, transportation networks geared to the needs of international markets, a growing labor force increasingly conscious of its class status, a diminishing number of farmers. No longer was the agrarian the solid, steadfast symbol of integrity to American youth; glamorous roles in the new mythology were assigned to business titans, while the farmer became a "hick" or a "hayseed."¹¹⁰

To say that the population was shifting from the farm to the city or that the common way of making a living was changing from being self-employed to being a wage-earner is another way of saying that the frontier was closing. Taken at its face value, the announcement in 1890, that the frontier was closed would suggest that in that year America became an industrial nation. In this sense the announcement was a bit misleading, since it was based on arbitrary figures about a ratio between land and population. But in another sense the announcement was accurate. For some time, "the center of economic and political gravity" had been shifting

from the country to the city, and the balance did finally change--if not in 1890 exactly, at least close to that time. According to Henry Steele Commager,

With the decade of the nineties--or roughly from the mid-eighties to the Spanish War--the new America came in as on flood tide. These years witnessed the passing of the old West, the disappearance of the frontier line and of good, cheap farm land, the decline of the cattle kingdom, the completion of the transcontinentals, the admission of the Omnibus States, and the final territorial organization of the trans-Mississippi area. They revealed a dangerous acceleration of the exploitation of natural resources; the seizure of the best forest, mineral, range, and farm land by corporations. . . . They saw the advent of the New South; an unprecedented concentration of control of the processes of manufacture, transportation, communication, and banking in trusts and monopolies; the rise of big business; the emergence of the successful businessman as hero. . . .

. . . This decade saw the decline of the idealistic Knights of Labor and the beginnings of the modern labor movement sponsored by the American Federation of Labor, the emergence of labor trouble as a constant in industry, the beginnings--with the Haymarket riot, the Homestead and the Pullman strikes--of class conflict in American society, and the fashioning of new legal and political weapons for that struggle.

And in this period came at last a full-throated recognition of the crowding problems of agriculture, urban life, slums, trusts, business and political corruption, race prejudice, and the maldistribution of wealth, and with it, convulsive efforts to adapt a federal political system to a centralized economy, and a laissez-faire philosophy to a program of social democracy.¹¹¹

Given an event which so clearly, as Turner phrased it, marked "the end of the first great period in its [America's] formation,"¹¹² we are led naturally to the question: what were the consequences of the closed frontier in America? The developments outlined in the previous quotation indicate what some of the immediate consequences were, and we could look to the historians to see what economic, social, and political changes have taken place in the

twentieth century; but that would open another can of worms. Instead, the question might be rephrased: what were the effects of the closed frontier on the most important characteristic of the pioneer--his belief in the American Dream?

Some answered this question by blithely asserting that all the essentials of the dream could be found on new frontiers--the frontiers of business, of science, of human relations, of space. But Billington convincingly refutes this assertion:

That these areas of expansion will provide opportunity for the upward mobility of millions seems indisputable, but equally indisputable is the fact that the form and nature of this opportunity has been forever altered by the passing of the frontier. The new science and technology will create jobs, but they will be jobs in corporations or government bureaucracies where advancement depends on cooperative endeavor. The passing of the geographical frontier doomed the agricultural pioneer or the small entrepreneur who would scale the social ladder by the application of his own energies to untapped resources. The principal distinguishing feature of old America--the opportunity for the self-employed to win personal vertical advancement through individual enterprise--cannot be duplicated in the new America of the twentieth century.¹¹³

Most commonly it was recognized that the American Dream, founded as it was on the agrarian ideal, was shattered when the door of the frontier closed. Responses to the shattered dream varied, but most of them involved a form of escape. Harold P. Simonson describes several of these forms of escape:

As for the young artists and intellectuals, their escape from all that a closed frontier implied left them foundering. Some went to Europe where no frontier dream existed. Some simply moved away from their home towns and the puerile Babbittry stifling them. Others went to Greenwich Village in New York or established colonies at Grantwood and Provincetown. Some took up

Spiritualism in California's City of Angels. The record has somber personal importance too. Vachel Lindsay committed suicide in 1931; Hart Crane, in 1932; and F. Scott Fitzgerald cracked-up in the late thirties. In the forties Ezra Pound was spared facing trial for treason only because he was adjudged mentally unsound. John Gould Fletcher committed suicide in 1950; Ernest Hemingway, in 1961. The case of Eugene O'Neill may also figure in here, but more testimonial is that of his son, a tall, black-haired man standing six feet three, two hundred and fifteen pounds, with a booming voice and a black beard, a professor of English at Yale, a classical scholar, who at the age of thirty-nine still slept with a teddy bear of childhood days and the same year, 1950, committed suicide with a razor.¹¹⁴

Simonson cites other suggestive evidence about suicide rates on the West Coast and then adds psychic suicide as another form of escape, that is, a refusal to accept the fact of a closed frontier, or a looking "back to a time when the myth assured us no walls existed, to a time of perpetual youth and innocence."¹¹⁵

An alternative response--one observed by Simonson in Mark Twain, Henry Adams, Ole Rølvaag and Nathanael West--is a cultivation of the tragic vision, a point of view which Simonson associates with maturity:

When a nation, like a person, comes of age, it recognizes that limitation is a fundamental fact of life. Painfully it admits that possibilities can only be finite and progress only limited, that solutions to problems are found more often through compromises than crusades It also abandons the dream that a second chance mollifies responsibilities here and now. Coming of age means awakening to the tragic realities that nations, like men, are only mortal; that truth comes chiefly through ambiguity and paradox; and that the old inheritance of pride still carries its inexorable consequences. These realities emphasize the common bondage all men share and the futility of their efforts to escape it. . . . To come of age is to recognize no exceptions, no annulments, and, most importantly, no escape from the cycle of genesis and decay. The existentialism symbolized by a closed frontier replaces the idealism

engendered on an open frontier. Instead of a limitless frontier there is a wall. The tension comes from the illusory prospect of the one and the certitude of the other. Existence in this tension is the heart of tragedy.¹¹⁶

For some, then, the closing of the frontier was like Adam's fall--a fortunate circumstance, for it provided the condition in which human beings could struggle to fulfill their potential: the closed frontier, like the sword at the entrance to the garden, "cuts through illusions about a past or future Promised Land and takes us into the awesome depth and energy and freedom in this brief, walled-in existence here and now."¹¹⁷

The responses to a closed frontier were numerous. All of them were to find literary expression in America.

American Literature

The frontier

As we turn to the literary treatment of the American frontier, one question stands out: what is the relationship between historical reality and literary interpretation? But this question generates several others. Do all the major characters of the frontier become literary heroes; if so, with how much verisimilitude are they portrayed? In what way does the structure of values found in the various works reflect the prevalent social codes?

It would be helpful if these questions could be answered with a tidy generalization which might then form the basis for a comparison of Alaskan frontier literature with Western frontier literature, and Arthur K. Moore does,

in fact, provide a useful summary:

The nineteenth-century romances of the frontier, while not entirely free of subversive elements, mine western legendry within the context of progressivism; in nearly every instance, virtue is rewarded, honesty vindicated, and Manifest Destiny justified, whatever the cost to art and probability. Yet, these ostensibly innocent novels, concluding with pious progressive chords, subtly invoke notes of the primitive during the journey through the wilderness and obliquely betray cleavages in the American mind.¹¹⁸

This generalization can be given a bit of elucidation and then be tested against the actual literature of the American frontier.

The cleavage in the American mind which Moore refers to--the dischord of "pious progressive chords" and "notes of the primitive"--is not a new observation. It has already been noted as the essential contradiction in the agrarian outlook, but perhaps it is worth restating here.

In the nineteenth century, there were two notions of the West, which in turn were related to two ways of looking at the use that was to be made of nature. There was the agricultural West on which the conquest of the wilderness was taking place as the farmer put his axe to the tree and his plow to the earth; and just beyond this agricultural area there was the Wild West, the wilderness realm of the Indian and the frontiersman.

The two points of view from which these Wests were regarded might be called the "primitive" and the "progressive." The primitives, as exemplified by Francis Parkman, saw the agricultural West as commonplace and tedious, while the Wild West was "an exhilarating region of adventure and

"comradeship in the open air. Its heroes bore none of the marks of degraded status. They were in reality not members of society at all, but noble anarchists owning no master, free denizens of a limitless wilderness."¹¹⁹ The frontiersman was thus "a fugitive from civilization who could not endure the encroachment of settlements upon his beloved wilderness."¹²⁰ From this point of view, the westward movement did not seem "a glorious victory of civilization over savagery and barbarism" but the regrettable "destruction of the primitive freedom of an untouched continent. . . ." ¹²¹

The progressives, on the other hand, saw the agricultural West as the area in which the process of civilization was being enacted and viewed the Wild West as still new, free land to be conquered. Thus, the frontiersman was an empire-builder, an agent of progress; he was "praiseworthy not because of his intrinsic wildness or half-savage glamor, but because he blazed trails that hard-working farmers could follow."¹²²

The way in which the farmer was regarded is more complicated. As we have already seen, from the mercantilist point of view, with its assumption that commerce is "the prime source of social values and achievements,"¹²³ the farmer had no significance except as he might be made a cog in the commercial system; he was but a half-savage. Although the agrarians affirmed that the primary social values were embodied in the individual farmstead, they also accepted the notion of progressive social stages and thus

were caught in the predicament of needing to assign the farmer to a low social status. As Henry Nash Smith points out, acceptance of the idea of civilization--with its notion of progress and refinement, as exhibited in class distinctions--"not only imposed on Westerners the stigma of social, ethical, and cultural inferiority, but prevented any recognition that the American adventure of settling the continent had brought about an irruption of novelty into history."¹²⁴

This cleavage between primitivism and progressivism is not merely an academic concept; rather it is descriptive of the popular mind in the nineteenth century. Cooper's own ambivalence is exemplary. Smith demonstrates Cooper's attitude by first summarizing the conflict as it is portrayed in The Pioneers:

From the opening scene, when Judge Temple claims as his own a deer that Leatherstocking's young companion has shot, until the moment when the Judge sentences the old hunter to a fine and imprisonment because of his resistance to the new game laws, the narrative turns constantly about the central issue of the old forest freedom versus the new needs of a community which must establish the sovereignty of law over the individual. One aspect of the conflict is of course the question of a primitive free access to the bounty of nature--whether in the form of game or of land--versus individual appropriation and the whole notion of inviolable property rights. Not far in the background are the further issues of the rough equality of all men in a state of nature as against social stratification based on unequal distribution of property; and of formal institutional religion versus the natural, intuitive theology of Leatherstocking, who has little regard for theological niceties or the minutiae of ritual.¹²⁵

Then Smith characterizes Cooper's personal relation to his materials: "The profundity of the symbol of Leatherstocking

"springs from the fact that Cooper displays a genuine ambivalence toward all these issues, although in every case his strongest commitment is to the forces of order"; ". . . he was at once . . . strongly devoted to the principle of social order and . . . vividly responsive to the ideas of nature and freedom in the Western forest. . . ." ¹²⁶

Commitment of the heart to primitive nature and at the same time commitment of the head to progress and civilization heightened the problems of the nineteenth-century writer as he turned to frontier materials. In the first place, it eliminated the numerically most important frontier figure, the farmer, from a role in fiction. The farmer was assumed to be a hard-working, virtuous citizen of the growing republic; but he occupied an inferior social position, and beside the Indian-fighter and fur trapper, he seemed dull and unheroic. Consequently, pioneering experience in the successive Wests, according to Smith, "has left its mark upon imaginative literature almost exclusively in fictional versions of the character of Daniel Boone." ¹²⁷

The qualification in Smith's remark needs to be noted: almost exclusively. An important exception, which will be explored later, is the Far Western gold miner.

The second problem of the writer was finding a literary mode adequate for expressing the experience and significance of the frontiersman. Arthur K. Moore suggests that the struggles of the early immigrants into Kentucky--and by implication, the struggles of frontiersmen in the

successive Wests--created conditions which were heroic:

"A few decades of regression under the impact of the frontier returned them [frontiersmen] to a condition which with qualification may be described as adolescence, an ideal state--in contrast to either savagery or sophistication--for heroic accomplishments."¹²⁸ These conditions not only existed but were fulfilled as well:

Epic material of extraordinary richness had accumulated in the Ohio Valley by the third decade of the nineteenth century. A heroic age had come and gone, leaving behind the towering buckskin warrior and a full book of his exploits against the Indians. Already grown a legend and a symbol too, the Kentuckian awaited in vain the transcendent genius who could dramatize his stand against the forces of savagery and eloquently spell out the implications of his way of life.¹²⁹

Moore further argues that the literary mode best suited for depicting the exploits of the buckskin warrior was the epic. Several reasons explain why this mode was not used, but the most important is that "the generality of creative writers in the nineteenth century could not bring themselves to dissociate the frontier from Scott and the romance."¹³⁰ In other words, influenced by current literary conventions and by the prevalent social codes, writers were committed to using the sentimental novel or romance. Such a commitment entangled them in the problem of attempting to portray "the essentially heroic conditions of the frontier" within "the romance pattern, which developed out of very different social conditions."¹³¹ Unfortunately for these writers, "romance, in contrast to epic, has never been intended as a severe, masculine record of ancient

"glory but as a narrative of lively adventure, a thing of entertainment suited to the refined court rather than to the mead hall."¹³² As a result, the development of the literary frontiersman in the nineteenth century can be traced by examining the ways in which writers attempted to treat a heroic figure within the conventions of the romance or sentimental novel.

The conventions called for a love story developed within a series of lively adventures. If the story were set in an earlier period, the ideals of that period might be expressed accidentally; but the issues were to be meaningful for the author's contemporaries. For Cooper, this meant fidelity to the "prevailing upper-class postulates--the sanctity of property, the desirability of material accumulation, the inevitability of progress, the stratification of society, the need for moral uplift, and the rule of the wisest (that is, the aristoi)."¹³³ Therefore, the technical hero of the romance had to be "well bred, well educated, and consequently well mannered"; he could woo only a lady from the same class; and he must, even though he be a skilled woodsman, prefer civilization over the backwoods:

The representatives of civilization may venture into the wilderness to achieve the familiar objectives of romance but do so at no cost to their principles. In the end they return to that blessed state whence they came full of exotic experience though no whit declined from that degree of excellence which good breeding and education wrought in them.¹³⁴

The problem facing Cooper and other writers of that

time was to find a way of making the picturesque frontiersman compatible with the canons of the sentimental novel. This Cooper first attempted to do by putting two heroes into the romance: the technical hero, a genteel figure through whom the love story could be developed; and the dramatic hero, the backwoodsman who could perform the marvelous exploits.

Most of Cooper's imitators were content to give their Leatherstockings only one plot function: as the agent of progress, he

. . . furthers civilization generally by oppressing the Indians as symbols of savagery and particularly by protecting the fair flowers of culture--the hero and heroine--sojourning in the wilderness. Although ordinarily expressing contempt for civilization, he is nonetheless an agent of progress. As an instrument mainly, superior to the Indians and border whites, yet inferior to broadcloth gentry, he occupies no definable social position for lacking social reality.¹³⁵

Even though he is, in a sense, an empire-builder, this backwoodsman is also a born nomad; therefore at the end of the story he can conveniently step off stage as the hero and heroine walk hand-in-hand back to civilization.

Cooper's Leatherstocking, however, is conceived in greater complexity. His relationship with nature is twofold: like the ordinary backwoodsman, he is an agent of progress--he is helping to make the forests safe for civilized white people--and in this role he is also the antagonist of civilization and therefore a symbol of primitive anarchic freedom. On the other hand, Leatherstocking embodies another attitude toward nature: " . . . the positive

"doctrine that untouched nature is a source of strength, truth, and virtue. . . ."¹³⁶ Thus he becomes the forest philosopher, the noble child of the woods reposed on nature's bosom.

Cooper's first attempts at accommodating frontier characters within the conventions of the romance were applauded by his readers, but the favorable public response also "created a predicament for the novelist by revealing to him that his most vital character occupied a technically inferior position in the social system and in the form of the sentimental novel as he was using it."¹³⁷ For the next twenty-five years Cooper struggled to create a frontiersman who would be not only the dramatic hero but the technical hero as well. The results of his experiments Smith summarizes as follows:

(1) Since the basic image of Leatherstocking was too old for the purposes of romance, the novelist doubled the character to produce a young hunter sharing the old man's habits, tastes, skills, and, to some extent, his virtues. (2) The earliest of the young hunter companions of Leatherstocking, Oliver Effingham, could be a hero because he was revealed as a gentleman temporarily disguised as a hunter. That is, the hero retained all his genteel prerogatives by hereditary right, and at the same time claimed the imaginative values clustering about Leatherstocking by wearing a mask, a persona fashioned in the image of the old hunter. But this was so flagrant a begging of the question that Cooper could not be satisfied with it. He therefore undertook further development of the young hunter produced by doubling the character of Leatherstocking, and this process yielded (3) the Paul Haver-Ben Boden type of hero, a young and handsome denizen of the wilderness, following the gentler calling of a bee hunter and thus free from even the justifiable bloodshed involved in Leatherstocking's vocation. This young Western hero is given a dialect less pronounced than that of Leatherstocking except in Leatherstocking's most exalted moments. His actual origin is left vague.

He is not a member of the upper class, but he is nowhere specifically described as having once been a servant. Finally, the young hero has none of the theoretical hostility to civilization that is so conspicuous in Leatherstocking. These changes make it technically possible for a Wild Westerner to be a hero of romance, but they destroy the subversive overtones that had given Leatherstocking so much of his emotional depth.¹³⁸

These experiments yielded the basic formulas by which earlier nineteenth-century writers depicted the backwoodsman in the novel; but as the frontiersman moves further into the century, further to the West, and closer to the technical center of the romance, some changes do occur. First, the frontiersman becomes a mountain man or trapper rather than a hunter like Leatherstocking, but more significantly he is no longer a noble, innocent child of nature:

He no longer looks to God through nature, for nature is no longer benign: its symbols are the wolves and the prairie fire. The scene has shifted from the deep fertile forests east of the Mississippi to the barren plains. The landscape within which the Western hero operates has become, in Averill's words, a "dreary waste." It throws the hero back in upon himself and accentuates his terrible and sublime isolation. He is an anarchic and self-contained atom--hardly even a monad--alone in a hostile, or at best a neutral universe.¹³⁹

Like Leatherstocking, the mountain man enjoys the freedom of the wilderness, but he is even more uncivilized: "He had adopted many more Indian ways than had the typical pioneers of the area east of the Mississippi. His costume, his speech, his outlook on life, often enough his Indian squaw, gave him a decidedly savage aspect."¹⁴⁰ Given such a character as hero, the standard themes of novels portraying him become "the trapper's love of freedom, his indifference to hardship and danger, his hatred of the dull life

"of settled communities."¹⁴¹ Amazing adventures are told as he fights Indians--and, unlike Leatherstocking, scalps the dead ones--as he performs daring feats on horseback and kills grizzly bears in hand-to-hand combat.

Although his barbaric life did provide colorful, exciting fiction, the mountain man's behavior also posed a threat to morality. Men who contemptuously rejected civilization and who lived according to the whims of their own base passions could not be openly lauded as national heroes. The logical solution to this problem was to create a character who possesses all the virtues of the strong and courageous mountain men but none of their vices. Such a hero is Charles Averill's Kit Carson:

. . . a man on horseback, in the dress of a Western hunter, equipped like a trapper of the prairies; his tall and strongly knit frame drawn up, erect and lithe as the pine tree of his own forests; his broad, sun-burnt face developing a countenance, on which a life of danger and hardship had set its weather-beaten seal, and placed in boldest relief the unerring signs of a nature which for reckless daring and most indomitable hardihood, could know scarce a human superior.

Far in the background . . . rolled the waving grass of a boundless prairie; amid the silent wilderness of which, towered the noble figure of the hunter-horseman, half Indian, half whiteman in appearance, with rifle, horse and dog for his sole companions, in all that dreary waste; though to the right a yelling pack of wolves were seen upon his track, and on his left the thick, black smoke, in curling wreaths, proclaimed the prairie fire, while in the clear gray eye that looked . . . forth, there seemed to glance a look of proud indifference to all, and the conscious confidence of ennobling self-reliance.¹⁴²

Considered in terms of the formulas which Cooper had devised for the frontiersman, Kit Carson represents only slight though significant modification. The essentials

of Leatherstocking's character were three: he was not a lover; he was a virtuous child of the wilderness in communion with God through nature; and he was a man of action, particularly demonstrated in his conflicts with the Indians. The romantic role has not changed with Carson: he is not a lover either. Like Leatherstocking, Carson is a man of virtue; but since Carson has lost contact with a benevolent nature, his virtue is accidental rather than the result of his communion with God. Finally, like Leatherstocking, Carson is a man of action, but he is a man of more action.

The emphasis on physical exploits in Carson's characterization marks the trend that accelerates in the next generation of Western heroes--those depicted in the immensely popular dime novels. The essential difference between Kit Carson and the dime novel Western hero is not in kind but in degree:

The outworn formulas had to be given zest by constant search after novel sensations. Circus tricks of horsemanship, incredible feats of shooting, more and more elaborate costumes, masks, and passwords were introduced, and even such ludicrous ornaments as worshippers of a Sun God devoted to human sacrifice in a vast underground cavern in the region of Yellowstone Park. Killing a few more Indians meant, in practice, exaggerating violence and bloodshed for their own sakes, to the point of an overt sadism.¹⁴³

There were, however, a couple non-essential though noteworthy departures from the standard dime novel. The role of the villain is gradually shifted from the Indian to the renegade: "By the 1890's the Western dime novel had come to hinge almost entirely upon conflicts between

"detectives and bands of robbers that had little to do with the ostensibly Western locales."¹⁴⁴

More importantly, with the appearance of Deadwood Dick around 1880, the Western hero takes on a new role and his characterization changes slightly. He is still the bravest man around, the best rider, and the best shot; but he is now also a lover. The dramatic hero has become the technical hero. Furthermore, Deadwood Dick has achieved not only fame but fortune as well: " . . . he has an income of five thousand dollars a year from mining properties."¹⁴⁵ His material success has not been granted by virtue of birth or education but has been achieved by his own efforts and courage: Deadwood Dick is thus an example of the self-made man.

This last dimension in the character of the Western hero is not the evolutionary result of natural forces inherent in the frontiersman; instead, the Western hero as self-made man represents an intrusion of other forces at work in society. As Merle Curti points out, in the decades following the Civil War, "the idea of success through self-effort as a possibility for everyone became vastly more popular and widespread than ever before."¹⁴⁶ The public demand for the literature of individual, material success through luck and pluck was met by such writers as Horatio Alger, who cultivated the cult of the self-made man, but writers of Western adventure were also occasionally willing to accommodate this social doctrine within the form of

the romance.¹⁴⁷

Despite the appearance of material success as a theme in the Western novel, the main thrust of change in the later nineteenth century was, as we have already seen in the comparison of Kit Carson and early dime novel heroes, toward more and more sensationalism:

The literary development of the Wild Western hero in the second half of the nineteenth century made the divergence between fact and fiction even greater. Where Kit Carson had been represented as slaying his hundreds of Indians, the dime novel hero slew his thousands, with one hand tied behind him.¹⁴⁸

The final and current role in which the Western hero is portrayed is the cowboy. The cowboy--as depicted in the dime novel, at least--does not spend much time working around cattle. In fact, he is essentially a Deadwood Dick without the obligation of pursuing material success:

The professional duty of Beadle cowboys is to fight Indians, Mexicans, and outlaws. And the atmosphere created by wronged women seeking vengeance upon their false lovers, Mexican girls in men's clothing, and Army officers detailed for secret service is thoroughly typical of the decadent phase of Beadle fiction. The introduction of characters described as cowboys is little more than an effort to achieve an air of contemporaneity. It does not change the shape of Wild Western fiction.¹⁴⁹

The changes in the formulas from Cooper's Western hero down to the cowboy of the 1880's have been to move the frontiersman onto the technical as well as dramatic center of the stage and, at the same time, to remove him more and more from ties with both nature and society. Henry Nash Smith neatly summarizes this evolution:

Cut loose first from the code of gentility that had commanded Cooper's unswerving loyalty, and then from

the communion with God through nature that had made Leatherstocking a saint of the forest, the Western hero had become a self-reliant two-gun man who behaved in almost exactly the same fashion whether he were outlaw or peace officer.¹⁵⁰

Smith's analytical survey of the frontiersman in nineteenth-century literature is so persuasive that one wishes he would have included another aspect of the frontier experience that is important both historically and literarily: the Far Western mining camp. Like other later fiction of the frontier, Bret Harte's stories are filled with colorful, picturesque, and exaggerated action, but there isn't such a straining for sensational effects. Possibly this is because Harte did not feel the necessity of straining to achieve a vivid impact; rather he could let the new dramatic materials of mining camp life provide the desired novelty and zest. Regardless of the explanation for this difference, Harte was clearly moving in the direction of greater realism, which thus distinguishes his work from that of the dime novel writers, and away from the conventions of the sentimental romance. Just how far he went can be indicated by looking at his treatment of the upper class postulates which had determined the structure of values in Cooper's novels.

Instead of affirming the desirability of material accumulation, Harte undercuts both the hope and the effort. The Old Man in "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar" does not have enough money to buy his sick boy a Christmas present, but he holds an illusory hope for the future: "The

"Old Man glibly repeated what was evidently a familiar formula, that if Johnny would wait until he struck it rich in the tunnel he'd have lots of money, etc., etc."¹⁵¹ Those who do strike it rich fare no better than the Old Man. Mr. Johnson, one of "Mrs. Skagg's Husbands," discovers a rich deposit of cinnabar but doesn't receive a penny of it; actually he spends his last years insane. The Wayne brothers in "The Bell-Ringer of Angel's" also discover a rich claim, but one of the brothers is shot to death as he flees from a clandestine rendezvous and the other brother becomes a fanatical revival preacher, "sweeping over the country, carrying fear and frenzy with him, scouting life and mercy, and crushing alike the guilty and innocent. . . ." ¹⁵²

The sanctity of property--a correlate of material accumulation--is also dramatically undercut. A notorious bandit leader and his girl humorously outfox the law-abiding citizens in "An Ingénue of the Sierras," and possession of real estate is depicted as changing hands in an unusual manner in "The Bell-Ringer of Angel's":

Originally the camping-ground of a Digger Chief, it passed from his tenancy with the American rifle bullet that terminated his career.

The pioneer who thus succeeded to its attractive calm gave way in turn to a well-directed shot from the revolver of a quartz-pro prospector. . . .¹⁵³

Conventional morality is also treated very lightly by Harte. Fighting, drinking, gambling, and violent death are frequently mentioned in an off-hand manner. Prostitutes, of course, outnumber wives by far, and the wives who are present all seem eager to run off. Instead of being a

moral violation, infidelity is an occasion for humor, as may be seen, for example, in a remark about one of the miners: "Perhaps some suggestion of nest-building may have been in his mind, for one pleasant spring morning he brought hither a wife. It was his own. . . ." ¹⁵⁴

The pioneering experience in the successive Wests may, as Smith asserts, have left its stamp upon imaginative literature primarily in versions of a Daniel Boone character; but even if Bret Harte's work contained the only depiction of mining camp characters, it would be worth noting. Harte does introduce a new experience into frontier literature and does suggest a new way of regarding frontier characters--as subjects for humor and pathos rather than heroics.

In a moment we can consider the literary treatment of the Western hero in post-frontier literature; but now, having traced the development of the Western hero during the American frontier period, we are in a position to consider the significance of nineteenth-century frontier literature. The basic issue which seems to determine judgments of significance is the relationship between historical reality and literary interpretation of that reality. Some scholars, like Jay B. Hubbell, seem to require verisimilitude of significant literature and to find this quality missing in most frontier novels:

. . . for too many of our writers the frontier has been a legend rather than a reality. Most of the novels that deal with the frontier were written by men who had

no first-hand experience of pioneer life. Consequently our frontier fiction is, as a rule, no "document" for the social historian; it represents a literary convention.¹⁵⁵

Other critics, like Henry Nash Smith, are more sympathetic even though they view the frontier literature as gradually becoming insignificant after Cooper's efforts. What made Cooper's novels significant, according to Smith, was his preoccupation with the code of gentility, his interpretation of the frontiersman as the innocent child of nature, and his ironic vision of the tension between primitive freedom and social order. In the later novels of the nineteenth century, these qualities disappear: ". . . the theme of communion with nature in the West proved too flimsy to sustain a primitivistic literature of any magnitude," for such an idea "proved quite irrelevant for a society committed to the ideas of civilization and progress, and to an industrial revolution."¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, "the abandonment of the artificial code of gentility"--as seen in the elevation of the frontiersman to the technical center of the Western story--"was a necessary step in the development of American literature," but such a step had two consequences. First, it destroyed the tension which had been generated between the polarities of savagery and civilization and thus forced the novelist into sensationalizing physical exploits. Second, the elevation of a refugee from civilization to the status of hero destroyed the possibility of establishing real contact between this genre and society.

The final consequence, thus, was to eliminate the significance which Cooper had found in frontier materials:

Devoid alike of ethical and social meaning, the Western story could develop in no direction save that of a straining and exaggeration of its formulas. It abandoned all effort to be serious, and by 1889, when Erastus Beadle retired from the firm of Beadle & Adams, it had sunk to the near-juvenile level it was to occupy with virtually no change down to our own day.¹⁵⁷

Finally, some critics see the gap between literary and historical reality but find frontier literature significant for other reasons. Arthur K. Moore exemplifies this stand:

Almost nothing of the truth of the expansion appears in the romances, but they are nevertheless valuable social documents, chiefly for intimating, even though behind a facade of exotic adventure, the whole structure of cultural assumptions made by those who fancied themselves aristocratic or who respected the condition. Assuredly, the pattern imposed upon the western scene first by Cooper among the novelists, while in part shaped by literary convention, owed a very great deal to the preconceptions of the literate and privileged minority, who desired progress in all good things, though at no cost to traditional values.¹⁵⁸

Moore, in fact, carries his point of view to an even more extreme position:

All authors who dealt with the West probably realized that the knights of arts and industry behaved scarcely less barbarously than the savages who stood in urgent need of light, and that the fair products of the Enlightenment who marched safely in the rear of the emigration displayed more avarice than benevolence. To have laid bare the spotted actuality of the expansion would have been to shock tender sensibilities in the East and to disturb the rosy optimism which sustained the march to the Pacific. Admittedly, none had the courage to ask if the means justified the end, but popular literature after all is scarcely the vehicle for scrutinizing the myth of progress.¹⁵⁹

Moore's concluding remark would seem to remove from the

writer any ethical or social responsibility, other than entertainment. To be fair with Moore, however, it is probably necessary to assume, even though he does not make it clear, that he is presuming a distinction between popular, dime-novel literature and serious literature.

At any rate, it was precisely scrutinization of the myth of progress that finally permitted the Western farmer to claim his literary birthright:

Hamlin Garland declared in 1892 that the high-sounding clichés had done serious mischief by masking the plight of the poverty-stricken Western farmer. Speaking through the character Radbourn in his powerful story "Lucretia Burns," he wrote: "Writers and orators have lied so long about the 'independent American farmer,' that he himself has remained blind to the fact that he's one of the hardest working and poorest-paid men in America."¹⁶⁰

As we have already noticed, until late in the nineteenth century, the farmer proved intractable as literary material for two reasons: he lacked the glamor of the Wild West frontiersman and his low social status disqualified him for the role of the genteel hero. Henry Nash Smith traces the slow evolution of attitudes which finally made it possible "to deal with the Western farmer in literature as a human being instead of seeing him through a veil of literary convention, class prejudice, or social theory": "In the early nineteenth century, as we have seen, the farmer could be depicted only as a member of a low social class. By 1890 he could be presented as a human being, unfortunate perhaps, but possessed of dignity even in his tribulations."¹⁶¹ Ironically, it was not until the frontier

had closed that the farmer, who had actually conquered the frontier, could be treated as a literary hero--or, at least, a protagonist.

Response to a closed frontier

The closing of the frontier was signalled in several ways: geographically by the announcement that good, free land was no longer available to the individual farmer; economically by the rise of commerce and corporate method; socially by the stampede from the farm to the city; emotionally and intellectually by the realization that the myth of the Garden and its correlate--the American Dream--were no longer in accord with reality. As Henry Nash Smith puts it, "The shattering of the myth by economic distress marked, for the history of ideas in America, the real end of the frontier period."¹⁶² Having just examined the ways in which the frontier was used by imaginative writers, we might now logically ask how writers responded to the fact of a closed frontier, that is, how they regarded the gap between the American myth and the new realities of American life.

Most Americans have followed the example set by Jay Gatsby; they have clung to the Great American Dream.

According to Ray Allen Billington,

. . . the people of the United States today, when the rates of social mobility are comparable in all industrialized countries, still cling to the belief that theirs is a land of unusual opportunity. This is the basic fabric of the "American Dream," the substance of the drive that motivates a considerable portion of the population. The persistence of this belief has had, and has, a powerful impact on society, for Americans assign different values to vertical mobility than

Europeans. Belief in the inevitability of progress has set their goals, motivated their drives for success, and kept society on an even keel. Faith in opportunity has helped persuade the lower classes to sustain the political order rather than to distrust its leaders as so often in other nations.¹⁶³

Explanation for the persistence of this myth is two-fold. First, the myth was deliberately perpetuated, for "so long as it survived in its increasing irrelevance to the facts, it could be manipulated by cynical men for selfish purposes."¹⁶⁴ As Smith points out, the myth of the garden had been put to such use long before the close of the frontier: "By the 1870's it could already be invoked to prevent reform of the land system."¹⁶⁵ And Merle Curti shows how perpetuation of the myth around the turn of the century was part of the conservative defense against social and economic reform.¹⁶⁶

Equally important was the desire of the common person to cling to the myth as a defense against discouragement in the face of economic adversity:

. . . in the years following the Civil War the plain people felt keenly the effects of the contraction of credit, of the recurring periods of depression and unemployment, and of the prevailing downward trend of farm prices. As it became ever more difficult for the small enterpriser to compete with the growing corporation, there was need for a reaffirmation of the traditional faith that however hard the times, however great the obstacles, America provided opportunity to reach high places.¹⁶⁷

Literary response to this common desire to deny the closing of the frontier took two primary forms. First, it developed the cult of the self-made man while preaching the gospel of success. The popularity of Poor Richard's

Almanac was even surpassed by the success of the William Makepeace Thayer and Horatio Alger novels: "Not only on the juvenile level but in the adult sphere, writers turned out thousands of tons of books based on the very acceptable theme of the individual rising above his surroundings to a triumphant material success."¹⁶⁸ Commanders of Scouts and leaders of wagon trains were joined if not upstaged by the Captains of Industry. As "the Golden Age merges into the Gilded Age. . . , " writes Lucy Lockwood Hazard, "the average man is perhaps less confident in his expectation of success; so much the greater the glorification of the success of the superman of industry, the Harrington, the Cowperwood, heroes of industrial pioneering."¹⁶⁹

The second way in which literature has accommodated the popular desire to ignore or deny the vision of a closed frontier is by recreating "the romance and adventure and enterprise of the last frontier."¹⁷⁰ Edward Wagenknecht indicates that there was great interest in historical fiction at the turn of the century and a great revival in the 1930's. His explanation for this revival during the 'thirties' would seem to apply also to the earlier period:

The need to escape from an America which seemed, during the years of the Great Depression, inexplicably to have failed to fulfill all its golden promises must, in the nature of the case, have encouraged many readers to retreat to the past.¹⁷¹

Lawrence S. Kaplan provides a more expanded though similar explanation for the interest in historical fiction, particularly that depicting the frontier days:

If Americans still think about frontier qualities, it is usually in the nostalgic terms of the mountain and plains frontier of the 1880's. The frontier becomes an escape, a daydream, a way of life that is the very antithesis of the life led by the harried urban dweller of the twentieth century.

So widespread is the demand for stories of the Wild West in every medium that the "horse opera" has been called the American equivalent of the Italian opera or the medieval morality play. There is a continuing appeal in the western story of good struggling with evil--cowboy against Indians, cowboy against rustler, or merely cowboy against the elements of nature--despite the usual romanticism that distorts the facts (or perhaps because of it). Today's American is struck by the simplicity of the life of the western hero. Such few problems as he has can be handled by his horse or by his gun. He is free to roam as he pleases, and especially he is free from the responsibility of family or of income tax, or--if western films are taken literally--of jobs. The equality of all frontiers is also his, and he has his fists and guns to prove it. Here is the life of a lost Eden--simple, free, and equal, where man can truly be an individualist.¹⁷²

Despite the great attention given to the frontier period in America, the characterization of the Western hero has remained essentially unchanged since the appearance of the dime novel:

The Street & Smith enterprises like the Buffalo Bill stories, the Log Cabin Library, the Jesse James stories, the Tip-Top Weekly, and the Red, White, and Blue Library, together with Frank Tousey publications like the Boy's Story Library, Frank Manley's Weekly, the New York Detective Library, the Pluck and Luck stories, and the Wild West Weekly--the cheap series widening downward from the 1890's into the twentieth century almost baffle enumeration--lead in a straight line from the Beadle publications to the Westerns of the present day. The movies and the radio have tidied up the morals, or at least the manners, of the genre, but plot construction and characterization follow an apparently unbreakable pattern.¹⁷³

If there has been a change, then it has been, according to Arthur K. Moore, in the direction of even greater primitive sensationalism and even less, if possible, ethical and

social significance:

By the nineteenth-century view, the exceedingly successful novel The Big Sky (1947), by A. B. Guthrie, Jr., is irresponsible. The author allows the hero Boone Caudill, an illiterate, barbarous warrior from Kentucky, to roam the plains fighting and fornicating as his bowels moved him. Inasmuch as his career is not integrated with the tide of progress and he himself is not recovered at last from the state of savagery, the book has not sufficient moral basis by the lights of the progressivists.¹⁷⁴

In contrast to the business man and common man who for various reasons did not care to acknowledge the fact that the door of the American frontier had been slammed shut, there have been those who are willing, though not necessarily happy, to face the new reality with its mask torn off. It is not necessary here to trace all the various developments in twentieth-century American literature, which would be the comprehensive way of examining the response of those who squarely faced the closed door.

Instead, generalization might serve the purpose. Turner and then others affirmed what is now obvious: as America moved from the frontier period into the industrial age, it would necessarily go through a difficult period of readjustment. There would be more mask-pulling--the naturalist and realists, the social protesters and muck-rakers; there would be a great quake of personal shock and alienation as the old idols crumbled--the lost generation, the beat generation, the drug generation; and if not the creation of a new American myth--if not yet such a new myth--at least an occasional affirmation of life, albeit

qualified by the polarities of the tragic or ironic vision.

Notes

¹Morgan B. Sherwood, ed., Alaska and Its History (Seattle, 1967), p. xiii.

²Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," The Frontier in American History (New York, 1950), p. 10.

³Ibid.

⁴Marvin W. Mikesell, "Comparative Studies in Frontier History," in Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier (New York, 1968), p. 167.

⁵Ibid., p. 165.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Turner Thesis in Comparative Perspective: An Introduction," Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier, ed., by Lipset and Richard Hofstadter (New York, 1968), p. 9.

⁸Mikesell, pp. 161-162.

⁹Ibid., p. 161.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York, 1950), p. 138.

¹²Lipset, p. 11.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 10-11.

¹⁵Mikesell, p. 165.

¹⁶Ray Allen Billington, America's Frontier Heritage (New York, 1966), p. 3.

¹⁷Smith, p. 291.

¹⁸For examples of criticism of Turner's hypothesis, see the following: Billington, pp. 3-19; Smith, p. 291; Hofstadter and Lipset, pp. 4-7; Arthur K. Moore, The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman (Lexington, 1957), pp. 6-7; Harold P. Simonson, The Closed Frontier: Studies in American Literary Tragedy (New York, 1970), p. 20.

¹⁹Turner, p. 3.

²⁰Ibid.

- ²¹Ibid., p. 2.
- ²²Simonson, The Closed Frontier, p. 26.
- ²³Billington, Heritage, p. 25.
- ²⁴Ibid.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 221.
- ²⁶Lucy Lockwood Hazard, The Frontier in American Literature, republished in American Classics series (New York, 1927, 1961), p. xviii.
- ²⁷Smith, p. 19.
- ²⁸Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York, 1956, 1962), p. 243.
- ²⁹Ibid., p. 268.
- ³⁰Rodman W. Paul, California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Cambridge, 1947), p. 339.
- ³¹Smith, p. 221.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Ibid., p. 223.
- ³⁴Billington, Heritage, p. 39.
- ³⁵Ibid., p. 162.
- ³⁶Smith, LHUS, p. 761.
- ³⁷Hazard, p. xviii.
- ³⁸Adam Hodgson, quoted in Port Folio (of Philadelphia), Fourth [Fifth] Series, XVII, 214 (March, 1824), cited by Smith, p. 255.
- ³⁹Thomas Jefferson, Writings, ed. H. A. Washington, VII, 377-378 (Monticello, September 6, 1824), cited by Smith, pp. 255-256.
- ⁴⁰Smith, Virgin Land. p. 256.
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²Ibid., pp. 36-37.
- ⁴³Ibid., p. 152.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., p. 163.
- ⁴⁵George Fitzhugh, Cannibals All! (Richmond, 1857), p. 355, quoted by Smith, p. 164.
- ⁴⁶Smith, p. 178.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., p. 179.
- ⁴⁸Ibid.
- ⁴⁹Ibid., p. 182.

- 50 Ibid., p. 19.
- 51 Hubert Howe Bancroft's estimate, cited in Paul, p. 15.
- 52 Billington, Western Frontier, p. 240.
- 53 Ibid., p. 218.
- 54 John Walton Caughey, Gold is the Cornerstone (Berkeley, 1948), p. 55.
- 55 Billington, p. 233.
- 56 Caughey, p. 167.
- 57 Billington, p. 233.
- 58 Ibid., p. 241.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 Ibid.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Ibid., p. 233.
- 63 Paul, p. 116.
- 64 San Francisco Weekly Alta California, February 15, 1851, quoted in Paul, pp. 116-117.
- 65 John S. Hittell's correspondence to the New-York Daily Tribune, December 27, 1858, quoted in Paul, pp. 171-172.
- 66 Paul, p. 332.
- 67 Ibid., pp. 332-333.
- 68 Ibid., p. viii.
- 69 Ibid., p. 262.
- 70 Caughey, p. 213.
- 71 Ibid., pp. 209-210.
- 72 Ibid., p. 210.
- 73 Ibid., p. 211.
- 74 Ibid., pp. 211-213.
- 75 Paul, p. 243.
- 76 Billington, p. 242.
- 77 Ibid., p. 248.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Ibid., p. 249.
- 80 Ibid., p. 254. Caughey, however, reports the value at \$1,595 in gold and \$4,791 in silver, or \$6,386 per ton (p. 296).

- ⁸¹Caughey, p. 297.
- ⁸²Billington, pp. 259-168.
- ⁸³Marshall Fishwick, The Hero, American Style (New York, 1969), p. 61.
- ⁸⁴Caughey, p. 291.
- ⁸⁵Paul, p. 262.
- ⁸⁶Hazard, p. xviii.
- ⁸⁷Allan G. Bogue, "Social Theory and the Pioneer," in Hofstadter and Lipset, pp. 74-75.
- ⁸⁸Lawrence S. Kaplan, "The Frontier and the American Character," The Frontier in American History and Literature, ed. by Hans Galinsky, et. al. (Frankfurt am Main [1960?]), pp. 74-75.
- ⁸⁹Mody C. Boatright, "The Myth of Frontier Individualism," in Hofstadter and Lipset, pp. 48-49.
- ⁹⁰Billington, Frontier Heritage, p. 70.
- ⁹¹Ibid., p. 71.
- ⁹²Ibid., p. 73.
- ⁹³Ibid., pp. 53-54.
- ⁹⁴Kaplan, pp. 28-29.
- ⁹⁵Turner, "Pioneer Ideals and the State University," The Frontier in American History, pp. 269-271.
- ⁹⁶Smith, p. 13.
- ⁹⁷Ibid.
- ⁹⁸Ibid., p. 23.
- ⁹⁹Quoted in Moore, The Frontier Mind, p. 26.
- ¹⁰⁰Moore, p. 24.
- ¹⁰¹Samuel Aughey, Sketches of the Physical Geography and Geology of Nebraska (Omaha, 1880), p. 155, quoted in Smith, pp. 212-213.
- ¹⁰²Billington, p. 28.
- ¹⁰³Simonson, pp. 3-5.
- ¹⁰⁴Billington, p. 38.
- ¹⁰⁵Smith, pp. 36-37.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 198-199.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 299.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 299-300.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 225.

- 110 Billington, p. 227.
- 111 Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven, 1950), pp. 44-45.
- 112 Turner, p. 281.
- 113 Billington, p. 228.
- 114 Simonson, pp. 42-43.
- 115 Ibid., p. 44.
- 116 Ibid., pp. 5-6.
- 117 Ibid., p. 45.
- 118 Moore, p. 185.
- 119 Smith, p. 55.
- 120 Ibid., p. 57.
- 121 Ibid., pp. 55-56.
- 122 Ibid., p. 56.
- 123 Ibid., p. 37.
- 124 Ibid., p. 305.
- 125 Ibid., p. 68.
- 126 Ibid., pp. 66, 68.
- 127 Smith, LHUS, p. 761.
- 128 Moore, p. 79.
- 129 Ibid., p. 106.
- 130 Ibid., p. 161.
- 131 Ibid., pp. 165-166.
- 132 Ibid., p. 163.
- 133 Ibid., p. 160.
- 134 Ibid., pp. 170, 176, 182.
- 135 Ibid., pp. 175-176.
- 136 Smith, Virgin Land, p. 70.
- 137 Ibid.
- 138 Ibid., p. 76.
- 139 Ibid., p. 97.
- 140 Ibid., p. 88.
- 141 Ibid., p. 90.
- 142 Ibid., p. 98.
- 143 Ibid., p. 101.

- 144 Ibid.
- 145 Ibid., p. 111.
- 146 Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought, 3rd ed. (New York, 1964), p. 627.
- 147 Ibid., pp. 615-632.
- 148 Smith, p. 114.
- 149 149 Ibid., p. 125.
- 150 Ibid., p. 134.
- 151 Bret Harte, The Best of Bret Harte, ed. by Wilhelmina Harper and Aimee M. Peters (Boston, 1947), p. 55.
- 152 Ibid., p. 264.
- 153 Ibid., p. 229.
- 154 Ibid., p. 230.
- 155 Jay B. Hubbell, "The Frontier," in The Reinterpretation of American Literature: Some Contributions Toward the Understanding of Its Historical Development (New York, 1928), p. 46.
- 156 Smith, p. 135.
- 157 Ibid.
- 158 Moore, p. 160.
- 159 Ibid., p. 182.
- 160 Smith, p. 225.
- 161 Ibid., pp. 290, 261.
- 162 Ibid., p. 219.
- 163 Billington, p. 114.
- 164 Smith, p. 233.
- 165 Ibid., p. 229.
- 166 Curti, pp. 615 ff.
- 167 Ibid., pp. 627-628.
- 168 Ibid., p. 630.
- 169 Hazard, p. xix.
- 170 Curti, p. 493.
- 171 Edward Wagenknecht, Cavalcade of the American Novel, from the Birth of the Nation to the Middle of the Twentieth Century (New York, 1952), p. 425.
- 172 Kaplan, p. 32.
- 173 Smith, p. 135.
- 174 Moore, p. 183.

CHAPTER II

THE PRE-KLONDIKE PERIOD (1867-1896)

History

Russian America

The history of American Alaska begins with its purchase in 1867, but Alaska had drawn the attention of the Western world some 150 years previously. At the end of the seventeenth century, the west coast of North America from California north had not yet been visited by white men, and European monarchs were interested in the possible riches of that unknown region as well as in continuing the search for a Northwest Passage. During the eighteenth century, explorers from France, Spain, and especially England left their place names all over Alaska--Revillagigedo Island, Chatham Strait, Prince William Sound, Cape Prince of Wales--and as late as 1778, Captain James Cook was following secret Admiralty instructions "to take possession for the British crown of countries that were uninhabited even if previously visited and discovered by another European power"; at various places in Alaska, he set up marks and inscriptions and deposited bottles containing information supporting a British claim of possession.¹

Despite these claims and other exploratory forays,

discovery and initial occupation of Alaska by white men was a Russian achievement. It has been suggested that the purchase of Alaska by the United States marked the westward continental limit of American territorial expansion;² conversely, the occupation of Alaska by the Russians marked the eastward limit of their march of expansion across Asia. Those in the vanguard, like the white men who penetrated the interior of North America, were fur traders. Since these early fur traders did not dream of practicing conservation, wholesale depletion of the fur-bearers became the rule and also an indirect motivation for further expansion of the Russian frontier:

Whenever the supply of fur-bearing animals diminished in one region and another offered easier yields, the hunter and trader moved on. This determined the speed and tempo of Russian eastward expansion--it had been the original cause of expansion across the Urals.³

A major difference between the roles played by fur traders in America and Russia was that the Russian government was in the fur business and it was big business:

The Russian government was the chief fur trader, for it collected from the natives the tribute or tax in furs called yasak. It levied a tax of 10 per cent, collected from the best furs obtained by private fur traders and trappers. It also exercised the right to buy their best furs. It created a monopoly on the sables and black foxes sold to China. It engaged in the business of selling furs. In this way Russia became and has remained to this day the leading source of supply of furs in the world. The revenue from furs in the seventeenth century was an important item in the income of a state as poor as that of Russia. It showed profit over and above the expenses which Siberia caused to the treasury. . . . Out of it all, Siberia became a colony and "a big business enterprise" of the Muscovite government.⁴

Early in the eighteenth century, Russian expansion

reached the Pacific and then stood looking across the open waters to the east. Operating under instructions first from Peter the Great and then from his successors, the Danish-born Vitus Bering left St. Petersburg in 1725 to begin the first of two expeditions which finally resulted in the discovery of Alaska in 1741. When the rebuilt St. Peter returned to Kamchatka the following fall, she was missing Bering and thirty of his crew who had died during the winter after shipwreck on an island; but she was carrying skins from the fur seal and the previously unknown sea otter.⁵

Valued at \$100,000, this small collection of furs had an effect similar to the discovery of gold in California: "These pelts set Siberia on fire, and every merchant, nobleman, trader and freebooter who could buy, borrow, or build a craft pushed off for the Komandorskies, the Aleutians, and finally the mainland of Alaska."⁶ For the next forty years, no permanent settlement was attempted by the Russians. Instead, the buccaneering fur hunters, the promyshlenniki, made sorties during which they slaughtered the fur seals and sea otters, pillaged the native Aleuts, and handled resistance with steel and lead.

This period might be called the frontier era of Russian America: since the government did not, as it had in Siberia, take an active role in the fur trade, the field was left open to individual interprisers, who could make a fortune from a single trip. Rapidly, however, this

frontier drew to a close. The fur resources of the Aleutian Chain were being depleted and in order to exploit the area further to the east, longer and costlier voyages would be necessary, perhaps even a permanent settlement. Furthermore, the Russian court was coming to the view "that the reckless competition between the promyshleniki was of no advantage to the crown, and that the lack of any establishment on land would encourage the invasion of foreign traders";⁷ there was also royal concern about the ill-treatment of the aboriginals.

In 1784, Gregory Shelikov planted a colony on Kodiak Island and then began to argue for an imperial charter. After Shelikov's death, his son-in-law, Count Nicolai Rezanov, took over the business and continued the same argument. The Alaskan frontier under the Russians may be said to have closed in 1799, when Rezanov obtained a twenty-year charter which granted "exclusive rights as far south as the fifty-fifth parallel. In the newly formed Russian-American Company the imperial family, the Shelikov interests and various competitors each received a third of the stock."⁸ For the next sixty-eight years, until the sale of Alaska in 1867, this company "was not only the exclusive commercial enterprise in Russian America but also exercised the governing power."⁹ The history of the Russian-American Company is fascinating, but two aspects of its reign are particularly worth mentioning here since they extend into the American occupation: the relationship

of the Russians with both the Alaskan natives and the United States and Russian motivations for selling Alaska.

During the one hundred and twenty-six years between the Russian discovery and the U.S. purchase of Alaska, the relationship between the Russians and the aboriginals did change for the better after starting with much violence and bloodshed. In the very year of discovery, Alexei Chirikov--commander of Bering's sister ship, the St. Paul--had sent a longboat ashore to get water. When this boat and its armed crew of eleven didn't return, a smaller boat with four men was sent to investigate. Two days later, two native canoes were sighted, but the Russian longboats and crews did not return and eight days later the St. Paul left.¹⁰

Although the Russians took the losses in this first encounter and occasionally in later conflicts, it was the aboriginals who suffered most. The promyshleniki were as ruthless in their treatment of the Aleuts as in their slaughter of the sea otter:

Principle, honesty and fair dealing with the simple Aleuts played no part in the frenzy for furs. The Aleut women were captured en masse. Whole villages of Aleut men were enslaved to hunt the sea otter. What matter if a thousand men died in storms at sea! Another thousand would be rounded up at gun point. Twenty-five thousand Aleuts were living peacefully along the Chain when the Russian freebooters arrived. Five decades later the population had been decimated to a pitiful two thousand.¹¹

Such treatment also extended eastward as the fur companies attempted to exploit new territory and to use terror as a method for eliminating competition:

Balushin [a promyshlennik for one of the companies] went from village to village tributary to St. George, beating the chiefs, taking furs by force, seizing girls, and warning them all that they would again be visited if they continued to trade with Kolomin [a rival].¹²

Even after the charter of the Russian-American Company eliminated such brutal methods for controlling competition, conflict continued between the Russians and the Alaskan natives: Sitka was burned in 1802 and the Russian colony at Yakutat massacred shortly thereafter. But relations did improve for two reasons. First, Baranov imposed discipline on his men and encouraged domesticated relations between the Russian men and the native women. Furthermore, arrival of the Orthodox missionaries helped to temper the excesses of the fur hunters as well as to provide the aboriginals with education.¹³ If there was not finally love between the Russians and the Alaskan natives, there was at least little overt hostility.

Since it is quite probable that today Alaska would be a Territory of Canada rather than a State of the Union except for the Russian occupation, perhaps it is worthwhile to briefly review the events leading to the Treaty of Cession in 1867. Prior to that treaty, there had been contact between Russians and Americans in the North Pacific as well as in Washington and St. Petersburg. Unlike England, France and Spain, the United States had not sent official exploring voyages into Alaskan waters, but even before the beginning of the eighteenth century, Yankee traders--or "Boston men," as they were called--were trading for Alaskan furs,

directly though illegally with native villages and officially through the Russian-American headquarters in Sitka; " . . . by 1790, the Boston-Sitka-Canton-Sitka route was a fixed course."¹⁴ Some seventy years later, the raids of the Confederate warship Shenandoah brought attention to the fact that for several decades New England whalers had been operating in the North Pacific and Bering Sea.¹⁵

Commercial relations between Russian America and the United States became more formalized in 1851, when a trade contract was signed between Chief Director Rosenberg of the Russian-American Company and a group of San Franciscan businessmen who in 1853, incorporated an organization commonly known as "the Ice Company" but officially called the American Russian Commercial Company. The original contract provided for the purchase of 250 tons of Alaskan ice at \$75 per ton, but it has been argued that the secret though genuine purpose of this business was to secure provisions for Russian Alaska during the Crimean War and also to forestall the danger of Alaska falling into British hands by arranging for a fictitious sale of Alaska to the San Francisco company. Negotiations for this sale were dropped after the Russian-American Company and the Hudson's Bay Company persuaded their governments to keep Alaska outside the theatre of war, but the ice business was not dropped. In fact, the venture proved so much more satisfactory than the previous arrangement for supplying ice to California--shipping it from Boston around Cape

Horn--that in 1852 a three-year contract was signed providing for the purchase of 1000 tons each year at \$35 per ton. Agreements between the Alaskan Russians and the San Francisco company continued up to the date of U.S. purchase and the Ice Company actually stayed in business until around 1880.¹⁶

American commercial interest in Alaska prior to its purchase is also evident in the description which Richard E. Welch, Jr. provides of the actions of another group of California businessmen:

A group of California fur traders headed by Louis Goldstone had for some years envied the favored position which the Hudson's Bay Company enjoyed under charter in Russian America. Using Senator-elect Cornelius Cole of California as intermediary, they began in 1866 to negotiate with Russian Minister Stoeckl for the expiring rights of the British company. Baron Stoeckl led them on, and, after they had made a formal request, made his refusal the opening wedge in his March, 1867, talks with Seward.¹⁷

A further tie between the United States and Russian Alaska was made by the attempts of the Western Union Telegraph Company to establish a land line between the U.S. and the capitols of Europe and Asia. The repeated failures of Cyrus W. Field's submarine lines gave impetus to the notion of building a line from Puget Sound up through British Columbia and across Alaska to the Bering Strait, there laying a short cable across to the Siberian side, and then crossing Siberia via the Amur River line. In 1864, the Western Union Telegraph Company, Russian Extension, took over the various charters which had been obtained by Perry McDonough Collins, the U.S. commercial agent in eastern Siberia, and undertook

survey and construction of the line. By 1867, just before the purchase of Alaska, when this project was abandoned due to the successful completion of the first Atlantic cable, sixty-seven miles of the line had actually been constructed by American crews in western Alaska.¹⁸

These cordial business relations between certain U.S. Americans and Russian Americans--paralleled in larger international circles by Alexander II's positive attitude toward the United States during the Civil War¹⁹--set the stage for negotiating the Russian sale of Alaska to the U.S. Several motives were prompting the Russians to consider selling Alaska. Although the Crimean War was over, the Russians were fearful of not being able to hold Alaska if hostilities should break out again: this fear was strengthened by the aggressive competition being applied by the Hudson's Bay Company and by awareness of the logical expansion of Britain, and possibly even of the United States, westward across North America. Russia's own interest in expansion was being concentrated on the Amur region; and, furthermore, depletion of the fur resources in Alaska had greatly reduced the profits of the Russian-American Company. Purchase by the United States would provide several benefits to Russia: the British-Canadian expansion to the West would be halted, Russia would have a friendly neighbor in the high North Pacific, and the envisioned purchase price would enable the Russian-American Company to liquidate profitably.²⁰ Given these factors, it is not surprising that

the Russians signed the Treaty of Cession in 1867, coincidentally the same year in which the scattered provinces in Canada became confederated as the Dominion of Canada and official ruling power passed from the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company.

U.S. occupation

Response in the United States to the purchase of Alaska was mixed. In fact, it may be said that from the very beginning of Alaska's status as a U.S. possession, two competing myths were being generated through which to regard this northern territory: the myth of the ice box and the myth of the treasure house.

In the newspapers and in Congress, those who opposed the purchase built their arguments largely on the issue of economic value. The New York World, for example, "declared, 'Russia has sold us a sucked orange,' and to the New York Herald Alaska was ' . . . an ice house, a worthless desert. . . . '"²¹ The House Committee on Foreign Relations returned a sweepingly unfavorable minority report;²² and during the House floor debates on the appropriation bill to pay for Alaska, elements of the ice-box myth were again marched out by the opposition:

"The territory is intrinsically and virtually valueless," affirmed Representative John A. Peters, R., of Bangor, Maine. . . .

Representative Dennis McCarthy, R., of Syracuse, New York, having heard "reports that every foot of the soil of Alaska is frozen from five to six feet in depth" ventured that his colleagues would soon "hear that Greenland and Iceland are on the market."

Representative Hiram Price, R., of Davenport, Iowa, deplored the willingness of members of Congress to vote

millions "for the purchase of the icebergs of Alaska" when they hesitated to appropriate "a few thousand dollars to remove the obstructions in the Mississippi, the grandest river upon the globe and inhabited by a loyal, intelligent and energetic people."

Representative Benjamin F. Loan, Radical, of St. Louis, Missouri, averred that "the acquisition of this inhospitable and barren waste would never add a dollar to the wealth of our country or furnish any homes to our people." Alaska, he said, was "utterly worthless," and that "to suppose that anyone would leave the United States . . . to seek a home . . . in the regions of perpetual snow, is simply to suppose such a person insane."²³

Those in political circles who supported the purchase, like Secretary of State Seward and Senator Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, conversely emphasized the economic potential of the new possession and also saw Alaska as providing strategic naval advantages, as stimulating commerce, as presenting new opportunities for bringing the light of Christianity to benighted savages, and as another step taken in the fulfillment of Manifest Destiny.²⁴ Favorable newspapers voiced the same refrains. Regarding the new purchase, the Boston Herald stated that

" . . . those who know most about it, estimate it most highly. The climate on the Pacific side [at that latitude] is not to be compared to that on the Atlantic side of the continent. . . . The country is reported to abound in furs, forest, and minerals, while its rivers and bays on its coast swarm with as fine fish as ever were caught . . . [Alaskan timber] will be particularly valuable in the development of our domain on the Pacific coast and the commerce of the Pacific which has just been entered upon. As to the price, there can be but one opinion--it is dog cheap."²⁵

The Philadelphia Inquirer was equally positive:

" . . . [Alaska] might become very useful to any power having naval interests in the Pacific. . . . A time may come, when the possession of this territory will give us the command over the Pacific which our extensive possessions there require. . . . If there is any value

in the timber, furs, and fisheries of that region, and it must be great, the consideration of the cost of the territorial government is not worthy of a moment's thought. . . . "26

Looking ahead for a moment, we find that the true economic value of Alaska was unambiguously indicated only thirty years after its purchase: "'Seward's Folly' had through the fur-seal lease repaid into the United States treasury more than the cost of the purchase, and despite the legal restrictions on its development had contributed over one hundred million dollars' worth of products to the national wealth."²⁷ Objective truth, however, did not at once settle the contention between these two conflicting myths. In fact, as late as 1952, when the U.S. Senate defeated an Alaska Statehood bill by a vote of 45-44, the myth of the ice box is credited with operating strongly enough to influence political decisions.²⁸ Just as in Henry Nash Smith's opinion that the myth of the garden had to confront and overwhelm the myth of the Great American Desert before settlement of the Great Basin could proceed with those energies generated on the level of the imagination,²⁹ so the myth of the treasure house would need to overcome the myth of the ice box before Alaska's development could proceed to the mere achievement of statehood. In the American West, the myth of the garden had triumphed after some thirty years of struggle; Alaska did not become a State until 1959.

To discover why the myth of the ice box lasted so long despite the early evidence of Alaska's genuine

economic potential, we need to look at the developments in Alaska during its first period, 1867 to 1896. Initially, expectations were very high. It was assumed

. . . that with Old Glory waving over the new domain, settlement such as was taking place in those other outposts of promise, the western territories, would follow. The prairies, the Rockies, the Coast--and now Alaska! The days of '49 in California would be repeated in the days of '69 in the still farther west and north!³⁰

Accompanying the U.S. officials who journeyed to Sitka to complete the transfer of Alaska from Russian to American hands were numerous pioneers who envisioned "a virgin country, a land of opportunity".³¹

Before the first sunset gun was fired stakes dotted the ground, plotting out this and that homestead; within a few days the framework of shanties had begun to arise, new stores were under construction, a new restaurant opened its doors, and the budding enterprises included two tenpin alleys and, of course, saloons. . . . Trade was brisk and the outlook rosy. Soon a newspaper, the Sitka Times, was started and a city government was organized.³²

Alaska seemed off to a good start; yet within two years Sitka's population had dropped from about 2500 to less than 1000; and during the next quarter of a century, the white population in the whole of Alaska increased by only a scant 4000, and half of these were considered transients.³³

The key obstacle to Alaska's growth during this period has been identified as the lack of any Congressional legislation which would establish an organized territorial civil government. During the first seventeen years, Alaska was only a customs district, which meant that

. . . no hopeful settler could acquire a title to land; no pioneer could clear a bit of the forested wilderness

and count on the fruits of his toil, or build a log cabin with the assurance that it was his; no prospector could stake a mining claim with security for his enterprise; property could not be deeded or transferred; no will was valid; marriage could not be celebrated; no injured party could secure redress for grievances except through his own acts; crime could not be punished.³⁴

In 1884, Congress passed Alaska's first organic act, making it, in addition to a customs district, a civil, judicial, and land district as well. This act did provide slight benefit: by extending mining laws to Alaska, it made mining possible; it recognized the need and provided a small budget for public education; and it provided for a governor who could exercise a voice about Alaska's needs in his annual reports. This act of 1884, however, had ignored the real needs of Alaska's pioneers:

. . . Alaska was a civil district in which the civil administration was authorized only to inspect, enforce the laws, and report, yet denied the means either to inspect or enforce.

Alaska was a judicial district, but Congress had so confused its mandate that no judge could be certain what the law was, and the marshall and his deputies often lacked the wherewithal to enforce a court order or sentence when there was one. The Oregon code had frequent reference to county and town functions and prescribed duties for their officials; but as Alaska had neither counties nor towns, and no power to create them, these provisions were meaningless, and left the corresponding functions for Alaska nonexistent.

Alaska was a land district, but without land laws.³⁵

For the remainder of this first period of Alaska's American history, pioneers in the Great Land struggled with these shackles which were wrecking their individual dreams in a land of apparent opportunity and watched helplessly as a hundred million dollars of wealth flowed Outside without a single tax law being passed which would "secure a return

"on the profits from the raw materials extracted from Alaska. . . ."³⁶ The manner in which this wealth was being taken from the treasure house is important for explaining three things: the longevity of the myth of the ice box, the hostility of Alaskan pioneers to non-resident or Outside interests (to use an adjective in current use among Alaskans), and actual frontier conditions in Alaska during this time.

We have already noted that one San Francisco company--the American Russian Commercial Company or the Ice Company--had trade agreements with the Russians fourteen years before the purchase and that this company stayed in business well after 1867. We have also noted that American whalers were operating in Alaskan waters long before 1867. Although whaling was in decline, a fleet did continue to operate and started taking walrus as well: "During the 1870's the whalers' entire walrus kill was estimated at 100,000 animals."³⁷ This harvest from Alaskan waters, in addition to having a disastrous effect on the local native population, did not economically benefit the rest of Alaska. The whale hunters came from outside of Alaska; and once they had filled their ships, they returned to non-Alaskan ports: "Until the mid-1870's, this was usually New Bedford, Massachusetts. Increasingly thereafter it was San Francisco, where ship and crew took winter rest."³⁸

Before the purchase of Alaska, West Coast fishermen had also found Alaskan waters a profitable source of herring,

halibut, and especially cod. By 1870, San Francisco alone was sending nineteen cod fishing vessels to Alaska; and by 1891, more than a million cod were being caught annually in Alaska and then taken to Outside markets. The demand for Alaska herring and candle-fish was so great that two firms, the Northwest Trading Company and the Alaska Oil and Guano Company--both headquartered outside of Alaska--set up plants which "annually packed tens of thousands of barrels of herring and eulachon oil. . . . Hundreds of tons of the fish residue from the Killisnoo works came to be used as fertilizer by Hawaiian and Southern California farmers."³⁹

Alaska's salmon fisheries were not tapped immediately by Outside corporate efforts; but since salmon canneries had been so successful on the Columbia River--by the mid-1870's over 400,000 cases were being packed yearly in eighteen plants⁴⁰--it was predictable that expansion would soon move northward. In 1878, two small canneries in the Panhandle of Alaska packed 14,854 cases valued at \$59,416; by 1889, thirty-seven canneries were scattered from Southeastern to Bristol Bay and in that year packed 696,732 cases worth nearly three million dollars.⁴¹ It is also worth noting that in the following year, 1890, many of these canneries joined to form the Alaska Packers Association, "the first great Alaska Salmon Trust."⁴² As was the case with the other fisheries and the whaling, this exploitation of Alaska's salmon resources was not contributing to Alaska's economic and human population growth: "Without a

"single exception the canneries were owned and operated by nonresident corporations whose operators came in the spring, bringing with them all the cheap Chinese and other labor they required, few if any of their employees becoming actual residents."⁴³

Since Alaska was not connected by trails, highways, or railroads with the rest of the United States, its pioneers were utterly dependent upon maritime transportation. From the very beginning, transportation was in the hands of nonresident corporations:

. . . the history of maritime transportation in Alaska appears to be a sequence of monopoly, alternating with periods of competition in which before long the competitors sank their differences and made common cause, with consequently adverse effects in Alaska and corresponding reactions on Alaskan public opinion.⁴⁴

Since the Pacific Coast Steamship Company was the major water carrier in Southeastern during this time, it naturally was the target of criticism:

"It is not surprising that the people of Alaska find fault with the Pacific Coast Steamship Company, and look upon it as a grinding monopoly, and pray for the day when competition will afford some relief," editorialized the Sitka Alaskan in the early years of the first regular steamship service to southeastern Alaska ports.⁴⁵

Two years later, the Juneau City Mining Record amplified the complaints:

"The people of Alaska have been and are now being imposed upon by not only the the exorbitant freight rates of the P.C.SS. Co., but by the wharf companies as well. Shippers could save money by lightering their goods from vessels to the beach, if the officers of the steamship company would permit them to receive their freight at ship's tackle, but . . . this will not be allowed . . . the steamship company acts in conjunction with the wharf companies, and the wharf bill is added to the

freight bill before the freight passes over it.⁴⁶

Closely related to maritime transportation was the tourist business, which started in 1881 when Henry Villard's luxury passenger steamer brought to the Panhandle an excursion party of eighty, including General Nelson A. Miles, chief officer on the Pacific Coast, and a military band. Growth in this business was fairly rapid:

In 1884 there were [on P.C.SS. Co. vessels alone] 1,650 sightseers; two years later, 2,753; and by the end of the summer season in 1890, more than 5,000 tourists had seen the territory. The trip had become fashionable and the summertime presence of Western nabobs and Eastern elite proved it.⁴⁷

More important than the increasing number of visitors, however, was the method in which this trade was conducted. The Pacific Coast Steamship Company did provide comfortable accommodations on their merchant vessels, but the bulk of the profits from the tourist business went to Henry Villard, the corporate leader credited with the success of the Northern Pacific Railroad as well as owner of the Oregon Railway and Navigation Company--another nonresident firm--which operated the Alaskan luxury steamers.⁴⁸

Despite the variety of economic activity in Alaska during this first period of American occupation, the most rewarding business was still, as it had been for the Russians, the fur trade.⁴⁹ But there was a very important difference. During the first half-century of Russian occupation, Alaska had been a fur frontier: until the monopoly of the Russian-American Company was granted in 1799, the promyshleniki had been able to operate independently

and in whatever fashion suited them to make the most of the opportunities offered by the virgin land. Under U.S. occupation, the fur frontier in Alaska never was open--it was only ajar and that for a short, three years.

Although the myth of the ice box was publicly recited in many newspapers and in Congressional circles, certain West Coast businessmen were privately convinced of the value of at least the fur trade in Alaska. In 1866, before it was known that Alaska would be sold to the United States, the California Fur Company was incorporated with a capital stock of \$5,000,000 for the purpose of obtaining from the Russian-American Company the lease which the Hudson's Bay Company held to the mainland of southeastern Alaska. Its stockholders included the most powerful financial figures in California, and its officers were politically connected: General John F. Miller, its president, and Cornelius Cole, its attorney, were soon to become United States Senators.⁵⁰

It was a San Francisco firm with a different name, however, that actually secured the predominant position in the fur trade. The same vessel which carried the various Russian and U.S. officials to Sitka to formally conduct the transfer also carried H. M. Hutchinson of Hutchinson and Company, and later of Hutchinson, Kohl and Company. Before the ceremonies of the day of transfer were completed, Hutchinson had purchased all the assets of the Russian-American Company: " . . . steamers, fishing boats, wharves,

"salt, furs, and facilities located at Sitka, the Pribilof Islands, Kodiak, Unalaska, and distant northwest trading posts as well."⁵¹ Soon after, yet another company, the Alaska Commercial Company, was formed and took over all the assets gained by Hutchinson's purchase. The predominant fur-trading firm had changed names three times, but the financial and political connections remained the same: General Miller, president of the earlier California Fur Company, became the president of the Alaska Commercial Company.⁵²

By outright purchase, this company had gained a strong commercial position in southeastern Alaska and had secured a near-monopoly on both trade and transportation in central and western Alaska and in the interior along the Yukon River. Not yet included under its exclusive control was the Pribilof Islands fur-seal herd, which at the time of the purchase numbered some three millions. Once the Russians departed, numerous American sealers began to exploit the herd, but the Alaska Commercial took quick action to eliminate competition for their profits:

Application was immediately made to Congress for the passage of a law to authorize the making of an exclusive concession or lease of the right to take seal furs on the Pribilof Islands.

Congress passed the Act of July 1, 1870 . . . and a month later . . . the secretary of the Treasury, under authority of that Act, signed a lease giving the Alaska Commercial Company "for the term of twenty years from the first day of May, 1870, the right to engage in the business of taking fur seals on the islands of St. George and St. Paul."⁵³

What the Alaska Commercial Company could not accomplish by

purchase it had obtained through political influence in Washington. The fur frontier in Alaska had been limited to the fur seal, and this frontier had been open for just three years, 1867 to 1870.

But the fur resources of Alaska were so valuable--the Alaska Commercial Company was making an estimated \$1,000,000 per year⁵⁴--that other interests tried to find a way to tear loose a few crumbs of this great harvest. In the late 1870's, fur seal pirates started hunting seals on the open water, and then pelagic sealing blossomed: "From an average of one vessel a year in the late eighteen seventies, the number jumped to sixteen in 1880, to thirty-four in 1886, to sixty-eight in 1889, to over a hundred in 1894."⁵⁵

Such inroads on a profitable business naturally elicited a response from the Alaska Commercial Company. Since the leasing act of 1870 forbid pelagic sealing, A.C.C. appealed to the U.S. government to seize all offending vessels, and appropriate instructions were issued in 1886. This skillful maneuvering of A.C.C. has been neatly compared with other economic feuds in American history:

Economically, the squabble between the Alaska Commercial Company and the independent pelagic hunters was comparable to a feud between a big open-range cattle baron and a group of individual homesteaders. Robert De Armond has succinctly stated that the Alaska Commercial Company "got Uncle Sam and Uncle Sam's Navy, plus most of the public press and a considerable part of Congress to help them. If the cattle barons had been as successful as the Alaska Commercial Company, there wouldn't be a farmer west of the Mississippi."⁵⁶

Again A.C.C. had persuaded Congress to secure and protect

its monopoly, that is, to keep Alaska's fur frontier closed. After the company's 20-year lease to the Pribilof Islands expired in 1890, another Outside corporation, the North American Commercial Company, obtained the lease; but A.C.C. maintained its highly profitable transportation and trade network.⁵⁷

Thur far all the major economic activities in Alaska during its first period--whaling, the fisheries and canneries, transportation, the tourist trade, and the fur trade--have been reviewed, with one exception--mining. Since its role in early Alaskan history is unique, generalization about frontier conditions in Alaska might be drawn here and then mining brought in as an exception.

First, if an essential characteristic of a frontier region is individual opportunity and if the predominance of corporate method is equivalent to a closed frontier, then it is clear that Alaska was not a frontier at all. Of course there were some small-moneyed entrepreneurs who achieved financial success in Alaska, but the vast majority of Alaska's treasure found its way into the accounts of corporate stockholders. Like Australia, Alaska at this time could be called "a big man's frontier," but that by definition means that it was not a frontier.

Second, since these corporations without exception were owned by nonresidents of Alaska and since these corporations were held responsible by Alaskan pioneers for the repeated failures of Congress to pass legislation which

would meet the special needs and promote the growth of Alaska, the businessmen of California, Oregon and Washington and the federal government received the frustrated fury of those who were attempting to develop Alaska in the traditional pattern of the American pioneer. An organization called the Alaska Pioneers Business Association was, according to the Sitka Alaskan, not established with a purpose suggested by its name; rather it was

" . . . organized in the sole interest of San Francisco businessmen, who do not intend to contribute a cent to the material welfare of the Territory . . . , bringing, as they do, all the supplies they need with them, and engaging the help they require below, to return there when their services are no longer wanted."⁵⁸

The Juneau City Mining Record also expressed a general belief about the adverse influence of the Alaska Commercial Company upon Congress:

"The people of Alaska have asked for . . . the enactment of laws beneficial . . . to this section, such as the extension of land laws, representation in Congress, a judicial code, suitable to our conditions, etc., but whenever anything for the benefit of Alaska is brought before Congress, this monopoly, through agents in Washington interposes an objection . . . and Alaska receives nothing. . . . Such has been the condition of things since the first settlement of Alaska."⁵⁹

About two years later, the same newspaper "wondered why the Pacific Coast Senators should be so concerned about the monopolies in Alaska, and so little interested in its general prosperity, that they could influence a majority of the members of Congress to oppose any bills introduced for Alaska's benefit."⁶⁰

Why West Coast Senators would be so interested in Alaskan monopolies must be a rhetorical question in light

of the connection between such Senators as John F. Miller and Cornelius Cole and such a San Francisco firm as the Alaska Commercial Company. That these Senators were not interested in the general prosperity of Alaska also seems a reasonable assumption when assertions made in the Eleventh Census Report are considered:

"The homestead and pre-emption laws having been withheld from this territory, the most desirable class of settlers have been barred out."

"The vast sums paid out every season by the salmon companies" were falling "almost entirely into the hands of nonresidents of the territory, both white and Chinese."

"The number of native laborers employed in any of the fishing establishments" was "insignificant compared to that of imported laborers."

"Few of the fishermen, packers and sailors engaged in the work have become permanent residents of the country, which is being rapidly drained of its principal resources without getting even a partial return in wages paid for labor."⁶¹

A more direct attack was made by Alaska's Governor Swineford:

"Clothed by the Government with a monopoly of the seal fur trade by which it has profited to the extent of many millions, it [the Alaska Commercial Company] has, octopus-like, thrown out its great tentacles and gathered to itself about all there is of value in the fur trade of the whole Territory. It has, by the power of its great wealth, driven away all competition and reduced the native population to a condition of helpless dependence, if not one of absolute and abject slavery."⁶²

How those Pacific Coast Senators were able to influence a majority of Congress is a more complicated question, but part of the answer comes from the myth of the ice box. Just as the myth of the garden had been "manipulated by cynical men for selfish purposes,"⁶³ so the myth of the ice box was cultivated to the same end. Such deliberate

perpetuation of the myth was noted already in 1878, by a Special Agent of the Treasury Department:

"I am not prepared at present to charge directly any persons with a deliberate intent to undervalue the natural wealth of Alaska, and to prevent its settlement and civilization, but . . . there is an undercurrent at work to belittle the purchase and decry the acquisition from Russia as worthless and a desert watery waste. . . . "64

The strength and adverse effect of this myth is indicated by the fact that apparently "the vast majority of federal officials, executive and legislative, continued to think of Alaska as a bad bargain, a worthless waste, further expenditure on which would be still more waste."65 Recitation of the myth of the treasure house was being drowned out by corporate bullhorns.

In terms of individual, economic frontier achievement, the only happy note in Alaska during this period was that sounded by the miners. In southeastern Alaska, gold had been found in several areas, but the first rush occurred in 1880, after Joe Juneau and Richard Harris struck pay dirt on the Gastineau Channel: "More than five hundred claims were staked, more than a third of them patented, and both quartz and placer mining began. . . . "66

Although the discovery of gold in this area did bring a significant number of miners into Alaska and did establish a permanent center of population, the discovery did not set the West on fire. In fact, the pattern of development which had appeared in the gold fields of California was soon duplicated in the Panhandle: within two

years the placer deposits gave out and hard-rock quartz mining became the backbone of the regional economy. As in California and other Western regions, the transition to hard-rock mining signalled the closing of the mining frontier in southeastern Alaska: \$800,000, for example, was required for just the 240-stamp mill at the Treadwell mine on Douglas Island.⁶⁷ Once again, it was San Francisco businessmen who financed the operation and deposited the profits in Outside banks,⁶⁸ but in contrast to the pattern set by other companies exploiting Alaska's treasures, the "Treadwell Group of Mines" did help Alaska: the miners and their wages contributed to a permanent population and stimulated economic growth.

Indirectly the corporate mining efforts in the Panhandle also contributed to the establishment of a longer-lived mining frontier in the interior of Alaska. Miners whose own claims in the Juneau area had run out or who tired of working in the Treadwell "glory-hole" started crossing the Dyea divide and prospecting the headwaters of the Yukon River. In 1883, the McConky party from Juneau discovered many bars which yielded good returns to placer methods; and in 1886, the first discovery of coarse gold along the Alaskan part of the Yukon was made on Fortymile River.⁶⁹

Although this discovery did not excite much attention outside of Alaska, it did generate an upswing in placer mining in the Interior:

There was an immediate stampede to the new workings on the Fortymile and its tributary creeks, and in 1887 a

trading post was built by Harper and McQuesten at its mouth. Gradually all the creeks tributary to Fortymile had been staked and were being worked, most of them since discovered to be on the United States side of the international boundary. By 1895 this area was producing upwards of \$600,000 a year. Right-hand tributaries of the lower Fortymile provided easy crossing to another stream, the Sixtymile, along whose course two rich gold-bearing streams were discovered in 1892--Miller and Glacier. About this same time (1892) gold was discovered on Birch Creek, a tributary of the Yukon that flows into that river about fifty miles below Fort Yukon. Since this creek in its course parallels the Yukon, it is readily accessible from the Yukon. A convenient site for a town was selected about ninety miles above Fort Yukon, and to this the name Circle City--from its proximity to the Arctic Circle--was given. The Arctic Circle is nearly one hundred miles away. It reached its peak of production one year after Fortymile in 1896 with a total of \$700,000.⁷⁰

With this amount of gold being extracted from the local diggings and fed into the local economy, there sprang up the towns of Fortymile and the even more popular Circle City, which by 1896, had twelve hundred citizens and was variously known as "the largest log town in the world" and "the Paris of Alaska." In addition to its "music hall, two theaters, eight dance halls, and twenty-eight saloons," it also supported two stores--operated by agents of the Alaska Commercial Company and of the North America Trading and Transportation Company--and a library containing "the complete works of Huxley, Darwin, Carlyle, Macaulay, Ruskin, and Irving."⁷¹ In this placer mining region, the frontier in Alaska can truly be said to have been open, and it remained open into the next period of Alaskan history.

Before turning to the literature of the pre-Klondike period, a glance needs to be taken at one more subject: the relationship between the aboriginal and white populations

during this time of American occupation. We have already noted how quickly the promyshleniki wiped out such a great proportion of the natives on the Aleutian Chain. The impact of white civilization on the Eskimos farther to the north was also lamentable, even though it was at the hands of the American whaler-trader rather than of the Russian promyshlennik.

One of the most shocking incidents was the Gilley Massacre in 1878. Having sailed his brig north on a whaling and trading voyage, Captain George Gilley received a number of Cape Prince of Wales natives aboard for trading. An argument and fighting broke out and the Eskimos took refuge in the forecastle. Then the massacre started:

"Seeing no other alternative," testified Captain Gilley, "I posted men above them, and when a native showed his head, he was clubbed and thrown overboard. Toward the last we hauled them out with gaff hooks. The three canoes had contained about twenty warriors but not one of them had escaped."⁷²

Less immediate in consequence but even more widespread in terms of lethal effect were the diseases brought in by the whalers:

In the gantlet of acculturation, no blows were more horrendous for Alaska's aboriginals than the ravages left by smallpox, measles, and their deadly bacilli cousins. Diseases registered the same dreadful mortality rate throughout Alaska that European-borne bacteria had effected elsewhere across the Pacific Basin and the Americas.⁷³

Directly and indirectly, starvation for the Eskimos soon became another result of the whaler-trader. Directly the whalers effected this by their wholesale slaughter of the whale and walrus, both essential for the natives' food,

clothing, and boats. According to Ivan Petroff, writing in 1880, alcohol brought in by the whaler-trader indirectly produced the same result:

. . . the trading vessels coming to this region . . . have carried such quantities of alcoholic liquor that the natives have acquired a craving for the same that can no longer be subdued, and this causes them to look for no other equivalent for their furs, oil, and ivory than the means of intoxication. At the same time they become utterly reckless in their pursuit of fur-bearing and other animals, thinking only of satisfying their desire for the present without the slightest thought of the future; and if this state of affairs be continued the extermination of the people, consequent upon the exhaustion of their means of subsistence, can only be a question of time.⁷⁴

Treatment by U.S. soldiers of the aboriginals in other parts of Alaska was not much better. During the first ten years of American occupation, when Alaska was under military rule, there were many complaints that the soldiers, officers and men alike,

. . . debauched the Indians, greatly intensified the evils wrought by the relatively moderate use of their ancient home-brew made of spruce bark and berries, by inculcating the distillation of a more potent "hooche-noo" made of molasses and sugar; and that the military, instead of being guardians of law and order, were responsible for much of the crime and violence among the aborigines. . . .⁷⁵

William Morris, Special Agent of the Treasury Department, provides an example of such a complaint made during that time:

"Previous to the arrival of the military its [hooche-noo's] manufacture was unknown to the Indians, but no sooner had the soldiers made their appearance in Alaska than the detestable traffic commenced. . . . One of the evil effects of this detestable vice has been the debauchery and degradation of the native women by a licentious soldiery. . . . A whole race of prostitutes has been created, and the morbus indecens of the Latins, is found in full feather. . . . Today there is not a

single surgeon or physician in Southeastern Alaska, and when a victim becomes infected with the lues vene-rea, his fate can be predicted. Syphilitic diseases are the bane of the country."⁷⁶

The impact of the various corporations on the welfare of the natives does not present a pleasant picture either, although in the cases of the canneries and the Treadwell mines the picture is not grossly unpleasant. Here it was rather a matter of the Indians finding cannery and mill work too distasteful: "Though natives tried mill work, the snorting, smashing machines repelled them. For a people raised in a wilderness, the mill was a prison, and they wandered off."⁷⁷ As the number of canneries increased during the 1880's, "the indigenes, always difficult to regiment, lost out":

Even where the actual salmon fishing was involved, the natives proved unreliable. Originally, Indians had transported salmon to the canneries, or at least been critical in their catch. But before long, small steam barges or tugs went to . . . [gather the fish].⁷⁸

In the western part of Alaska, where the Alaska Commercial Company held a monopoly on transportation and trade, exploitation rather than neglect was the consequence. We have already seen how Governor Swineford, appointed in 1885, described in his third annual report the strangle-hold of A.C.C. on the Aleuts.⁷⁹

Onto this dark picture of uncontrolled acculturation and its inevitable hardship and agony for Alaska's aboriginals can be thrown the light of early missionary work. Many of the miners and soldiers in Alaska were skeptical about the ultimate goal of missionary work and considered

the missionaries to be merely kill-joys; but once it is assumed that acculturation of some form was inevitable, then, even though it may be uncertain that they should be praised as soul-savers, it is clear that they were beneficial as social workers.

What had become apparent to the field workers of the nineteenth century, including Alaskan missionaries, was that "unless native peoples could acquire a rudimentary grasp of the white man's civilization, Christianization must fail. Sanitary living habits, the mutual obligations of wedlock, the dignity of the individual--these and other elemental social concepts were complicated and blurred by aboriginal societies." Therefore, "in Alaska as in Africa, the Far West, and Polynesia, primary education had usually preceeded, or at least accompanied, Protestant conversion."⁸⁰

If education is considered valuable as a means of gradual acculturation, then the spread of mission schools in Alaska indicates the great benefit of the missionaries' efforts. After the transfer, Russian Orthodox priests continued their work of education and Christianization, in Sitka and especially in the western periphery: "From its San Francisco headquarters the Russian Orthodox Church sent out an annual payroll in excess of eleven thousand dollars to priests scattered from Kodiak to St. Michael."⁸¹

Shortly after the transfer, American missionaries took up the work started by the Russians. In 1877, the Presbyterian Church established the first permanent school

in Wrangell, and the following year another permanent school in Sitka. In 1884, a Congressional appropriation of \$40,000 and the appointment of the Presbyterian missionary Sheldon Jackson as General Agent for Education in Alaska contributed greatly to the growth of education. Since the federal funds were scant for the job to be done, Jackson enlisted the cooperation of other church groups:

[By 1890] . . . the Presbyterian missionaries in Southeastern Alaska could rejoice in the presence (or promise) of Baptists at Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and Prince William Sound, Friends (Quakers) at Douglas Island, Methodists on the Alaskan Peninsula and Aleutian Islands, Moravians in the Kuskokwim Valley, Episcopalians along the Yukon River, and Congregationalists on the Bering Sea Coast.⁸²

Operating independently, the Roman Catholic Church also began to establish missions during the 1870's, concentrating their efforts on the Yukon River and the Bering Sea regions.⁸³

One of the more practical results of Sheldon Jackson's work can be seen in his response to the problem of starvation among the Eskimos. In 1891, using private money, he imported sixteen Siberian reindeer. "By 1897 hundreds were to be seen in northwestern Alaska, and the federal government was paying the bill."⁸⁴

Probably the most spectacular success of the efforts in the Pacific Northwest to regulate Indian acculturation was that of the Reverend William Duncan with the Tsimshians of British Columbia. Starting in the early 1860's, he established the village of Metlakatla some twenty miles south of the Alaskan border. In 1878, the German

anthropologist Aurel Krause described the result:

. . . Metlakahtla possessed its own schooner which made regular commercial trips to Victoria, a community warehouse, a merchandise store for alien Indians, a soap factory, a smithy, a sawmill, a schoolhouse which cost about four thousand dollars; a large building for public assemblies, courts and the care of strangers; a mission house, a church, a woolen mill, a rope and cord factory, a tanning establishment, a shoe factory and much else.⁸⁵

In 1887, after breaking with the Anglican Church, Duncan and approximately a thousand Indians moved to Annette Island, a few miles from present-day Ketchikan, and there rebuilt their economically self-contained Victorian village.⁸⁶

It is unfortunate that Father Duncan's success was not matched by other missionaries. Still, the efforts which were made by others on behalf of the aboriginals stands in marked contrast to the typical treatment received at the hands of Alaska's early incorporated exploiters.

Having taken a look at the significant developments in Alaska during its pre-Klondike period, we can now examine the way in which the realities of these first three decades were presented in contemporary fiction.

Literature

Washington Irving included a brief sketch of Aleksandr Baranov--first governor of Russian America and manager of the Russian-American Company from its first charter in 1799 until 1818--in Astoria, or, Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains in 1836, but the first full-length work of Alaskan fiction did not appear until 1889:

Willis Boyd Allen's The Red Mountains of Alaska. Between 1889 and 1896, apparently no short stories and less than a dozen novels were published, relating in some way to Alaska. Since the number of novels is so small, generalization about themes and characters in Alaskan literature of the pre-Klondike period--actually a span of only eight literary years instead of twenty-nine historical years--do not mean much: they are frequently descriptive of a single specimen rather than of a general class.

Probably the most important statement that can be made about these stories is that they do signal the beginning of literary interest in and use of Alaskan materials. If for this reason we do try to force these novels into some pattern, then the most accurate description would be to say that they all have a common theme: Alaska is a treasure house. However, the wide range of values, goals, and assumptions through which these earliest authors envision a treasure house necessitates specific examination of variations on the theme.

Treasure house of exploitable economic wealth

Given the immediate and intense efforts of Outside corporations to exploit Alaska's economic wealth, particularly in the fur trade but also in other areas, it seems quite appropriate that the first novel, Willis Boyd Allen's The Red Mountains of Alaska (1889), would depict the efforts of a wealthy Eastern paper mill proprietor, John Dutton, to become even richer by developing Alaska's mineral resources--

a proposal urged by Dutton's brother, an Army lieutenant stationed in southeastern Alaska just a year after the purchase.

In a letter containing the proposal, the lieutenant first seems about to advance the myth of the ice box:

"The uncertainty of the mails in this new adopted country of ours, the constant disputes with Russian traders who are angry at having their hunting-ground sold over their heads--or under their feet, rather!--and the treachery of the native Innuits, as well as the reckless behavior of our own troops, have kept my hands full and my head in a continual worry since the establishment of the post. Sometimes I wish the government had kept her seven millions in her pocket, and left this desolate country to take care of itself."⁸⁷

But this is only a momentary, rhetorical stance, and soon he moves into a review of Alaska's natural wonders:

" . . . in the rest of the territory are splendid forests, as I have said. There are mountain peaks reaching (in Mt. Wrangel) the enormous height of twenty thousand feet above the sea; there is a river, the noble Yukon, over two thousand miles in length--a rival of the great Mississippi itself. Among the hills are winding streams and pleasant valleys, where brilliant wild-flowers blossom, insects hover over them in the sunshine, and birds dart to and fro as merrily as in our old New England orchards. The woods are full of game. There is no place in the world where bears, black, brown, grizzly, and cinnamon, with two or three other varieties, are found in such abundance. Moose have not learned to fear the rifle, and wild goats clamber over the rocks in full sight."⁸⁸

Finally the lieutenant builds to his dramatic climax:

"Yes, wealth. . . . Without doubt, the coasts of Alaska are veined throughout their length and breadth with gold and silver. Shafts are being sunk in all directions, and mines located."⁸⁹

But the fabulous wealth in gold is exceeded by an even greater treasure: " . . . 'a mountain of mercury!'" And

there is no question about what should be done with it: "It waits," Dutton's brother continues, "for someone to take those red heaps of granite and quartz, fuse them, and bear away such a fortune as you could not make in a century of prosperous mill operations at Sheldon. Will you come?"⁹⁰

The answer to this question is never uncertain. Five months later all the arrangements have been completed, and the Duttons are about to leave the Sheldon railroad station:

There is a tallish, brown-bearded gentleman, with clear, bright eyes, and an exceedingly gentle voice; a lady, of refined face and manner, and close beside her a young girl; four boys, one of them freckled and sandy-haired; a negro woman, with a red bandanna handkerchief around her black neck; and a young Newfoundland dog, full of quiet surprise at all this commotion. Several large trunks and cases are piled upon the platform, awaiting transportation.⁹¹

The entire family, including servant and dog, is embarking upon a genteel prospecting trip.

The conclusion to such a romantic beginning is fully as realistic as the complicated adventures encountered for the next three hundred pages. After a year of close calls with grizzly bears, hungry wolves, and bad Indians--but no real hardships--the mountain is reached. Then instead of being a mountain of mercury, which would mean a find of incredible value, it turns out to be--more realistically--"a tolerably perfect specimen of a mountain of iron!"⁹² From this point on, the Duttons have no interest in Alaska. They quickly journey to San Francisco, where Mr. Dutton interests a group of California capitalists in

his claim and four years later receives over half a million dollars for his share in the enterprise.

Such success certainly conforms to one of the major requirements for a sentimental novel--an assertion of the desirability of material accumulation. And in one quick stroke another requirement is met--an affirmation of the need for moral uplift: Mr. Dutton is going to use a portion of his new wealth to permanently fund Dutton University, which, incidently, is to be located back in the East, not in Alaska.

A variation on the theme of economic exploitation is found in a minor subplot of Kirk Munroe's Snow-Shoes and Sledges; a Sequel to "The Fur-Seal's Tooth" (1895). Instead of corporate effort being the acceptable way of draining Alaska's wealth, individual initiative is lauded. Gerald Hamer, an independent trader trying to break into the Yukon River trade, is plotted against by Simon Goldollar, a trusted clerk who hopes to win promotion by ruining someone who would break the company's monopoly. Actually, this conflict, which could be developed into a significant theme, never becomes more than a device for justifying a winter race with dog sleds from Anvik up to the mining camp at Fortymile, where trade contracts will be made for the following spring.

Endangered treasure house of exploitable economic wealth

Exploitation of Alaska's treasures was first directed at resources which were, unlike mineral wealth, renewable

but at the same time vulnerable to man's greed--the fur bearers and the fisheries. Just as the Russians had nearly exterminated the sea otter in their relentless quest for corporate profit, so, by the 1890's, was it clear that pelagic sealing was having a disastrous effect on the Pribilof Islands herd. In 1896, David Starr Jordan, noted ichthyologist and president of Stanford University, was sent north as the U.S. Commissioner in Charge of Fur Seal Investigations, and the following year he published a polemic entitled, The Story of Matka: A Tale of the Mist Islands. Although the tale was reissued in 1910, as a school book, it was written for adults and praised for the "simple yet forcible manner in which the life on the Mist Islands is described, the short sentences used, and the careful choice of simple Anglo-Saxon words. . . ."⁹³

A couple examples are enough to illustrate both the style and the message. The male fur seals reach the islands and make their territorial claims in anticipation of gathering harems from the approaching females. Atagh, a great beach-master, is challenged and forced to fight his brother, Unga, but Atagh's victory is not sweet:

Then they both groaned very loud, and big tears flowed from their eyes and made wet strips across their cheeks, for they were sorry that they must fight each other. For they were brothers, and for many a day they had been great friends. Long days and nights had they slept side by side on Zoltoi sands. But this was when they were bachelors, before the great duties of life had come to them.⁹⁴

Finally, the females arrive and one of the most winsome, Matka, is heading for Atagh's territory when Unga

attempts to interfere:

And Unga saw her as she came up, and stood in her way, and would not let her pass, for he was great and strong, and Matka was small and lissome. "Stay with me," said Unga; "I am all alone." Then he groaned very loud, and raised his neck, and shook his head three times, while the tears ran from his eyes. "See Atagh," he said; "he has enough already, and does not care for you at all."

"That is right," said Matka. "He is such a dear, good, masterful fellow; no wonder everybody likes him. We shall all have such good times together. Don't you remember how he threw you and old Imnak off the rocks last year, and carried Ennatha and all the rest of them to his own place, and you could not help yourselves? How mad you were; but you could only groan, and could never blow a white cloud like Atagh. By the side of Atagh the rest of you beach-masters are no better than old white Isogh, who can't raise his head, and can only wriggle off into the water when a beach-master looks at him. There were forty of us that year, and we all belonged to Atagh. Oh, what a beach-master he is!"⁹⁵

Domestic bliss follows and Matka gives birth to a darling little boy, Kotik, who promises to be as great as his famous father. As a couple seasons go by, he grows and is spared at the Asascardano when the annual drives are made to gather skins of the bachelors: at first the Mist Islanders pass over Kotik because he is too young and then because he has a scar on his shoulder.

In the final part of the story, Matka has a little daughter, but the island idyll on the Pribilofs is shattered by the fur seal pirates:

And then at last came the sad summer, when the ships of the Pirate Kings found their way into the Icy Sea. It was then that we picked up Matka, with a spearhead in her throat, dead on the shining sands they call Zoltoi, the golden. And Lakutha, her little one, who had been so plump and joyous, grew faint and thin, until she died at last. Atagh was sore at heart, though he pretended not to notice it.⁹⁶

The implied conclusion of the novel is that since the

traditional harvest of the fur seals by the Mist Islanders (a veiled way of saying by the corporate monopoly) is reasonable and even laudable and since the methods of the pelagic Pirate Kings are bad, the reader should, after admiring the fine Homeric style of the tale and ignoring the pathetic fallacies, write his Congressman and ask for legislation to bring happiness back to the endangered fur seal. Interesting as the story might be as a corporate propaganda piece, it makes no contribution to the creation of a mainstream of Alaskan literature.

Treasure house of
natural wonders

Nearly all of the novels of this period pay tribute to the scenic beauty of the new possession, but one of them, Willis Boyd Allen's Gulf and Glacier; or, The Percivals in Alaska (1892), deserves special mention. As we've already noted, genteel excursion parties started touring the Panhandle in 1881. Gulf and Glacier capitalizes on this growing interest by providing in the manner of travel guide books a very detailed description of a family trip from Boston across Canada by railroad, up to Alaska by boat, and back to Boston by railroad across the United States. Although Alaska is the focal region of the seven-weeks trip, much space is given to Canada and the United States: going out, the tourists visit Montreal, Winnipeg, Banff National Park, the Selkirk Mountains and the Fraser River, Vancouver and Victoria; coming back their stops include Seattle, Portland, Yellowstone, Minneapolis--where "they hurriedly

"inspected one of the great 'Pillsbury' mills, which turn out seven thousand barrels of flour a day"⁹⁷--and Niagara Falls.

On the boat trip to Alaska, the travelogue, which is romantically complicated by the inclination of several young couples, includes the usual wild life:

Whales rose solemnly and spouted with deep sighs. Porpoises showed their glistening backs above water, raced beside the ship, and threw themselves out into the sunlight. Eagles winged their way from shore to shore, and ducks paddled merrily in every small bay. On masses of floating timber hovered snow-gulls, their beautiful wings lifting and closing as their rafts were rocked in the steamer's wake.⁹⁸

And once the ship reaches Alaska, numerous bears are spotted, Indian villages are inspected, glaciers are visited where the sailors refill ice chests by chipping off pieces of ice bergs, and tales are told about the ingenuity of northern mosquitos: two of them will commonly get together with a third whose wings they hold flat against his body as they push him through the fine meshes of a head net. Even more astounding is the rumor, believed by many, "that the mastodon, whose skeleton rears itself high above the elephant's, in our museums, is not entirely extinct, but actually roams the tangled thickets of inner Alaska"; support for this belief is attributed to no less an expert than John Muir!⁹⁹

Since this catalog of natural wonders and beauty is written in the mode of the sentimental novel, we would expect and do find more than young love blooming amid lively adventures. Moral uplift or piety is expressed in several

ways but most commonly by the responses of various characters to God's grandeur. One of the young, for example, sends his mother a poem which he has written after being inspired by what he has seen:

Within thy holy temple have I strayed,
 E'en as a weary child, who from the heat
 And noonday glare hath timid refuge sought
 In some cathedral's vast and shadowy nave,
 And trembles, awestruck, crouching in his rags
 Where high up-reared a mighty pillar stands.
 Mine eyes I left unto the hills, from whence
 Cometh my help. The murmuring firs stretch forth
 Their myriad tiny crosses o'er my head;
 Deep rolls an organ peal of thunder down
 The echoing vale, while clouds of incense float
 Before the great white altar set on high.
 So lift my heart, O God! and purify
 Its thought, that when I walk once more
 Thy minister amid the hurrying throng,
 One ray of sunlight from these golden days,
 One jewel from the mountain's regal brow,
 One cup of water from these springs of life,
 As tokens of thy beauty, I may bear
 To little ones who toil and long for rest.¹⁰⁰

Such a treasure house of natural beauty is, of course, a source of perpetual delight; therefore, it comes as no surprise to learn near the end of the trip that several of the tourists are planning already to make another excursion to Alaska.

Treasure house of the Lord

As we have already noted, some of the most active of the white Americans who came to work in Alaska rather than just to visit were the missionaries. Arriving in 1881 with her husband and fellow missionary, Caroline McCoy Willard was aware, as she states in the preface to Kin-dashon's Wife; an Alaskan Story (1892), of the marvelous

opportunities for bringing the light of civilized Christianity to barbarian heathens: "During those early days we fully realized that great changes awaited these peoples, changes to be accomplished not only by the Gospel, but by the inevitable contact with an incoming civilization. . . ."¹⁰¹ The argument of her novel follows logically from her intent as a Gospel worker: the changes to be wrought among Alaska's aboriginals are desirable.

To dramatize this message she first presents the Tlinglits as living in a natural Garden of Eden:

And on this bright morning the little lake of Chilkoot mirrors back from its clear face a sky warm and bright and blue, against which loom the great peaks forever ice-crowned, and from which slide invisibly the glaciers blue and cold.

Further down, blending with the golden browns and the purple of the granite, lie the tender yellows of the sheep pastures, dotted, to the trained eye, with flocks, flocks untended by earthly shepard. Then, with almost imperceptible gradations of color, come the blue and black greens of the stunted pine and huckleberry-bush--guarded by the forests primeval, spruce, hemlock, fir, and cedar; and mingling with these their own lighter and more graceful foliage are the cottonwood, wild-apple, and the alder.

Every limb is clothed with moss, and its festoons float from pillar to pillar in this vast temple. The air is redolent with the breath of roses, as the mountain drops to the water's brink, roses as red and sweet as ever grew along the valley roadways in the dear homeland, and far more fresh and luxuriant. The sweet-pea, whose buds are just bursting, creeps over the brink of the lake, hiding full nests of the numberless water-fowl whose peculiar call, broken into a hundred echoes, falls again in a shower of sound and vanishes amid the solitudes. The tender notes of the robin and the blue-bird mingle with the croak of the raven and the cry of the eagle. The cinnamon bear walks fearlessly down the track of the avalanche and feeds upon the abundant trout of the noisy mountain stream.¹⁰²

In this idyllic setting, life is enjoyable for those whose

age excludes them from social responsibilities:

The little bark advances from out of the shadows of the narrow river course into the broad, full light of the lake, revealing the figures of those who sing. An old woman sits in the middle of the canoe making thread from the dry sinew of the reindeer. A girl of twelve lies curled in the prow, toying dreamily with the grass and flowers she has plucked from the banks as the canoe glided through the river--she carries the high, tenor-like soprano of the song; her brother, perhaps two years the girl's senior, with his single paddle both propelling and guiding the boat--so leisurely that we know it to be a pleasure party--occupies the stern. He, too, is singing; and under the young voices is the crooning of the woman. . . .¹⁰³

Romance also blossoms among the young men and women. The worthy Kin-da-shon longs for the hand of the beautiful Tashekah and her father approves the match, but he desires that she, his only living relative, stay with him until his death; dutiful Tashekah, loving and honoring her father above all others, is happy to comply and Kin-da-shon will not fret over the delay.

Life, however, is not pleasant for everyone. As the chief of the village lays dying, the shaman goes into a trance and indicates that beautiful, 15-year-old Sha-hehe has cast a black spell. Punishment follows immediately, even being led by her own father and mother:

The girl is seized and bound, her feet close together, her hands behind her back. Her one poor garment is torn from her amid jeers and cries. On the faces of those about her are seen both horror and exultation. Her own father, in his eagerness to preserve the honor of his family, is the first to bring the great bundle of "devil-sticks" (a nettle-thorn). No sooner has he flung them down than, by her mother's hands, the girl is thrown violently down on the venomous bed and spat upon. Others are not slow in adding the force of their strength to the torture of the young witch, smiting her still further into the stinging

nettle. She is then dragged from it and her body doubled together by strong and violent hands. She is thrown then upon her back on the floor; a man jumps upon her chest and, planting his knees on it, beats her head on the planks below. The blood starts from her mouth and nose--her eyes are staring.¹⁰⁴

The girl survives these and other tortures, described in delicious detail, but hers is to be a living death: she becomes the slave of the new chief, who is an evil man.

Other slaves suffer a more sudden end. With the death of the old chief imminent, ten of his slaves are sacrificed--another practice perpetuated by the shamans:

One after another they receive a dozen or more deep stabs in different parts of the body, until the ground about them is saturated with blood.

They are then thrown down on their backs, and their necks are brought into position over a log four or five inches in diameter; another log of like dimensions is then fitted over their necks, the executioners bring the ends together, and in a few seconds more the hideous gurgling has ceased--the spirits of the ten slaves have gone out to prepare the way for and to serve the dying chief.¹⁰⁵

Into this world of sorcery, slavery, and torture steps the white trader who intensifies the Tlinglit's problems by providing them with hoots-a-noo and muskets and ammunition. The results are disastrous at both the personal and communal levels.

Romantic love had not been fulfilled after the death of Tashekah's father. She was given to a shaman, after which the good Kin-da-shon accepted the irreparable and took Kotch-kul-ah for wife. All would have gone well, but the evil new chief uses white man's liquor to seduce Kotch-kul-ah, who then flees in shame to Sitka and dies.

On the communal level, the influence of the traders also works its dire effects: "Encouraged by the bonus offered by the traders, the distribution at 'pot-latch' feasts became more prodigal, while in proportion the discomfort of families was disregarded."¹⁰⁶ Worked up by alcohol and perpetuated by lex retaliatus, tribal and family jealousies and bitterness flare into war and bloodshed. The only one to gain from all this misery and killing was the shaman: "It was truly a harvest-time to this emissary of evil, who, by every artifice and device, kept the people in a state of abject slavery to himself."¹⁰⁷

The dramatic solution to all these problems is to replace the shaman and his gospel of evil with the Christian missionary and the Gospel of Love. Finally, "when hoots-a-noo ran low and the hearts of the people were weary with the long conflict," the highest ranking chief of the Chilkat people bid the missionaries to address his people:

It was a congregation to fill the heart of one bearing the message of peace and love--of peace to a suffering, struggling world--peace to Chilkat, torn and bleeding as she was--of love from a God who "so loved the world"--the world which struggled in enmity against him--so loved that he gave--not took from them all they had, to pay the "shame" they gave him--he gave his only begotten and well-beloved Son, that they might not perish but have everlasting life. This mighty love, the missionary told them, was given to the Chilkat people, not to one tribe only, but to all tribes. Would they receive it? Would they obey it, that they might live by it in peace, and forever?¹⁰⁸

The answer was predictable: "Hard faces softened, dull faces kindled. Their hearts had been touched. The Chilkat war was at an end."¹⁰⁹ However, for the loving

peace to last, the influence of the evil shamans needed to be countered by the continual presence of a missionary:

"During a later absence of the missionary, six adults, accused of witchcraft, were tortured during one winter."¹¹⁰

The benevolent influence of the Gospel is also seen in the private lives of Kin-da-shon and his childhood sweetheart, Tashekash. After her shaman husband dies,

. . . she followed her heart to the mission: her quick, hungry mind feasted on what she found there, and she became proficient, too, in many of the simple accomplishments which go to make a happy home.

She was the same Tashekah, yet not the same. Sweet and even she was by nature, but mental and spiritual growth had developed and ripened a character of priceless worth.¹¹¹

Kin-da-shon likewise goes to the mission and after having "gained faith and light and peace. . . , " he also finds "joy--the satisfying of a pure heart": "Twas the first Christian marriage in the tribe--the first establishing of a two-one home, where the true God was held in loving reverence, and where at morn and eve the man with his wife knelt in prayer and praise together."¹¹² Just how completely Kin-da-shon has rejected the old customs and adopted the ways of white civilization is revealed in the dwelling which he provides for his wife and himself:

"I want my new house only just big enough for Tashekah and me," he said to the missionary in building the pretty nest which was so greatly to differ from the many-family shelters of old. "I want to hold her so close that no evil may be able to fall between us."¹¹³

And lest there be any doubt about the happiness of those who have gone through such great changes, the novel

concludes:

And the next year when, on a sweet Sabbath morning, they brought their baby daughter--pretty she was as Kotch-kul-ah herself--and together stood presenting her for baptism, the fulness of the benediction seemed to have fallen on Kin-da-shon and his wife.¹¹⁴

As suggested in its preface, the implied conclusion to this novel is, now pass the hat for Alaskan missions. Unlike David Starr Jordan's polemic, however, this novel is significant in that it makes a serious attempt to deal with an important problem: the acculturation of Alaska's natives.

Treasure house of
moral edification

The action of Kirk Munroe's Snow-Shoes and Sledges; a Sequel to "The Fur-Seal's Tooth" (1895) develops from the efforts of the young hero and his companion to rejoin their families by traveling from the mouth of the Yukon, first by riverboat and later by dogsled, to its headwaters and then crossing the Chilkat Pass to Lynn Canal where they can catch a ship to Sitka. Such a trip naturally provides numerous occasions for great adventure: visiting Eskimo and Indian villages, quelling mutiny on a riverboat, participating in a trial at the mining camp of Fortymile, fighting off hungry wolves, spearing moose to avoid starvation, and miraculously surviving avalanches. But these adventures all serve a greater purpose: since adversity breeds character, the boys become men; or, more accurately, the hardships of their trip provide opportunities for them to demonstrate

10/10/10

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of the use of a computer program on the learning of the English language.

1

1

1

1

how men should act.

The school of life opens very early in the story. The riverboat captain has become delirious with a fever, and Phil, the young hero who has become mate on the boat, hesitates from assuming responsibility for the craft and its crew. As he considers turning his authority over to the engineer, a drunk, his conscience, in the voice of the author, goes to work:

But hold on, Phil Ryder! Have you not also been paid, at the very highest rate too, by the man who now lies so helpless before you, and whose fortunes are in your hands? Did he not rescue you from a certain death out there in those cold, cruel waters, when your bidarkie was on the point of foundering? Did you not gladly accept his offer to accompany him on this trip when all appeared smooth sailing? Have you not been fed and clothed at his expense? Above all, has he not proved his confidence in you by appointing you to a position of trust? Are such things as gratitude and loyalty unknown to you? You were proud to be called first mate yesterday, and now you shrink from performing the first and most evident duty of the office. You owe everything to Gerald Hamer, and yet you would entrust his fortunes to a man whom you know to be a drunkard whenever liquor is within his reach, and on whose movements the captain bade you keep a close watch. Shame on you, Phil Ryder!¹¹⁵

Although Phil has waived for a second, he quickly accepts his duty and within hours also assumes a proper stance on the temperance issue:

When Phil went to the engineer's room to report this distressing news [the millwright has died of measles] he was filled with wrath to find that individual lying in his bunk and indulging to excess in the contents of a case of brandied peaches that he had stolen from the cargo.

Without a word Phil picked up the case and flung it into the river. "I'll see you again in the morning, sir, when you are sober," he said, as he left the room, and, locking the door, put the key in his own pocket.¹¹⁶

Shortly thereafter, Phil demonstrates his sense of honor, the strength of his word. As ice begins flowing in the river, Phil asks himself why he had not put the boat into winter quarters earlier near one of the Eskimo villages. The author answers for Phil:

Because he had made up his mind to reach Anvik, and declared his intention of doing so, and his Yankee grit was not of the kind to be daunted by obstacles nor turned back from an uncompleted duty. Why? Because he had promised Captain Hamer to carry him to Anvik. Phil Ryder did did [sic] not often make promises, being opposed to them on general principles, but when he did make one he kept it.¹¹⁷

If Phil were a little older, the author would be obliged to grant a suitable reward for such virtue, such pluck and perseverance--to provide Phil with a girl just like his mother. As it is, the reader feels completely satisfied when Phil gets back to Sitka and into the welcoming arms of his family. Then the story quickly ends with the entire family returning to San Fransisco. The hero has enjoyed his marvelous, edifying adventures in the wilderness, but the civilization Outside is preferable.

Having looked at these various notions of a treasure house--economic, natural, religious, moral--we can see that what they all have in common is a wealth of adventure. Like the Far West or Wild West, as opposed to the domestic or agricultural West, Alaska for the writers of this period was a stage on which a drama of picturesque and exciting episodes could take place.

Like the literary depiction of the Wild West, the presentation of Alaska also suffered from a straining of the formulas; but in the case of Alaskan literature, the disease appears with the first novels. In addition to those wonders already mentioned--mountains of mercury and iron, a moose being speared to death with a spear that just happens to be leaning against a tree, mastodon roaming the interior of Alaska--we find other repetition of the conventional devices as well as much straining after novelty.

In The Red Mountain of Alaska, for example, there are the Cooperesque encounters with Indians, complete with waterfalls and embroidered handkerchiefs indicating that the females of the party have been captured by Indians. But this is not enough. Two of the white males are captured by the Chilkat Brown Bear squaws--Alaskan Amazons--on a husband-hunting party and are released only after the squaws receive a ransom of tea, tobacco, a mirror and a charm. Later the white party arrives at abandoned Ft. Selkirk and there take refuge from a storm in the remains of an old fireplace. Then it is discovered that a door in the iron floor of the fireplace opens to a secret passageway down which is discovered a skeleton sitting at a table with a scrap of paper in front of him. After retrieving the paper, the adventurers leave the tunnel--just in time to avoid being crushed to death as the tunnel collapses--and then discover a treasure map on the paper. Strange marks on the map are found to be in Hebrew, after which it is

concluded that the lost tribe of Judea must have come to Alaska. Other novels are not quite so imaginative but just as far-fetched.

The formula treatment of Alaska is also seen in the use of dialect to denote social status and more importantly to achieve a humorous effect. In Snow-Shoes and Sledges, for example, an important minor character, Jalap Coombs, frequently repeats the folk wisdom of an old friend:

Jalap Coombs was firm in his belief that the other party [in the sled race to Fortymile] was still far away, and that his would be the first in; for, quoth he, "Luck allers has been on my side, and I'm going to believe it allers will be. My old friend Kite Roberson useter say, speaking of luck, and he give it as his own experience, that them as struck the best kinds of luck was them as worked the hardest for it; and ef they didn't get it one way they was sure to another. Likewise he useter say, Kite did, consarning worriments, that ef ye didn't pay no attention to one 'twould be might apt to pass ye by; but ef ye encouraged it by so much as a wink or a nod, ye'd have to fight to git red of it. So, seeing as they hain't no worriments hove in sight yet, what's the use in s'arching for 'em?"¹¹⁸

If one dialectical speaker adds color to a tale, then should not increasing the number of dialects heighten the humor even more? In The Red Mountain of Alaska, there are no less than four: French-Canadian and Indian are encountered on the way to Alaska; Irish and Negro are brought along from Boston in the personages of an orphan friend of the family and a colored servant.

That Alaska would be treated as just so much new grist for old mills is not so surprising when we consider that over half of the novels of this first period were

written by authors of series stories. All three of Willis Boyd Allen's novels--The Red Mountain of Alaska (1889), The Gold Hunters of Alaska (1889), Gulf and Glacier; or, The Percivals in Alaska (1892)--were written for his Pine Cone Series. Fur-Seal Tooth, a Story of an Alaskan Adventure (1894) and Snow-Shoes and Sledges; a Sequel to "The Fur-Seal's Tooth" (1895) were written by Kirk Munroe, also author of Dory Mates (1890), Canoemates (1893), Campmates (1903), and Raftmates and editor of Harper's Young People. During this period, Edward Sylvester Ellis wrote Among the Esquimaux; or, Adventures Under the Arctic Circle (1894) and then proved his awareness of current events in 1898 with Klondike Nuggets and How Two Boys Secured Them. Actually, all of these formula stories should be regarded as written for a juvenile audience even though they are usually classified with books for adults.

The fact that Alaska was primarily treated with conventional formulas of theme and action has important literary consequences. One is that the significant realities of early attempts to settle Alaska are ignored. None of these novels reveal an awareness of the fact that the Alaskan frontier--to the extent that it can be said to have existed at all during this time--departs so radically from other frontier regions in America's history. All of these writers ignore the early seizure of Alaska's resources by Outside corporations and the consequent frustration of individual settlers. All ignore the lack of fertile

agricultural land in Alaska and thus the implications stemming from the impossibility of Alaska ever duplicating the traditional agrarian patterns of settlement. Nowhere is there mention of the fact that after the Civil War, which would be the time during which Alaska's settlement by Americans started, the policies of the Republican party, as Henry Nash Smith has mentioned, favored the banker, the businessman, and the industrialist and thus were helping to close the American continental frontiers as well as arbitrarily hindering the traditional moves for opening a new frontier. Instead of looking for novelty in Alaska, these writers were simply applying the old formulas to a region which departed greatly from the traditional American pattern of settlement and thus were creating a wide gap between reality and literary interpretation.

A second consequence of the formula response to Alaska is that it becomes an overstatement to speak of a strong, unified myth of the treasure house--or any myth of Alaska, for that matter. The elements of such a myth are present in the novels of this period, but they have not been welded into a form which could seize the imagination and send men into action. What Alaska and its literature needed--and would soon find in the Klondike discovery--was an event of such significance that psychic and physical energies would become sharply enough focused to create a myth that might find literary expression.

The fact that a literary myth for Alaska had not

yet been fused from the potential elements is also suggested by the fact that in the literature of this first period there are no typical heroes, no archetypal Alaskan characters. The Wild West had its hero--the frontiersman, whether he be backwoodsman, plainsman, mountainman, cowboy, or gold-seeker--and the protagonist of the agricultural West, the nester, also finally found literary representation. But in Alaska no such character had yet emerged: we find no refugees from civilization, no agents of progress, no nesters, a few saved savages but no noble ones. Instead, we find a scattering of characters: genteel tourists, and genteel prospectors, boys separated from parents, missionaries, Indians, seals--and none of them are very dynamic or even very real. Again, what was needed was an Alaskan experience of such force that a unified Alaskan character would be created--in the imagination, at least, if not in reality. That event, that experience was about to take place.

Notes

¹Ernest Gruening, The State of Alaska (New York, 1968), p. 17.

²Morgan B. Sherwood, ed., "Introduction," Alaska and Its History (Seattle, 1967), p. xiii.

³Robert J. Kerner, "The Russian Eastward Movement: Some Observations on Its Historical Significance," Pacific Historical Review, XVII (May, 1948), reprinted in Sherwood, p. 7.

⁴Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁵Gruening, pp. 4-8.

⁶Herb and Miriam Hilscher, Alaska, U.S.A. (Boston, 1959), p. 6.

- ⁷Gruening, p. 18.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰Ibid., p. 6.
- ¹¹Hilscher, pp. 6-7.
- ¹²Hector Chevigny, Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure (Portland, Oregon, 1942), p. 60.
- ¹³Ibid., pp. 87, 139.
- ¹⁴Ibid., p. 169.
- ¹⁵Richard E. Welch, Jr., "American Public Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America," American Slavic and East European Review, XVII (1958), reprinted in Sherwood, p. 276.
- ¹⁶E. L. Keithahn, "Alaska Ice, Inc.," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVI (April, 1945), reprinted in Sherwood, pp. 173-175, 185.
- ¹⁷Footnote in Welch, p. 276.
- ¹⁸James Wickersham, Old Yukon: Tales--Trails--and Trials (Washington, D.C., 1938), pp. 83-93.
- ¹⁹Welch, p. 275.
- ²⁰Gruening, pp. 20-21. See also Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough (Norman, Okla., 1945), pp. 174-175.
- ²¹Ibid., p. 27.
- ²²Ibid., pp. 27-28.
- ²³Ibid., p. 28.
- ²⁴Reinhard H. Luthin, "The Sale of Alaska," in Sherwood, pp. 238-239.
- ²⁵Boston Herald (April 11, 1867), quoted in Welch, p. 277.
- ²⁶Philadelphia Inquirer (April 1 and April 8, 1867), quoted in Welch, p. 283.
- ²⁷Gruening, p. 99.
- ²⁸Gruening, "Climythyology," address to the American Meteorological Society, University of Alaska, June 27, 1962, reprinted in Gruening, An Alaskan Reader, 1867-1967 (New York, 1967), p. 375.
- ²⁹Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York, 1950), pp. 201-205.
- ³⁰Gruening, The State of Alaska, p. 34.

- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid., pp. 34-35.
- 33 Ibid., pp. 40, 75-76.
- 34 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
- 35 Ibid., p. 53.
- 36 Ibid., p. 64.
- 37 Ted C. Hinckley, The Americanization of Alaska, 1867-1967 (Palo Alto, Calif., 1972), p. 81.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid., pp. 121-123.
- 40 Ibid., p. 123.
- 41 Gruening, p. 74.
- 42 Congressional testimony of James Wickersham, quoted in Gruening, p. 589.
- 43 Gruening, p. 65.
- 44 Ibid., p. 235.
- 45 Sitka Alaskan (June 19, 1886), quoted in Gruening, pp. 235-236.
- 46 Juneau City Mining Record (November 22, 1888), quoted in Gruening, p. 236.
- 47 Hinckley, p. 150.
- 48 Ibid., pp. 147, 150.
- 49 Ibid., p. 72.
- 50 Gruening, pp. 66-67.
- 51 Hinckley, p. 32.
- 52 Ibid., p. 91.
- 53 Wickersham, Old Yukon, p. 96.
- 54 Gruening, p. 69.
- 55 Ibid., p. 88.
- 56 Hinckley, p. 183.
- 57 Ibid., p. 184.
- 58 Sitka Alaskan (September 12, 1891), quoted in Gruening, p. 85.
- 59 Juneau City Mining Record (September 26, 1889), quoted in Gruening, pp. 85-86.
- 60 Ibid. (August 13, 1891), summarized in Gruening, p. 86.

- ⁶¹Eleventh Census Report, pp. 42, 218, quoted in Gruening, p. 77.
- ⁶²Governor Alfred P. Swineford, "Third Annual Report," quoted in Gruening, p. 566.
- ⁶³Smith, pp. 229, 233.
- ⁶⁴William G. Morris to Secretary of the Treasury John Sherman, quoted in Gruening, p. 68.
- ⁶⁵Gruening, p. 66.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., p. 64.
- ⁶⁷Ibid.
- ⁶⁸Hinckley, pp. 135, 185.
- ⁶⁹Wickersham, pp. 101-105.
- ⁷⁰Tompkins, p. 216.
- ⁷¹Pierre Berton, Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush (Toronto, 1963), pp. 32-33.
- ⁷²Quoted in Hinckley, p. 83.
- ⁷³Hinckley, p. 97.
- ⁷⁴Ivan Petroff, "Population and Resources of Alaska . . . 1880," cited in Hinckley, p. 82.
- ⁷⁵Gruening, p. 36.
- ⁷⁶Quoted in Gruening, p. 555.
- ⁷⁷Hinckley, p. 137.
- ⁷⁸Ibid., p. 127.
- ⁷⁹Cited in Gruening, p. 566, see above, p. 121.
- ⁸⁰Hinckley, p. 115.
- ⁸¹Ibid., p. 92.
- ⁸²Ibid., p. 153.
- ⁸³Ibid., pp. 154-155.
- ⁸⁴Ibid., p. 199.
- ⁸⁵Aurel Krause, The Tlinglit Indians, trans. by Erna Gunther (Seattle, 1956), p. 226; quoted in Hinckley, p. 116.
- ⁸⁶Hinckley, p. 170.
- ⁸⁷Willis Boyd Allen, The Red Mountains of Alaska (Boston, 1889), pp. 14-15.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 15-16.
- ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 16.
- ⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 21-22.

- ⁹¹Ibid., p. 25.
- ⁹²Ibid., p. 344.
- ⁹³Ellwood P. Cubberley, "Introduction" to The Story of Matka: A Tale of the Mist-Islands, by David Starr Jordan (San Francisco, 1897, 1910), p. 9.
- ⁹⁴David Starr Jordan, The Tale of Matka, p. 17.
- ⁹⁵Ibid., pp. 22-23.
- ⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 64-65.
- ⁹⁷Willis Boyd Allen, Gulf and Glacier; or, The Percivals in Alaska (Boston, 1892), p. 230.
- ⁹⁸Ibid., p. 74.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., p. 173.
- ¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 44.
- ¹⁰¹Carrie M. White Willard (Mrs. Eugene S. Willard), "Preface," Kin-da-shon's Wife; an Alaskan Story, 3rd ed. (New York, 1892), p. ii.
- ¹⁰²Ibid., p. 10.
- ¹⁰³Ibid., p. 11.
- ¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 41.
- ¹⁰⁵Ibid., p. 43.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 252. In the preface, Mrs. Willard more precisely names those whites who have harmed the natives: "Many of the peoples are what they are to-day as a result of the devil's missions to Alaska, prosecuted by the whiskey smuggler, the license vender, the dance-house proprietor, and by men who have forsaken the teaching of good mothers and have prostituted the noblest instincts that God gives--who, instead of making a pure and happy home with a woman of their own race and intelligence, take advantage of the native custom of marriage to build a domestic structure which cannot endure and which works ruin to all concerned" (pp. ii-iii).
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 258.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid., pp. 253, 259.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid., p. 259.
- ¹¹⁰Ibid., p. 280.
- ¹¹¹Ibid.
- ¹¹²Ibid., pp. 280-281.
- ¹¹³Ibid., p. 281.
- ¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵Kirk Munroe, Snow-Shoes and Sledges; A Sequel to "The Fur-Seal's Tooth" (New York, 1895, 1923), pp. 14-15.

¹¹⁶Ibid., p. 22.

¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 28.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 121.

CHAPTER III
THE KLONDIKE PERIOD (1896-1912)

History

Even though gold was discovered in California in 1848, '49 is the memorable year. Similarly with the Klondike, the "Trail of '98" has become famous although the original discovery by the American-born George Washington Carmack and the Tagish Indian Skookum Jim actually took place late during the summer two years before, on August 17, 1896, and infected America with Klondicitis during the summer of 1897.¹

As had been the case in California, news of the discovery produced an immediate local rush: overnight Circle City and Fortymile became ghost towns. All during the fall and winter of 1896-1897, prospectors moved into the hills and creekbeds, staking and digging and waiting for spring clean-up. By April 1897, the miners and camp-followers in Dawson numbered fifteen hundred,² all gathered from various camps and areas in the Yukon and especially from the interior of Alaska.

Since Dawson was cut off from the Outside during the winter, news of the discovery did not reach the attention of the United States and Canada until the summer of

1897.³ That spring some eighty prospectors and three tons of gold started down the Yukon in river boats to St. Michael, where they boarded the ocean-going Excelsior, destined for San Francisco, and the Portland, bound for Seattle. Reaching their destinations in mid-July within two days of each other, they put the word "Klondike" onto the lips of America and onto front pages of newspapers around the world.⁴

To explain why the ensuing Klondike stampede was the "most frenzied of the great international gold rushes," Pierre Berton draws attention to several conditions existing at that time. Most important was the economic:

It was also an era in which the rich grew richer and the poor poorer, when the "haves" had almost everything and the "have-nots" almost nothing, when melodramas starring wicked landlords and destitute widows were believable and understandable slices of life, when the word "mortgage" had connotations of terror, when banks foreclosed and men quite literally died of hunger in the street. Next to the headlines in the penny press about the foibles of the wealthy (RICH GIRL'S SUICIDE A MYSTERY--MONEY HER BANE?) were other headlines about the torments of the poor (PRIDE MADE HER STARVE IN SILENCE). If it was the era of Vanderbilt and Rockefeller, it was also the era of Samuel Gompers and Henry George, of the sweatshop and the tenement house. It was an age of millionaires, but it was also an age of hoboes. In short, it was an era occupied with money or preoccupied with the lack of it. It was an age, in the words of its historian Mark Sullivan, when "money-making was the most prized career."⁵

Furthermore, the creeping depression which came to a climax with the Panic of 1893 and threw the nation into a black slump, particularly in the Pacific northwest, had made a very telling assault on the American Dream. But since people did not want to believe that the frontier was

closed, that opportunity for the individual was gone, it was "no wonder the continent went insane when two ships loaded with gold steamed in from out of the Arctic mists": "For years they had been waiting for a miracle to deliver them. It came, like an electric shock, when the Portland docked in Seattle with a ton of gold aboard."⁶

Off the Portland came men who a year previous had not had a cent to their name and now carried from fifteen thousand to half a million dollars worth of gold with them. Even fifteen thousand was a small fortune in 1897:

. . . a four-room apartment could be rented for a dollar and a quarter a week, an all-wool serge suit could be purchased for four dollars, a square meal cost twenty-five cents, a quart of whiskey went for forty cents, coffee was thirteen cents a pound, a smoked tongue was worth twelve cents, and two baskets of fresh tomatoes could be bought for a nickel.⁷

All a person had to do was to reach the gold fields, and this was much easier than had been the case in 1848:

Rail and water transportation had reached a state of efficiency which made it possible to move large masses of people swiftly and inexpensively; the Klondike, in fact, started a railway rate war that saw the fare from Chicago to the Pacific coast drop to ten dollars. The Yukon was just far enough away to be romantic and just close enough to be accessible. Rich men could, in theory at least, travel all the way by boat without lifting a finger, while poor men could speedily reach the passes and travel by foot and home-made boat on a fast current to the goldfields.⁸

In the Far North, it seemed, the frontier was still open, and pioneers wasted no time responding to what was apparently a last opportunity to fulfill the Great American Dream:

"Seattle," a New York Herald reporter wrote, "has

gone stark staring mad on gold."

By nine thirty on the morning of the Portland's arrival the city's downtown streets were so jammed with people that some of the streetcars had to stop running, which was perhaps just as well since the streetcar-operators had already started to resign and head for the Klondike. Before the week was out the city had trouble keeping its transportation system in operation at all. This was the first of a series of mass resignations which became a feature of the early stages of the stampede. Only a few hours after the Portland docked, a Seattle barber suddenly stopped work, closed his shop, and bought a ticket for Alaska. All over the Pacific northwest similar incidents were taking place. Clerks quit by the dozen the same day; the Seattle Times lost most of its reporters; shipping men and policemen left their jobs. Within four days, twelve members of the Seattle force had resigned to go to the Klondike. Salesmen jumped counters, doctors deserted patients, preachers quit their congregations.⁹

Leading and respected citizens quickly gave the great stampede an air of authority and respectability:

The mayor of Seattle, W. D. Wood, happened to be in San Francisco attending a convention when the news broke. He did not bother to return home, but wired his resignation. Before the month was out he had raised one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, bought himself an ocean steamer, the Humboldt, and formed the Seattle and Yukon Trading Company. . . .

.
John McGraw, a former governor of Washington, a senatorial candidate, and onetime president of the First National Bank of Seattle, was aboard the Portland when she left on her return journey. Fellow passengers included General M. E. Carr of the state militia, who had the most lucrative law practice in the state, and Captain A. J. Balliot, once Yale's greatest oarsman and footballer, who also gave up a thriving law practice to seek his fortune in the goldfields. E. J. "Lucky" Baldwin of San Francisco, a millionaire hotel man, miner, and landowner, who had been one of the argonauts in the '49 rush, announced that, at the age of seventy-one, he would go to the Klondike to seek the mother lode itself. Winfield Scott Stratton, the eccentric millionaire from Cripple Creek, organized an expedition and bought two riverboats to prospect the Yukon River.¹⁰

Klondicitis also infected the East Coast. Only two weeks after the arrival of the Portland, "the New York Herald's

"financial page carried advertisements for eight huge mining and exploration corporations all formed within a few days to exploit the Klondike. Their total authorized capitalization came to more than twenty-five million dollars."¹¹ Corporate interests were not going to let all that wealth slip into the accounts of individual prospectors.

Only here and there was the discovery played down during that summer of 1897. A noteworthy exception was Ambrose Bierce:

"The California gold hunter did good by accident and crowed to find it fame," he wrote in the San Francisco Examiner. "But the blue-nosed mosquito-slapper of Greater Dawson, what is he for? Is he going to lay broad and deep the foundations of Empire [for Great Britain]? Will he bear the banner of progress into that paleocrystic waste? Will he clear the way for even a dog sled civilization and a reindeer religion? Nothing will come of him. He is a word in the wind, a brother to the fog. At the scene of his activity no memory of him will remain. The gravel that he thawed and sifted will freeze again. In the shanty that he builded, the she-wolf will rear her poddy litter, and from its eaves the moose will crop the esculent icicle unafraid. The snows will close over his trail and all be as before."¹²

On the other hand, Joaquin Miller, already sixty years old but going north as a Hearst journalist, "announced that there was 'no possible chance of famine' and . . . boasted that he was traveling light, with very little in the way of possessions or equipment. . . . "¹³

Most people, even those who did not start immediately for the North, apparently took Miller's view and the rush began immediately. By the end of August,

. . . twenty-one . . . steamers as well as three sailing-vessels and two scows, all jammed with men and

animals and freight, had put out from Pacific-coast ports, steaming toward the Lynn Canal. In one single week in mid-August, twenty-eight hundred people left Seattle for the Klondike. By September 1 nine thousand people and thirty-six tons of freight had left the port.¹⁴

Although none of those who left after August 1 on the all-water route via the Yukon River reached Dawson before freeze-up and although most of those who chose the routes over the White and Chilkoot passes, like Jack London, actually spent the winter holed up far from Dawson,¹⁵ it has been estimated that during the winter of 1897-1898, "one million people laid plans to leave home and family to seek their fortune in the Klondike and that, at the very least, one hundred thousand actually set out."¹⁶

When travel started once more in the spring of 1898--hence the term, "Trail of '98"--some fifty thousand persons moved along the various routes to Dawson City. Arriving there, they discovered that although the Klondike would not turn out to be one of the richest mining areas in total quantity, individual claims were among the richest: "Until this time, ten-cent pans had been considered rich. Before the season was out, some men would be getting as much as eight hundred dollars from a single pan of selected paydirt."¹⁷ One fractional claim, pie-shaped and only eighty-six feet across at its widest point, set the record: it eventually yielded half a million dollars.¹⁸

But those who arrived in 1898, and even those few who had made it in 1897, also discovered that all the good

claims were already staked. Responses to this fact varied:

Some went into the profitable work of transportation. Some opened grocery or general merchandise stores. Some started newspapers, some built toll roads, or created booths along the roads to the gold fields. Some took "lays" or worked for others on the creeks. They were as likely to succeed in this as the original stakers. Money was flowing into the North, and anyone who could divert some of it to his own pockets had a chance to succeed.¹⁹

Others, having reached their goal of a year's struggle, simply turned around and headed home:

All of them realized at last that none had won the great race to the Klondike; the best ground had long since been staked out by men who were on the spot before the name became a byword. Yet none had lost either. There was a strange satisfaction in the simple fact that they had made it.²⁰

Still others began to prospect in Alaska. Gold was discovered at Nome late in 1898, producing \$2,800,000 the following year and reaching a peak of \$7,500,000 in 1906.²¹ In 1902, Felix Pedro and some companions found gold in the Tanana Valley near Fairbanks; and by 1912, strikes had been made in the Innoko-Iditarod region of the lower Yukon, in the Ruby district (120 miles west of the confluence of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers), on the Chandalar River, and on the upper reaches of the Koyukuk near Bettles and Wiseman.²²

By the close of this period in Alaska's history, several things were clear. First, the mining frontier in Alaska was drawing to a rapid close. In some cases, this was because the rich placer deposits had already been worked over; in other cases it was because the individual miner was barred from good dirt by the so-called "pencil miners":

In the extensive placer-mining areas throughout the interior the prospectors were encountering a new obstacle, the filling of claims by the power of attorney. One person could stake as many claims as he desired, ostensibly for others--who were not even in Alaska, and hold them for speculation. Some of these "pencil miners," as the frustrated prospectors called them, staked over a hundred claims. Newly arrived prospectors would find at the end of their long journey every creek in a region "located," and that the "assessment work" required by United States law to permit holding a claim was deferable till the end of the next year.²³

This abuse had been protested immediately, and corrective legislation was introduced already in the Fifty-fifth Congress (1897-1899), but no reforms were passed until 1912.²⁴

A more significant cause for the closing of the mining frontier was that the most extensive of these gold deposits in the interior of Alaska were deep deposits. Those around Fairbanks, for example, were buried under a hundred feet or more of overburden, and large capital investment was required to finance the equipment necessary to reach paydirt. As Clarence C. Hulley puts it, "The Fairbanks gold mining region was not 'poor man's diggings'. . . . It was 'rich man's placer.'"²⁵ Further west on Flat Creek, it was Guggenheim dredges which recovered over a million dollars worth of gold after three months of summer work; and by 1912, the most valuable claims around Iditarod were held by the Yukon Gold Company.²⁶ Hard rock mining in Southeastern continued to produce about \$3,000,000 annually during this period and continued to be controlled by corporate interests.²⁷ With the mining frontier everywhere closing, and in some places already closed, many prospectors

left for the Outside, but others stayed and squared off at the choice which eventually faces any mining region: was it going to be transition and further development, or decay?

One thing which seemed clear to some people at the time was that Alaska would not be able to make a transition to a predominantly agricultural economy. Alaska was too far from the markets, for one thing; and, unlike California, it was not blessed with a favorable climate and fertile soil. Agriculture could, perhaps, be developed to provide for the needs of a local population,²⁸ but such development presupposed a permanent population supported by a different economic base.

With the gold mining frontier closing in Alaska, corporate placer mining and dredging pointed to a possible though temporary future: the all-time peak in gold production in Alaska had been reached already in 1906.²⁹ More importantly, other treasure had been discovered in Alaska as a result of the attention generated by the gold rush; more accurately, the economic potential of Alaska became so obvious to so many people that the myth of the icebox seemed to disappear.

The timber resources were already known to be immense; by 1900, vast copper deposits had been found and staked on the Chitina River, a tributary of the Copper, and enormous deposits of coal were located at and near Katalla and in the Matanuska Valley.³⁰ To develop these copper and coal deposits, however, railroads would be necessary:

furthermore, the advance of gold mining would be accelerated if cheap, dependable transportation were provided between an ice-free port and the interior.

Since the British-financed White Pass and Yukon Railroad between Skagway and Whitehorse Rapids on the Yukon River proved to be exceedingly profitable, it is not surprising that American capitalists turned their attention to the two major natural gateways from ice-free harbors through the mountains into the interior; one proceeding up the Copper River from either Port Valdez or Cordova and the other leading up the Susitna Valley after utilizing the harbor at Resurrection Bay where present-day Seward is located.³¹

Plans soon became more concrete:

These two portals were already occupied by groups of railroad builders. The easterly Copper River route was to reach Eagle on the Yukon, close to the Canadian boundary, a distance of 525 miles, with a twenty-five-mile spur contemplated from the lower end of the road to the Bering River coal fields. The westerly route was to tap the Matanuska coal fields, 190 miles inland, and extend to the Chena-Fairbanks district on the Tanana, a total distance of about 460 miles.

In the optimism about Alaska of the century's first few years, these two routes were not deemed in competition with each other. Both were considered necessary to open up rich and different sections of Alaska. In further contemplation was a nine-hundred-mile westward extension from Fairbanks into the Seward Peninsula.³²

Construction on these lines began quite early. The Alaska Central Railroad, with former-Senator George Turner of Washinton its director, began construction over the westerly route in 1903. By 1905, this company had completed fifty miles at a cost of \$2,500,000 and had surveyed the entire 463 miles to Fairbanks. After the Alaska Central

went into receivership, its holdings were taken over by the Alaska Northern Railway, which added another twenty-two miles to the line before giving up in 1911.³³

On the eastern route, several groups, backed by New York and Philadelphia financiers, were competing, some planning to use Valdez as the sea terminal and others with an eye on Cordova. Competition between the Home Railway Company and the Copper River Company, both of which had started from Valdez, led to a gun-fight for the right-of-way in the Keystone Canyon before the route was abandoned.. Then the weapons changed to steam locomotives and pile drivers as the companies fought for key positions at Katalla.³⁴

Finally, disputes over railroad right-of-ways and terminals ended when really big business stepped onto the scene:

In 1906 the internationally known banking house of J. P. Morgan & Co., in association with the Guggenheim brothers, formed the Alaska Syndicate. They had acquired at a cost of \$3,000,000 the Bonanza copper mine in the Chitina Valley, which with some adjacent properties became known as the Kennecott mines. They had secured one of the richest copper deposits, and moved in 1907 to complete a railroad already begun up the Copper River Valley from Cordova to the junction of the Copper and Chitina rivers and then on into the Chitina Valley. The railroad, two hundred miles in length, was a magnificent feat of engineering and cost some \$20,000,000.³⁵

Completed in 1911, it shipped millions of pounds of copper to supply needs for World War I.³⁶

It is also interesting to note that the interests of the Alaska Syndicate did not stop with railroads and copper:

At the same time the syndicate acquired a dominant interest in the Northwestern Commercial Company which owned the Alaska Steamship Company. The steamship line was used to carry the copper ore southbound and general commercial cargo northbound. The enterprise was highly profitable because of the richness of the copper deposits, which were worked for a quarter of a century, when the deposits were exhausted. The syndicate also acquired twelve canneries which were producing about one-eighth of the Alaska salmon pack.³⁷

An eighth of the salmon pack was particularly significant given the great increase in the salmon fisheries during this period. In 1899, the pack had gone over a million cases and in 1901, had reached two million, where it stayed for the next ten years. Then in 1911, it went over 2,800,000 cases and jumped to over four million the next year. Great as was the value of mining during this Klondike period, the fisheries produced even more wealth.³⁸

The great interest shown in building Alaskan railroads during this time reflected a genuine need for the development of the territory. If Alaska were not going to decline, as had been the case with so many other gold-mining regions in America, then resources other than Kennecott copper needed to be tapped, and this required railroads. Several condition, however, were interfering with railroad building.

One was that most companies had underestimated both the time and costs of construction "and therefore found it impossible to comply with the provision in the Homestead and Right of Way Act of 1898 which compelled them to complete the projected road within four years or forfeit their rights

"to the uncompleted part."³⁹ "Another difficulty was the \$100-a-mile annual tax on completed portions of the railroad,"⁴⁰ a federal tax which had been imposed by Congress in 1898. Furthermore, Alaskan railroad builders could secure no federal assistance--no land grants or loans, as had been the case with America's transcontinental railroads, nor even a Congressional guarantee for interest on railroad bonds, which would provide additional financing, as had been the case with railroad construction in the Philippines in 1905.⁴¹

Another obstacle to railroad building was the inability of individuals or groups to obtain title to the vast coal fields. Alfred H. Brooks pointed out the dire effects of this obstacle in the Geological Survey's report for 1910:

"As in previous years, the lack of cheap fuel is the greatest hindrance to the advancement of the mining industry in Alaska." Railway construction, he pointed out, would be active only when cheap fuel for operating was available. With the nondevelopment of the coal fields the Alaskan railways were at a double disadvantage. They were paying \$11 to \$12 a ton for coal used in operating when high-grade coal superior to the imported product should have been made available near by at a cost of only \$2.50 to \$3.50 a ton. Moreover the coal tonnage needed to support the railways was nonexistent.⁴²

Brooks had already made a similar observation in the 1906 report: "'Considering the quantity of fuel consumed in Alaska and by steamers plying between the ports of the Pacific states and the territory, the tardy development of what are known to be excellent coal beds in Alaska is somewhat remarkable.'"⁴³

In the background of the tardy development of Alaska's coal fields was the rise in conservation inspired by Gifford Pinchot at the turn of the century:

In the United States during the first decade of the twentieth century, a wave of conservation of resources swept the land. It was a worthy cause, for the nation had been for three hundred years burning, wasting, destroying, as well as using and developing the resources of America. It had devoured the inheritance of the Indian with the wealth he had accumulated through the ages. The burden fell on Alaska.⁴⁴

By 1907, the vast timber resources of all southeastern Alaska as well as of the coast around Prince William Sound had been locked up in federal reserves, and soon eleven million acres were set aside in the Chugach National Forest. Moreover, in 1906, "President Roosevelt had by executive order . . . withdrawn all coal lands on the public domain from location and entry. . . ."⁴⁵ Since two-thirds of the coal lands in the forty-eight states was already in private hands, the effect of this order was not so grievous there; but since in Alaska all land was public domain, the order effectively shut down the development and settlement of Alaska.⁴⁶ It did not, it should be noted, hurt the larger mining, fishing, and shipping interests which were already established in Alaska and intent on the specialized exploitation rather than the general development of the territory.

In Congress, for once it was agreed that Alaska was a treasure house of economic potential, but there was still conflict over what was to be done with her wealth. The conservationist reformers, acting from the best of motives,

"were concerned partly with preserving Alaska as a wilderness area, partly with preventing its ruthless exploitation by corporate monopolies."⁴⁷ For the conservatives, and their motives might not have been the purist, "Alaska was a region of great potentialities whose development was being thwarted by addleheaded reformers."⁴⁸

In Alaska, the polarization of political and economic attitudes was similar, as suggested in Stuart Ramsay Tompkin's labels: promyshlennik and sourdough. The sourdoughs were those individual settlers who felt, first, that Outside corporations were draining Alaska of its wealth without contributing to its growth and settlement and, second, that Congress, the tool of the nonresident corporations, was not passing those laws which would stop exploitation and at the same time contribute to permanent development.⁴⁹ Since the sourdoughs saw local government as the key to making desirable changes, they supported the move toward at least territorial self-government and even statehood.

On the other side, the promyshleniki--so named by Tompkins because of the similarity of their exploitative attitudes--or, "the Guggenheims," as James Wickersham called them, represented the interests of the larger mining, fishing and shipping companies. Since these groups saw self-government as a threat to their political control of Alaska through influence in Washington, they were opposed to territorial self-government.

Numerically the sourdoughs far outnumbered the Guggenheims, or promyshleniki, and in 1912, after the Democrats had obtained control of the House, were able to win a territorial government, but the big mining, fishing, and shipping interests were still powerful enough to severely curtail the powers of the new legislature. Among other restrictions, the territorial government could not "pass any law interfering with the primary disposal of the soil . . . ," thus the coal lands could not be unlocked; and the Alaska legislature could not pass laws concerning game, fur-bearing animals, fur seals, and fish, thus removing Alaska's principal resources from local regulation.⁵¹

Such limited home-rule was not exactly an achievement to cause great celebration in Alaska. In fact, testifying before the Senate Committee on Territories in 1912, Alaska's Governor Walter E. Clark stated:

"The people are not hopeful. There is a great feeling of disappointment. . . . Of course, most people who go to a frontier country like Alaska expect hardships, and as a general rule they are optimistic, but, . . . there has been quite a spread of a hopeless feeling in the territory on account of the coal-land situation and the railroad situation."⁵²

If a shattering of the Great American Dream of belief in individual opportunity and of hope for success reveals an awareness of a closed frontier, then Governor Clark's remark suggests that by the end of the Klondike period, most Alaskans realized that the frontier of the gold-rush days was over.

Furthermore, the fact that Alaska was having

problems making a transition to a non-frontier though more permanent economy and thus was facing a real possibility of decline is reflected in population figures. In 1890, Alaska had a total population of about 32,000, some 4,300 of them white. In 1900, the effects of the gold rush were seen as the white population jumped to about 34,000, bringing the total to 64,000. But between 1900 and 1910, the whites increased by only 764 or 1.3 per cent, while the rest of the United States showed an increase of 21 per cent.⁵³ As the door of the frontier closed almost completely, Alaska was clearly having its problems. The post-Klondike, that is, post-frontier period would show how those problems might be handled.

Literature

When we look in a general way at the literature of the Klondike period, immediately apparent are several contrasts with the pre-Klondike period. Most obviously, the number of novels published between 1897 and 1912 reflects the great increase in attention brought to bear on Alaska as a result of the Klondike discovery: during the sixteen years of the Klondike period, about forty novels were published, which, on a novels-per-year ratio is about twice the rate of literary activity for the pre-Klondike period. Moreover, there had been no Alaskan short stories published in the previous period, but for this period Wickersham's bibliography alone lists well over a hundred.

During the pre-Klondike period none of the novels

could be called historical romances, a fact which is probably explained by the few years of U.S. occupation: writers were scarcely aware of Alaska's present, let alone her past. In the Klondike period, however, a few historical novels do appear, all of them understandably looking back to the recent Russian occupation. In addition to two other novels about Alaska, Warren Cheney wrote The Way of the North; a Romance of the Days of Baranof (1905). Author of The Apostle of Alaska: The Story of William Duncan of Metlakahtla and Guilty? the Story of a Great Murder Trial, John William Arctander, who for twenty-five years was one of the best known lawyers in the Middle West, wrote The Lady in Blue: A Sitka Romance. (1911).. The subplot is a common one: the beautiful princess is separated from her true lover, a handsome, noble midshipman in the Czar's army, and then forced to marry an "old blázé roué." The young midshipman returns to Sitka during the banquet in celebration of the wedding, and then he and the princess both commit suicide: "'Separated in life! United in death!'"

Details of the main plot give a twist to this story of star-crossed lovers. The narrator of the love story claims to have seen the ghost of the princess one night, the eighteenth day of the month, when he stayed in the Baranoff Castle in Sitka. He learns that her ghost has been seen every month since her death; a fact which is explained by a popular Russian belief: "a suicide must do penance for his awful sin by haunting for fifty years, in the darkness

"of the night, familiar places, repeating what was before death his wont to do."⁵⁴ Thus the ghost of the princess climbs to the watch tower at the top of the Baranoff Castle, futilely looking for the ship which will bring her lover back. The story then ends with an element of mystery:

"How strange! It was on the eighteenth day of March, 1894, just fifty years to a day, from the wedding--from the death of the beautiful Russian princess,--that Baranoff Castle burned to the ground. No one at Sitka can explain how the fire started, but all, who had an opportunity to know, agree that it was first observed in the glass cupola on the roof."⁵⁵

Just how much fact might underlie Arctander's story about the Princess Olga Feodorovna is uncertain, but there is a historical basis for Gertrude Atherton's Rezánov (1906). After writing twelve novels dealing mainly with California history, Miss Atherton applied her sentimental formulas to the love story of the masterful Count Rezanov, who had engineered the Russian-American Company's charter, and Concha Argüello, beautiful daughter of a California Spanish nobleman. After meeting and falling in love in 1806, when Rezanov visited California for the purpose of securing provisions for the Russians in Alaska, they must part while Rezanov returns to Russia to secure permission from Rome and Madrid for Concha to marry a heretic.

But true love is thwarted, for Rezanov dies on the return trip across Siberia. A single example is enough to illustrate the tone of this romance. As Rezanov lays dying of some fever in a bare Siberian room, the author sums up the nature and significance of the love between Rezanov and

Concha:

Theirs was one of the few immortal loves that reveal the rarely sounded deeps of the soul while in its frail tenement on earth; and he harbored not a doubt that their love was stronger than mortality and that their ultimate union was decreed. Meanwhile, she would suffer, no one but he could dream how completely, but her strong soul would conquer, and she would live the life she had visioned in moments of despair; not of cloistered selfishness, but of incomparable usefulness to her little world; and far happier, in her eternal youthfulness of heart, in the divine life of the imagination where he must always be with her as she had known him briefly at his best, than in the blunt commonplaceness of daily existence, the routine and disillusionment of the world. Perhaps--who knew?--he had, after all, given her the best that man can offer to a woman of exalted nature; instead of taking again with his left hand what his right hand had bestowed; completed the great gift of life with the priceless beacon of death.⁵⁶

It is very sad and yet uplifting, or at least so think some like William Marion Reedy, who describes the novel as "a poem and a shrine of that love which lives when death itself is dead."⁵⁷

Probably all the writers of this period as well as of the previous period were attempting to exploit the novelty of Alaska, but such a motivation seems most obvious in the instance of formula writers or authors who write series stories. We have already seen how in the pre-Klondike period over half the novels were written for some series; such novels also appear in this period. The first was Klondike Nuggets and How Two Boys Secured Them (1898) by Edward Sylvester Ellis, who later wrote The Young Gold Seekers of the Klondike (1912). Harry Edward Dankoler produced James Griffin's Adventures in Alaska (1903), and James Cooper Wheeler found new material for another of his Captain Pete

stories, Captain Pete in Alaska (1910). Agnes Herbert wrote Two Dianas in Alaska (1909) and in the first year of the next period came out with The Moose (1913). Emerson Hough also directed his attention to the new adventure of the North: The Young Alaskans (1908) and The Young Alaskans on the Trail (1911) and other "Young Alaskan" stories. Just starting on his writing career, James Oliver Curwood also saw potential in far-northern materials: Danger Trail (1910), Honor of the Big Snows (1911), and Philip Steele of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (1911).

Already launched on his career, Hamlin Garland headed north on horseback from Ashcroft, British Columbia, toward Teslin Lake, following at first the old Telegraph Trail of 1865. Finally reaching Glenora on the Stikine River, he came by riverboat down to Wrangel and from there shipped to Skagway. Before turning back, he actually crossed White Pass and followed a miner stampede to Atlin Lake. This trip he records in The Trail of the Gold Seekers; a Record of Travel in Prose and Verse (1899) and then fictionalized in The Long Trail; a Story of the Northwest Wilderness (1907).

Short story writers especially attempted to give a twist to old situations by merely setting them in the gold fields. The titles of a few suggest the range of such efforts: "Northern Lights: an Alaskan Fairy Story," "A Hard Luck Story," "'The Good Old Summer Time' in Alaska," "A New Year's Eve in the Yukon," "The Key That Unlocked--

"A Story of a Yukon New Year's," "Cupid Adventures," "The Orphan of Sourdough City," "The Green Casket," "The Smart Set of Cariboo Crossing," "The Goblin of the Glacier--A Tale of the Alaskan Alps," "A Prodigal Santa Claus," "Janet's Marriage Potion," "Alaska Live Mammoth Story," "Finding of Noah's Ark on a Mountain in Yukon." Wickersham's bibliography lists these and many more.

Literary exploitation of the North also attracted other talent. Writers who normally did not write fiction at all were tempted to try their hand: John Muir, for example, wrote Stikeen (1909). Eleanor Cecilia Donnelly, who usually published poetry, jumped on the bandwagon in 1898 with A Klondike Picnic; the Story of a Day. With Genuine Letters from Two Gold-Seekers in Alaska.

Despite all the obvious literary exploitation of Alaskan materials, the Klondike period still fared better than the previous period.. In pre-Klondike literature, about three-fourths of the novels are either formula fiction or propaganda. In the Klondike period, if short stories are excluded, the percentage of such fiction drops to about a third. An important implication of such figures may be that if the elements of an Alaskan literary myth did exist, then the probability of their being discovered would increase. Instead of Alaska being viewed through literary formulas and conventions which had evolved from conditions quite different from those found in Alaska--which had been mostly the case during the pre-Klondike period--now more

writers would be carrying less *Überglau*ben and thus might experience a fresher and more direct contact with the new materials. An Alaskan myth might have a better chance of being an Alaskan myth rather than a Western romance with only the names of the Indian tribes changed.

In any case, the great majority of writers in this period were concerned with giving literary rendition to the most important event of this time--the gold rush. We have already seen how a few writers wrote historical novels about Alaska; in addition, other non-Klondike but contemporary subjects found dramatization. Although pelagic sealing had reached a peak in the mid-1890's, it was still being practiced in 1904 when Jack London's The Sea Wolf was published. Stewart Edward White's Conjuror's House, a Romance of the Free Forest (1903) deals with the conflict between the Hudson's Bay Company and free trades. The efforts of a medical missionary in Alaska during the first decade of the twentieth century are depicted in Hiran Alfred Cody's The Frontiersman; a Tale of the Yukon (1910), and big-time salmon canning forms the background of Rex Beach's The Silver Horde (1909). But these non-Klondike stories, together with the historical fiction, make up only a fourth of the total number of novels published during the Klondike period.

With so much attention being given to the gold rush in Alaska, we would expect an Alaskan myth to find its themes in this area. Such is exactly the case. Ben Adams, for example, makes the same observation when he says:

Gold was also the source of another industry besides mining. Jack London never made any money panning gold, but he struck rich paydirt writing about it. From the gold rush sprang the myths and legends of the Old Yukon, of the giants who battled with nature and each other, of fortunes made and lost on the turn of a card.⁵⁸

Then Adams goes on to make what is a fairly common complaint among Alaska's few historians, scholarly and popular alike: the writers of this period, especially Jack London and Rex Beach, have created a myth which is not in contact with reality and therefore have done Alaska a disservice.⁵⁹ Henry W. Clark, for another example, calls Jack London a leader of the false gospel of life in Alaska: "This tendency of the people of the United States to look upon Alaska as a land of ice and snow had been aided materially by the proneness of writers, both fiction and otherwise, to describe Alaska as ice-bound, and the home of fur-clad, tallow-eating people."⁶⁰

Clarence C. Hulley damns Jack London and Rex Beach with faint praise and then becomes more explicit in his evaluation of Robert Service--according to him, the greatest of the three giants of Alaskan gold-rush literature. Using an analogy which sounds strange to one accustomed to regarding Leatherstocking as a more important literary creation than Cooper's Indians, Hulley says:

Out of his daily experience he built a glamorously strange town of gold seekers, dance hall women, and gamblers that made him a popular writer. Just as James Fenimore Cooper painted for his readers the American Indian as a romantic character who actually never existed except in popular imagination, so Service pictured the colorful in virile if not good verse.⁶¹

Even as fine and thorough a scholar as Stuart Ramsay Tompkins joins in this protest:

The people of the North have yet to attain full justice at the hands of the literary world. The generation of writers that included Rex Beach and Jack London have written picturesque, perhaps overdrawn accounts of the gold rush. This trend towards the unusual has continued unabated. Hollywood lends its aid to crown with a halo of romance northern prospectors, miners, Eskimos, and mounted policemen. It is time that a note of realism should be struck to redress the balance and to enable us to understand the peculiar problems of the sourdough.⁶²

Given so much protest at an alleged distortion or lack of realism in the literature of the Klondike period--forgetting for the moment that Tompkin's complaint includes post-Klondike writers as well--it seems appropriate to answer in detail two questions. First, just what is the myth which finds dramatization in the literature of this period; and second, to what extent is this myth out of contact with reality?

It is a fact that a fair bit of distortion about life in the North did circulate during this period. A recent Alaskan poet, Oliver Everette, instead of protesting, gets a chuckle out of this fact, which is true today:

LOVE'S DIALOGUE

POST PRUDHOE BAY

(Apologies to Marlowe and Raleigh)

Chechako:

Cute Eskimo, come be my squaw;
We'll eat our fish and blubber raw.
I've willow leaves and strong muktuk
and pokes of berries and ugruk.

To make our clothes, the hides you'll chew

of nanook, seal and caribou.
 Your face ruffed out in wolverine
 shall have seal oil for beauty cream.

The hide of walrus I'll pledge
 with eiderdown to make our bed.
 An old oildrum shall be our stove;
 a chamber pot shall seal our love.

Iglu trussed up by whalebone ribs
 with walls of sod to house our kids;
 our malemutes will love the snow
 and howl at sixty-five below.

If you won't squaw, my arctic duck,
 till polarcap on hell breaks up,
 I'll stretch a gut to make a drum
 till shaman music keeps me warm.

Arctic Lass:

Eat fish and blubber raw? You dolt,
 the supermarket is my poke!
 I'll have a frig and pantry shelves
 With foods that almost cook themselves.

I'll not abuse by chewing hides
 my teeth kept white by mint flourides.
 My ruffs are silk, my parka mink;
 and Avon Calling creams my skin.

Foam rubber pillows, linen sheets,
 soft spread of lace with quilts beneath,
 and featherbed with innerspring,
 plus therma-blanket--love must bring;

A six room cottage built in frame
 with rugs, hi-fi, and thermopane;
 and instant heat, couch overstuffed;
 sinks, tubs and toilets--all that flush.

Of malemutes I've had my fill
 I want a peke. And kids!--The pill!
 Go beat your gut and shaman ply
 or strike it black at Prudhoe Bay!

Moral:

Chechako lads must realize
 that arctic belles
 are civilized.⁶³

Furthermore, even when natural or social reality is

not violated, the tone of a writer can be off. This fault, which becomes most obvious in poetry, is illustrated in the following exchange between Joaquin Miller, "the poet of the Sierra Nevadas," and Sam C. Dunham, a gold-rusher who wrote much poetry of the same calibre as the burlesque given here:

Comrades of the Klondike

Have you, too, banged at the Chilcoot--
 That storm-locked gate to the golden door;
 Those thunder-built steeps have words built to suit--
 And whether you prayed or whether you swore
 'Twere one, where it seemed that an oath was a prayer--
 Seem'd that God couldn't care--
 Seem'd that God wasn't there!
 Have you, too, climbed to the Klondike?
 Hast talked as a friend to the five-horned stars?
 With muckluck shoon and with talspike,
 Has bared gray head to the golden bars--
 The heaven-built bars, where morning is born?
 Hast drank with Maiden Morn
 From Klondike's golden horn?
 Hast read low-voiced by the Northern Lights
 Such sermons as never men say?
 Hast sat and sat with the midnights
 That sit and sit all day?
 Hast heard the silence--the room--
 The glory of God--the gloom?
 Then come to me my sun-land, my soldier!
 Aye, come to my heart, and stay.
 Your hand! For a better, a bolder,
 Bared never his heart to the fray.
 And whether you prayed or you cursed--
 You dared the best--and the worst--
 That ever brave men durst!

To Sam C. Dunham

Joaquin Miller

Reply

I, too, have banged at the Chilcoot--
 I have scaled her storm-torn heights
 And slid down her trail with dizzy shoot,
 That produced a northern "light";
 And I uttered a curse-laden prayer.
 Of course God didn't care,
 For only the devil was there.

I, too, have climbed the Klondike
 Thro' bog and muck and roots,
 Till my legs were stiff as the talspike
 And the water filled both my boots;
 Have drunk from the golden horn
 With maidens night and morn--
 I acknowledge the corn;
 Have heard loud-voiced by the Northern Lights
 Such oaths as only men say;
 Have lain awake thro' the midnights,
 And fought mosquitoes all day;
 Cursed Klondike--not the iceberg' boom--
 And paid an ounce for a room,
 Which filled my soul with gloom.
 My friend, I'll come to thy sunland
 As soon as this long winter's o'er,
 And I'll drink to thy health in the one land
 Whither thy thoughts ever soar;
 And tho' this drouth [whiskey was selling for \$20 a
 a bottle at that time] be the worst
 That ever humanity cursed,
 At last we'll banish our thirst.

To Joaquin Miller

Sam C. Dunham⁶⁴

It is also a fact that many of the short stories and
 some of the novels published during the Klondike period do,
 as some critics assert, distort realities and thus have
 helped to spread a false picture of the gold rush. However,
 shorter-lived in the effect but much more responsible for
 false notions about the Klondike at the time was the yellow
 journalism of the news correspondents--Hearst alone sent two
 expeditions to the Klondike, one of them including Miller⁶⁵--
 and the advertising efforts of various business groups.
 Just how important Klondike outfitting and transportation
 was can be seen in the case of Seattle, which advertised
 five times as much as such competing cities as San Fran-
 sisco, Portland, Tacoma, Victoria, Vancouver, and Edmon-
 ton;⁶⁶ ". . . in 1899 alone, twelve hundred new houses

"mushroomed up in the city [Seattle], and the merchants, who before the rush had sold goods worth an annual three hundred thousand, now found that their direct interest in outfitting amounted to ten million."⁶⁷ Since all these enterprisers--merchants in the various cities, railroads and shipping companies alike--were hoping to reap a harvest from a gold rush to the north, it comes as no surprise that the hardships of the stampede were played down and the value of the gold fields exaggerated and other wonders propagated by the propaganda and advertising agencies of these businessmen.⁶⁸

To make an accurate assessment of the relationship between the literary myth and the realities of Alaska during this period and thus to evaluate the various complaints about literary distortion or romanticization, it seems well-advised to turn to the best-known as well as most often criticized writers, Jack London and Rex Beach. Along with Elizabeth Robins, better known for her interpretations of Ibsen's plays on the London stage,⁶⁹ they are probably also the best Alaskan writers in this period.

The Trail

One element of the Alaskan myth which is emphasized by these three writers is the rigor of life in the North. Hardship is the common lot of those holed up in a cabin for the winter as well as of those on the trail.. Even in the summer time, if one were lost, without food, or injured, travel could be dangerous. Winter is not the season of

London's "Love of Life,"⁷⁰ in which Bill, the deserter, is eaten by wolves and Bill's partner is close to death when picked up by the crew of the Bedford. In Beach's "The Stampede," one of the prospectors becomes separated from his companions; when found, "his condition told the grim tale of his wanderings, crazed with hunger and hardship." The suffering demented man is finally brought to a doctor, who sighs:

"It is the rape of the North they are doing. . . . We ravage her stores, but she takes grim toll from all of us." He moved the hot water forward on the stove, cleared off the rude table, and laid out his instrument-case.

In the winter, the problems of hunger, injury, and being lost are compounded by cold temperatures, snow, wolves, and silence. London especially dramatizes the danger of traveling at such time. In "The One Thousand Dozen,"⁷² for example, Rasmunsen, in addition to suffering other hardships, "was caught in a blizzard on Chilkoot and left two of his toes with the surgeon at Sheep Camp." In "An Odyssey of the North,"⁷³ two of the characters die of hunger and cold, and the man in "To Build a Fire"⁷⁴ freezes to death after breaking through some skim ice. The wolves get Bill in White Fang and almost get Henry, but another hardship which must be endured is the silence:

They travelled on without speech, saving their breath for the work of their bodies. On every side was the silence, pressing upon them with a tangible presence. It affected their minds as the many atmospheres of deep water affect the body of the diver. It crushed them with the weight of unending vastness and unalterable decree. It crushed them into the remotest recesses of

their own minds, pressing out of them, like juice from the grape, all the false ardors and exaltations and undue self-values of the human soul, until they perceived themselves finite and small, specks and motes, moving with weak cunning and little wisdom amidst the play and interplay of the great blind elements and forces.⁷⁵

Although the rigors of nature in the winter time are most frequently portrayed by London, the other writers also dramatize danger and hardship. In The Magnetic North, Elizabeth Robins depicts the various problems of the two characters as they travel up the frozen Yukon; and like London, she also asserts the weight of silence:

Their eyes had dropped down that last stretch of the steep snow slope, across the two miles of frozen river, and ran half round the wide horizon-line, like creatures in a cage. Whether they liked it or whether they didn't, for them there was no way out.

"It's the awful stillness." The Colonel arraigned the distant ice-plains.

They sat there looking, listening, as if they hoped their protest might bring some signal of relenting. No creature, not even a crystal-coated willow-twigg, nothing on all the ice-bound earth stirred by as much as a hair; no mark of man past or present broke the grey monotony; no sound but their two voices disturbed the stillness of the world.

It was a quiet that penetrated, that pricked to vague alarm. Already both knew the sting of it well.⁷⁶

Near the beginning of The Silver Horde, Rex Beach shows two men barely escaping death after breaking through thin ice. Later he remarks that "the hazards of winter travel in the North are manifold at best . . . ," and then describes the efforts of men traveling in a blizzard.⁷⁷

The veracity of London, Beach, and Robins in portraying this element of the Alaskan myth seems unquestionable when other accounts are consulted. From the summaries

of Rodman W. Paul and Ray Allen Billington, it seems that the '49ers suffered extreme hardships on their way to California;⁷⁸ but Hamlin Garland, after traveling the Ashcroft Trail, asserts that conditions were even worse for those headed toward the Klondike:

It was plain to me that goldseeking in the Rocky Mountains was marvellously simple and easy compared to even the best sections of the Northwest, and the long journey of the Forty-niners was not only incredibly more splendid and dramatic, but had the allurements of a land of eternal summer beyond the final great range. The long trail I had just passed was not only grim and monotonous, but led toward an ever increasing ferocity of cold and darkness to the arctic circle and the silence of death.⁷⁹

Garland describes in detail the obstacles of the Ashcroft Trail, and Pierre Berton records that "at least fifteen hundred men and some three thousand horses attempted this route, although only a handful reached the final goal."⁸⁰

If the number of deaths and failures for other reasons to reach Dawson may serve as an index to the natural hardships encountered in the North, then a review of what happened on the various trails to the Klondike will suggest that fiction writers have not much exaggerated this particular element of the Alaskan frontier myth. Some two thousand stampedeers tried the Edmonton Trail, five hundred more than started from Ashcroft. By the fall of 1898, less than a dozen had reached Dawson, and probably not even a hundred of those who set out ever reached the gold fields over this route: "A sign on a tree on one of the Edmonton trails was a measure of its hardship. It read: 'Hell can't be worse

"'than this trail. I'll chance it.' The man who scribbled those words killed himself in despair."⁸¹

Another route led from Port Valdez, across the Valdez Glacier, down the Kluteena River to the Copper, and then upstream after portaging to the headwaters of Forty-mile. In the winter of 1897-1898, about thirty-five hundred men and women attempted this route. Many died on the glacier itself, and those who did make it then faced the Kluteena:

The first three miles of the Kluteena were deceptively gentle, but the rest was a horror. The unsuspecting boatmen rounded a bend and came face to face with chaos. . . . Drift piles blocked the main channel, and snags like skeleton fingers reached out from bank and river bottom to pluck at the whirling craft. The entire strip of rapids was strewn with wrecked boats, provisions, clothing, and equipment. On June 1, one observer counted thirty-six rafts wrecked and abandoned in the first few miles of the fast water. One man in four was wrecked and ruined on the Kluteena and left to wander aimlessly along its banks without food, spare clothes, or shelter. Some made one or two trips successfully, shuttling their goods downstream, then were wrecked on the next attempt. On seeing the rapids, hundreds lost all stomach for the Klondike.⁸²

Of the thirty-five hundred who attempted this route, only two hundred made it down the Kluteena and probably no more than twenty actually reached Dawson.⁸³

About a hundred men are known to have tried to reach the Klondike across the Malaspina Glacier near Yakutat. Of these, forty-one died and many others were missing limbs or sight for the rest of their lives.⁸⁴

Deaths were fewer on the trails over the White and Chilkoot passes, but they did occur. During one night on

the White Pass Trail, seventeen men died from meningitis; and an avalanche on the Chilkoot on April 3, 1898, piled snow thirty feet deep over an area of ten acres and snuffed out the lives of more than sixty. There was a grim coda to this tragedy. Most of the bodies were buried in a little hollow in the mountains not far from where the avalanche had occurred. As spring advanced, the "hollow where the bodies rested became a lake, and when summer arrived the last stragglers following in the wake of the main wave of stam-peders came upon the grisly spectacle of dozens of bloated corpses floating about on the surface of the water."⁸⁵

Human beings were not the only creatures to suffer and die on these passes. Hamlin Garland describes a scene of carnage which he observed on the White Pass Trail:

Upon reaching the end of the wagon road, and entering upon the trail, we came upon the Way of Death. The waters reeked with carrion. The breeze was the breath of carrion, and all nature was made indecent and disgusting by the presence of carcasses. Within the distance of fifteen miles we passed more than two thousand dead horses. It was a cruel land, a land filled with the record of men's merciless greed. Nature herself was cold, majestic, and grand. The trail rough, hard, and rocky. . . .

. It was terrible to see how on every slippery ledge the ranks of horses had broken like waves to fall in heaps like rows of seaweed, tumbled, contorted, and grinning. Their dried skins had taken on the color of the soil, so that I sometimes set foot upon them without realizing what they were. Many of them had saddles on and nearly all had lead-ropes. Some of them had even been tied to trees and left to starve.⁸⁶

Given all the struggle and heartbreak which took place on the passes, particularly on the Chilkoot, over which most of the gold-seekers toiled, probably Pierre

Berton is correct in suggesting that the Chilkoot Pass is a major symbol of the Trail of '98:

For many people today the entire story of the Klondike gold rush is evoked by a single scene. It shows a solid line of men, forming a human chain, hanging across the white face of a mountain rampart. Caught in the instant of a lens opening, each man, bent almost double under the weight of his burden, yet still straining upward toward the skies, seems to be frozen in an attitude of supplication. It is a spectacle that at one glance mirrors all the terror, all the hardships, and all the yearning of '98.⁸⁷

That the Chilkoot Pass might be a symbol of the stampede seems even more plausible when it is kept in mind that for those on the trail, the pass was not crossed just once and then left behind. Shortly after the stampede began, the Mounted Police began to require that everyone entering the Yukon Territory bring with him a year's supply of food, over eleven hundred pounds. Adding tents, tools, and other equipment, each man had to move nearly a ton of goods across a pass to either Lake Bennett or Lake Lindemann. Those who back-packed everything would hike some twenty-five hundred miles before completing the crossing; those dragging sleds still covered more than a thousand: ". . . even a hard-working man took ninety days to move through the White Pass" and just as long to cross the Chilkoot.⁸⁸

Once these passes were crossed, hardship did not end; it was still five hundred miles to the Klondike. When spring broke in 1898, over seven thousand boats started down the Yukon from its headwaters in Lakes Bennett

and Lindemann. Before reaching the river proper, these boats had to pass through Miles Canyon and over the rapids beyond it. This passage was more spectacular than the Kluteena though less dangerous; still, Squaw Rapids and White Horse Rapids claimed their victims: during the first few days after river travel started in 1898, a hundred and fifty boats were wrecked and ten men drowned.⁸⁹

Winter travel overland between the head of the Lynn Canal and the Klondike, like travel everywhere in the North at such a time, was also hazardous. One good example of this is provided by the Yukon relief expedition. With rumors of winter famine in Dawson threatening spring trade, businessmen pressured Congress to appropriate two hundred thousand dollars for the purchase of 539 Norwegian reindeer, which were shipped to New York, railroaded to Seattle, and once more shipped to Haines. From there they started overland on a trip that lasted from May 1898 to nearly February 1899. Again, the trail took its toll:

The swamps, the mountains, the snowfields and glaciers, the canyons and fallen trees which they had to traverse caused them to die by the scores, like the horses on the Skagway trail. Wolves killed several, the Indians shot more, some strangled themselves on their harness. . . . As the months wore on and the very dogs dropped in their tracks from hunger, the herders were reduced to picking up raw beans spilled on the trail by the gold-seekers ahead of them and stuffing them, filthy and frozen, into their mouths.⁹⁰

By the time the herd reached Dawson, only a hundred and fourteen were left, about a fifth of the original herd.⁹¹

Robins and especially London and Beach do deserve

the credit which is given them for dramatizing this particular theme of the Alaskan myth--the rigors of travel and the struggle necessary to survive against the hardships of nature, and sometimes the failure to survive. On the other hand, it would seem that they do not deserve criticism for having exaggerated natural hardships.

The Code of the Trail

A second element of the myth of the Northland evolves as a response to the adversity of nature. If man is to survive under bleak and harsh conditions, if he is to survive the great white silence, then he must stick to a code of brotherhood. Conversely, men who break this code, or who through ignorance have not learned it, expose themselves not only to loneliness but to death as well. This theme of brotherhood and cooperation finds both simple assertion and dramatization in many of these Klondike-period stories.

In The Magnetic North, this theme is announced very early:

They [the Boy and the Colonel] had promptly adopted each other before they discovered that it was necessary to have one or more "pardners." It seemed, from all accounts, to be true, that up there at the top of the world a man alone is a man lost. . . . 92

As winter sets in and the Boy and the Colonel decide to travel further up the frozen Yukon, their partnership is put to the test of the trail:

The two who had been scornful of the frailty of temper they had seen common in men's dealings up here in the North, began to realize that all other trials of

brotherhood pale before the strain of life on the Arctic trail. Beyond any question, after a while something goes wrong with the nerves. The huge drafts on muscular endurance have, no doubt, something to do with it. They worked hard for fourteen, sometimes seventeen, hours at a stretch; they were ill-fed, suffering from exposure, intense cold, and a haunting uncertainty of the end of the undertaking. They were reasonable fellows as men go, with a respect for each other, but when hardship has got on the nerves, when you are suffering the agonies of snow-blindness, sore feet, and the pangs of hunger, you are not, to put it mildly, at your best as a member of the social order. They sometimes said things they were ashamed to remember, but both men grew carefuller at crucial moments, and the talkative one more silent as time went on.⁹³

Although their friendship is severely strained several times by what might be called "trail-fever," no overt violence occurs and later these two men are able to look back on their experience and realize with strong conviction the truth of the code:

"We ought to see some things clearer than other people. We had our lesson on the trail," said the Colonel quietly. "Nobody ought ever to be able to fool us about the power and the value of the individual apart from society. Seems as if association did make value."⁹⁴

The Boy also acknowledges the Colonel's affirmation, which is repeated a little later: "'I knew one thing, though, and I learned it up here in the North: men were meant to stick to one another.'"⁹⁵

An assertion of the code of brotherhood also occupies the dramatic center of Beach's "The Stampede."⁹⁶ One of the gold-seekers, Sully, has sworn to kill two of his acquaintances, Crowley and Knute. The story reaches its climax when Crowley and a companion, Buck, came upon Sully, lost in the hills and nearly dead from hunger and injury.

Crowley could now simply leave his sworn enemy to his grim fate, but he makes a different decision:

It was not sympathy which prompted Crowley, for he sympathized with his boyish companion [Buck], whose sufferings it hurt him sorely to augment. It was not pity; he pitied himself, and his own deplorable condition; nor did mercy enter into his processes, for the man had mercilessly planned to kill him, and he likewise had nursed a bitter hatred against him, which misfortune could only dim. It was not these things which moved him, but a vaguer, wilder quality; an elemental, unspoken, indefinable feeling of brotherhood throughout the length of the North, teaching subtly, yet absolutely and without appeal, that no man shall be left in his extremity to the cruel harshness of this forbidding land.

Another of Beach's short stories, "The Weight of Obligation,"⁹⁷ also reaches a happy conclusion after portraying the strain of the trail on two men, Johnny Cantwell and Mortimer Grant, who "were partners, trail-mates, brothers in soul if not in blood."

After landing at Katmai, they begin a journey across the coastal range on their way to Nome. At one point Cantwell collapses and Grant saves him; but instead of being grateful, Cantwell begins to resent the older man's superior strength and stamina. The trail puts Cantwell back into good physical shape, but he is plagued by the thought that he had collapsed and tension grows between them. Cantwell also rankles over the memory that back in Katmai, he had won the favors of a native girl, after which "Mort had shouldered him aside and won her favor, then boasted of it." Trail-fever builds:

His [Cantwell's] resentment--in reality nothing more than a phase of insanity begot of isolation and silence--

could not help but communicate itself to his companion, and there resulted a mutual antagonism, which grew into a dislike, then festered into something more, something strange, reasonless, yet terribly vivid and amazingly potent for evil.

The crisis comes when it is discovered that a tip which Cantwell had bought in Seattle is false: Grant begins to think about the carbine and Cantwell to cherish his axe. But violence is avoided after Mortimer injures himself on the trail and Cantwell is able to take the benefactor's role:

During the night everything had changed for Johnny Cantwell; his mental attitude, his hatred, his whole reasonless insanity. Everything was different now, even his debt was canceled, the weight of obligation was removed, and his diseased fancies were completely cured.

"The Brand"⁹⁸ is still another of Beach's stories in which a character moves from enmity toward the world--a position antithetical to the code--to amity. After being betrayed by a woman, McGill goes off by himself and discovers a rich gold strike; but this does not produce the joy one would expect:

. . . what use to make of his discovery he hardly knew, since he had slunk away from the world, ablaze with hatred for his fellow-men, intending to live alone for the rest of his days. This grudge was as bitter now as then, and he determined, therefore, to keep his find a secret.

This decision, however, gives him no peace:

" . . . voices called to him all through the night. He rose early, for they would not let him rest, and during the darkness a terrible hunger had grown upon him. It was the hunger for companionship, for speech." Finally, he finds

peace by an act which conforms to the code of brotherhood; he spreads the news of his strike and even files a claim for an old friend. His change of heart is then rewarded in two ways. He makes a great deal of money from his strike, but this is played down in face of an even more meaningful personal conclusion: he is also reconciled with his repentant wife. The fact that their reunion takes place after he becomes wealthy is in no way treated ironically.

For the most part, there are no great sinners in the stories of Beach and Robins; that is, not many insist upon breaking the code of brotherhood to the extreme of bringing a catastrophe upon themselves. In London's stories there are also mild or only apparent sinners and even some saints. Dramatically, London's White Fang develops in direct contrast with "Bâtard." London had written in 1904, that he was "'going to give the evolution, the civilization of a dog--development of domesticity, faithfulness, love, morality, and all the amenities and virtues.'"⁹⁹ Accordingly, under the warm guidance of the love-master, White Fang moves away from savagery; in fact, he violates the instinct of self-preservation by which he had lived in the Northland and develops a sense of altruism necessary in the civilization of the Southland, and the result is good:

The months came and went. There was plenty of food and no work in the Southland, and White Fang lived fat and prosperous and happy. Not alone was he in the geographical Southland, for he was in the Southland of life. Human kindness was like a sun shining upon him, and he flourished like a flower planted in good soil.¹⁰⁰

But this doesn't mean that White Fang became a pansy: on

one occasion, after being granted permission by his lover-master, he kills three dogs who have been sicked on him; and near the end of the novel he kills a convict who attempts to murder a member of the family. Like Averill's Kit Carson, White Fang finally preserves all the virtues of the primitive life but none of its vices.

Jack Westondale, racing to stay ahead of a Northwest Territory mounted policeman in "To the Man on the Trail,"¹⁰¹ is first welcomed and even aided by a group of men celebrating Christmas and then denounced for violating the code of the trail:

"'A dirty scoundrel and a liar!' 'By gar! Him no good!' 'A thief!' 'Worse than an Indian!' It was evident that they were angry--first at the way they had been deceived; and second at the outraged ethics of the Northland, where honesty, after all, was a man's prime jewel."

Finally, the Malemute Kid comes to the defense of this apparent sinner:

"It's a cold night, boys--a bitter cold night. . . . You've all travelled trail, and you know what that stands for. Don't jump a dog when he's down. You've only heard one side. A whiter man than Jack Westondale never ate from the same pot nor stretched blanket with you or me. Last fall he gave his whole clean-up, forty thousand, to Joe Castrell, to buy in on Dominion. Today he'd be a millionaire. But while he stayed behind at Circle City, taking care of his partner with the scurvy, what does Castrell do? Goes into McFarland's, jumps the limit, and drops the whole sack. Found him dead in the snow the next day. And poor Jack laying his plans to go out this winter to his wife and the boy he's never seen. You'll notice he took exactly what his partner lost--forty thousand. Well, he's gone out; and what are you going to do about it?"

The answer to this question comes quickly. Westondale has broken the law, but he has not broken the code of

brotherhood which assumes a sense of justice more concerned with morality than legality; therefore, a toast is raised to a recognized brother:

"So a health to the man on the trail tonight; may his grub hold out; may his dogs keep their legs; may his matches never miss fire. God prosper him; good luck go with him; and--"

"Confusion to the Mounted Police!" cried Bettles, to the crack of the empty cups.

It is interesting to note here, however, that the real sinner--Joe Castrell, who had broken the faith with his partner--does not go unpunished: he was found dead in the snow on the day following his betrayal.

In another of London's stories, "Too Much Gold,"¹⁰² the code of honesty and forthrightness is again broken, but the justice rendered to the offenders is poetic. Two partners, Hootchino Bill and Kink Mitchell, stampede to Dawson and learn that all claims above and below Carmack's Discovery are already staked. In a fit of ill-humor and cynicism, they stake what they feel is a worthless claim on a creek soon to be named Eldorado. They are to be satisfied with nothing less than a claim on "Too Much Gold," "the fabled creek of which all sourdoughs dreamed, whereof it was said that gold was so thick that, in order to wash it, gravel must first be shovelled into the sluice-boxes." They show their contempt for anything less by leaving the following note on their present claim:

THIS MOOSE IS RESERVED FOR
THE SWEDES AND CHECHAQUOS

The next evening they get a luckless miner, Ans

Handerson, drunk and trick him into buying the supposedly worthless claim for eight hundred dollars. Sobering up the next morning, Ans tries to nullify the deal, but the two partners refuse to part with the money which they have gained by deception. Next comes the poetic justice: three months later, the duped Swede is worth half a million dollars.

In contrast with the lighter tone of "Too Much Gold" and "To the Man on the Trail" and with the stories of Beach and Robins, many of London's stories do depict serious sins against the code of the trail and grim consequences for such violations. The man in "To Build a Fire" is not wicked or dishonest; but lacking imagination, he is unable to see the significances of things; and having faith in his own strength and rationality, he rejects the notion that a man cannot depend entirely upon himself but must have a partner. Even after he falls through some skin ice, he rejects the code, for he has a fire started and expects to dry out soon and be on his way:

The fire was a success. He was safe. He remembered the advice of the old-timer on Sulphur Creek, and smiled. The old-timer had been very serious in laying down the law that no man must travel alone in the Klondike after fifty below. Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself. Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought. All a man had to do was to keep his head, and he was alright. Any man who was a man could travel alone.

But this is hubris, and the man pays the usual price. Snow from the tree under which he has built the fire falls and extinguishes it, and he is unable to start

a new one. In several flashes of recognition, he sees how he has called down death upon himself; his last words are: "'You were right, old hoss; you were right,' the man mumbled to the old-timer of Sulphur Creek."

In other cases, the man who breaks the code does seem wicked. In "Love of Life," one injured man is deserted by his partner, Bill, who walks off without a word or a glance. As the injured man struggles to reach aid, he refuses to believe that Bill would have deserted him:

But hard as he strove with his body he strove equally hard with his mind, trying to think that Bill had not deserted him, that Bill would surely wait for him at the cache. He was compelled to think this thought, or else there would not be any use to strive, and he would have lain down and died.

Actually it is the sinning against and his great will to live that occupy the dramatic center of this story, but before the tale ends, we learn of Bill's own fate, presumably the result of his breaking the code, as well as more about Bill's character:

In the afternoon the man came upon a trail. It was of another man, who did not walk, but who dragged himself on all fours. The man thought that it might be Bill, but he thought in a dull, uninterested way. . . .

. . . He followed the trail of the other man who dragged himself along, and soon came to the end of it--a few fresh-picked bones where the soggy moss was marked by the foot pads of many wolves. He saw a squat moose-hide sack, mate to his own, which had been torn by sharp teeth. He picked it up, though its weight was almost too much for his feeble fingers. Bill had carried it to the last. Ha-Ha! He would have the laugh on Bill. He would survive and carry it to the ship in the shining sea. His mirth was hoarse and ghastly, like a raven's croak, and the sick wolf joined him, howling lugubriously. The man ceased suddenly. How could he have the laugh on Bill if that were Bill; if those bones, so pinky-white and clean, were Bill?

He turned away. Well, Bill had deserted him; but he would not take the gold, nor would he suck Bill's bones. Bill would have, though, had it been the other way around, he mused as he staggered on.

In "Bâtard,"¹⁰³ there is no doubt about the character of the two protagonists. At the very beginning of the story, it is said:

Bâtard was a devil. This was recognized throughout the Northland. "Hell's Spawn" he was called by many men, but his master, Black Leclere, chose for him the shameful name "Bâtard." Now Black Leclere was also a devil, and the twain were well matched. There is a saying that when two devils come together, hell is to pay.

But there is an essential difference between these two devils: Bâtard "hated only blindly, instinctively, without reason or method," but Leclere "hated with understanding and intelligence. . . ." There could be no greater violation of the code of brotherhood and love than Leclere's as he proceeds to cultivate the natural evil in Bâtard:

Much of evil and much of strength were there in these, Bâtard's progenitors, and, bone and flesh of their bone and flesh, he had inherited it all. And then came Black Leclere, to lay his heavy hand on the bit of pulsating puppy life, to press and prod and mould till it became a big bristling beast, acute in knavery, overspilling with hate, sinister, malignant, diabolical. With a proper master Bâtard might have made an ordinary, fairly efficient sled-dog. He never got the chance: Leclere but confirmed him in his congenital iniquity.

After five years of deliberate effort, Leclere has created a monster whose malignancy matches his own. The bizarre conclusion to this tale draws a grim lesson about the fate of those who cultivate hate rather than love: Bâtard diabolically causes Leclere's death before being shot to death himself.

Death also marks the conclusion of "An Odyssey of the North," although in this story it is difficult to make judgments about guilt. Naass, an Aleut chief, seems to have good cause for revenge: he had paid a fabulous price for Unga, but on their wedding day, Axel Gunderson, a white, carried her off by force. In the years that follow, Naass nurses his hatred as he suffers many hardships; on the other hand, genuine love develops between Axel and Unga:

This, then, was the wife of Axel Gunderson, a woman whose name and fame had traveled with her husband's, hand in hand, through all the Northland. At table, Malemute Kid baited her with the assurance of an old friend, and Prince shook off the shyness of first acquaintance and joined in. But she held her own in the unequal contest, while her husband, slower in wit, ventured naught but applause. And he was very proud of her; his every look and action revealed the magnitude of the place she occupied in his life.

But this matters not to Naass. Seeing himself as "the righter of wrongs," he still plans to take his revenge on Axel and then to reclaim Unga and return to Akatan, where, as he says to her later, "'we will live in the dirty huts, and eat of the fish and oil, and bring forth a spawn--a spawn to be proud of all the days of our life. We will forget the world and be happy, very happy.'"

By trickery, Naass does manage to cause Axel's death on the trail and then reveals himself to Unga and attempts to reclaim her, but she rejects him and chooses to die in the snow with Axel. Unlike The Oresteia, there is no third movement in this story which dramatizes an alternative to lex retaliatus as a code of justice to be applied once the rules of brotherhood have been broken; instead,

the Malemute Kid concludes: "'There be things greater than our wisdom, beyond our justice. The right and the wrong of this we cannot say, and it is not for us to judge.'"

Another variation on the code of the trail, or the code of brotherhood or of the Northland, might be called the code of the cabin. The most obvious manifestation of this is hospitality, an unobtrusive example of which may be seen in "To the Man on the Trail." Jack Westondale has been in the cabin for only minutes when Belden picks up the conversation so that the Malemute Kid may prepare a visible sign of hospitality:

"Reckon they'll show spunk?" asked Belden, in order to keep up the conversation, for the Malemute Kid already had the coffeepot on and was busily frying bacon and moose meat.

Conversely, refusal of hospitality is a grave offense. In The Magnetic North, some of the less manly characters reveal their baseness by declining to offer food to some Indians and at another time to a Jesuit priest. But in each case, those who would break the code are brought back into line by stronger men, and this generalization is made about later behaviour:

In the appalling stillness of the long Arctic night, any passerby was hailed with enthusiasm, and although the food supply in the Big Cabin was plainly going to run short before spring, no traveller--white, Indian, or Esquimaux--was allowed to go by without being warmed and fed, and made to tell where he came from and whither he was bound--questions to tax the sage. Their unfailing hospitality was not in the least unexpected or unusual, being a virtue practiced even by scoundrels in the great North-west. . . . 104

In Beach's "When the Mail Came In,"¹⁰⁵ one of the

cheechaquos is shocked to learn that his cabin has been used by a couple of miners to aid a dance-hall girl who has fallen through the ice. Soon he is lessoned by a sour-dough:

"Young feller," said he--and his eyes were black--
 "I've rattled around for thirty years and seen many a good and many a bad man, but I never before seen such an intelligent dam' fool as you are. . . . You've broken about the only law that this here country boasts of--the law of hospitality."

In Beach's The Silver Horde, a refusal of hospitality serves as a plot device, signalling that something is amiss:

Fraser had been watching the fellow, and now remarked to his companion:

"Say, what ails that ginney?"

The assumption of good-nature fell away from Boyd Emerson as he replied:

"I never knew anybody to refuse shelter to freezing men before. There's something back of this--he's got some reason for his refusal. I don't want any trouble, but--"106

And in The Spoilers, a change in this law of hospitality signals the rapidly approaching close of the frontier as more and more newcomers of a different breed arrive:

"There isn't half the disorder you think there is. There weren't any crimes in this country till the tenderfeet arrived. We didn't know what a thief was. If you came to a cabin you walked in without knocking. The owner filled up the coffee-pot and sliced into the bacon; then when he'd started your meal, he shook hands and asked your name. It was just the same whether his cache was full or whether he'd packed his few pounds of food two hundred miles on his back. That was hospitality to make your Southern article look pretty small. If there was no one at home, you ate what you needed. There was but one unpardonable breach of etiquette--to fail to leave dry kindlings. I'm afraid of the transitory stage we're coming to--that epoch of chaos between the death of the old and the birth of the new."107

In addition to extending hospitality to the stranger,

the law of the cabin dictates that men who are spending a winter together keep the same faith required of men on the trail. Just as trail-fever can strain and even break the best of friendships, so cabin-fever can be a deadly enemy. The disease never becomes rampant in The Magnetic North, but its symptoms do appear:

But, for the most part, as winter darkened around them, they lounged from morning till night about the big fireplace, and smoked, and growled, and played cards, and lived as men do, finding out a deal about each other's opinions, and little or nothing about each other's history. . . .

In the state of lowered vitality to which the poor, ill-cooked food, the cold and the lack of exercise, was slowly reducing them, they talked to one another less and less as time went on, and more and more--silently and each against his will--grew hyper-sensitive to the shortcomings and even to the innocent "ways" of the other fellow.

Not Mac's inertia alone, but his trick of sticking out his jaw became an offense, his rasping voice a torture. The Boy's occasional ebullition of spirits was an outrage, the Colonel's mere size intolerable. O'Flynn's brogue, which had amused them, grew to be just part of the hardship and barbarism that had overtaken them like an evil dream, coercing, subduing all the forces of life.¹⁰⁸

London's "In a Far Country"¹⁰⁹ shows the disease running its full course. In dreadful contrast to the conclusion of the story, at the beginning an assertion is made about the necessity of being able to adopt the code of brotherhood in order to survive in a far country, the Northland:

But his [a man's] pinch will come in learning properly to shape his mind's attitude toward all things, and especially toward his fellow man. For the courtesies of ordinary life, he must substitute unselfishness, forbearance, and tolerance. Thus, and thus only, can he gain that pearl of great price--true comradeship. He must not say "Thank you"; he must mean it without opening his mouth, and prove it by responding in kind.

In short, he must substitute the deed for the word, the spirit for the letter.

On the trail, two of the men show themselves to be shirks and grumblers, but they are tolerated. Then, with winter setting in, these two decide to hole up in a cabin while the rest of the party is going to make a run for Dawson. As these groups separate, a prediction is made about the fate of the two Incapables:

Sloper laid his hand on the other's shoulder.

"Jacques Baptiste, did you ever hear of the Kilkenny cats?"

The half-breed shook his head.

"Well, my friend and good comrade, the Kilkenny cats fought till neither hide, nor hair, nor yowl, was left. Very good. Now, these two men don't like work. They'll be all alone in that cabin all winter--a mighty long, dark winter. Kilkenny cats--well?"

The Frenchman in Baptiste shrugged his shoulders, but the Indian in him was silent. Nevertheless, it was an eloquent shrug, pregnant with prophecy.

In vivid detail, the physical and moral disintegration of the two men proceeds to the ultimate repudiation of the code--a double murder: one dying by revolver and knife, and the other freezing to death after being chopped with an axe at the base of his spine. "In a Far Country" provides a dramatization of cabin-fever which is probably the most affective to be found in any of the stories of this period.

Having looked at examples which Robins, Beach, and London provide of literary depiction of the code of the trail, that is, the affirmation of brotherhood as a prerequisite for survival and, conversely, the assertion that to break the covenant with mankind is to court disaster, again the question might be asked: what is the relationship

between this second element of the Alaskan myth and reality? In various accounts of the gold-rush days, many instances may be found of men actually living by the code. James Wickersham, for example, records that the open-cabin policy was widespread:

Prospectors' cabins were along the river, and we found a latch string hung on the outside of every prospector's door. It was the custom for any traveller to pull the string which raised the inside wooden bar, walk in, make a fire, and make himself at home. Every cabin on the Seventy Mile had a good bunk with a spruce bough bed, and a small sheet-iron Yukon stove as part of its furniture. Before leaving the cabin for the day's work, or a visit to a neighbour, or a trip to town, the occupant would invariably cut enough shavings from the dry wood always in the shelter of the door, and arrange the shavings and wood in the stove ready for a quick fire, and leave a square block of matches in sight, so that one coming in, sometimes almost perishing from cold, or wet from the treacherous overflow of water beneath the snow, might make a fire with the least possible waste of time. We visited all the cabins along the river, some occupied and other temporarily vacant, and observed evidences of this wise custom in every one.¹¹⁰

A couple of the more outstanding examples of honesty and friendship involve Clarence Berry, one of many who made a fortune from the Klondike and one of the very few who managed to keep it. During the first winter of staking, locations were not exact and as William Ogilvie, the government surveyor, marked the exact boundaries, fractional claims appeared which could then be staked by anyone not already having a claim in that district. After Ogilvie located Berry's land according to the claim which had been legally filed, it was discovered that Berry had already dumped thousands of dollars worth of paydirt onto a fraction which did not actually belong to him. The first instance of

friendship was demonstrated by Ogilvie, who privately informed Berry of the error. The second instance was enacted by George Bryne, a trail-mate of Berry. Carrying out an unenforceable agreement with Berry, Bryne staked the fraction before word spread and then transferred it to his friend. The next spring that fraction produced \$140,000 for Berry. As Ogilvie remarked, "'A friend like that, in such a need, is a friend indeed.'"111

Berry, on the other hand, was also a loyal friend. It had been Bill McPhee, owner of a saloon in Fortymile, who provided the grubstake on which Berry stampeded to the Klondike from which he eventually took a million and a half dollars. As his fortunes continued to grow, Berry never forgot McPhee:

In 1906 McPhee's saloon at Fairbanks was destroyed by fire and the aging barkeeper lost everything but the clothes he wore. Berry wired him from San Francisco to draw on him for all the money necessary to get back into business again. In his declining years McPhee lived on a pension from Berry, who died of appendicitis in San Francisco in 1930, worth several millions.112

More dramatic and more numerous than the instances of loyalty to the code are the examples of friendship strained beyond the snapping point. Pierre Berton records many such ruptures on the route down the Yukon to Dawson:

A man sitting in a boat and watching the banks roll past him like a moving scrollwork could watch in fascination the little human scenes which, like brief tableaux, illuminated and punctuated this final chapter in the movement north:

--Two men caught on the rocks in the middle of the Thirtymile River and, oblivious to their surroundings, fighting with their fists in white-hot anger;
 --Two more, on a lonely beach not far from the mouth of the Teslin, solemnly sawing their boat down the middle;

--Ten men at Big Salmon dividing everything up ten ways onto ten blankets, including an enormous scow, which was torn up to build ten smaller scows so that each could go his separate way in peace.

Once again the Mounties were called in to arbitrate these disputes. Two men tried to divide up a single skillet and, this being impossible, were at each other's throats until a policeman arrived and solved the situation by tossing the implement into the river, to the satisfaction of both.¹¹³

Before the boat trip started, it was necessary to build a craft from whipsawed lumber, which involves back-breaking work. For many comradeships, this strain was too great:

No story of broken friendship is more heart-breaking than that of two bank clerks who came over the Chilkooot Pass that winter. They had been friends from childhood, and had gone to school together and worked side by side in the same bank as youths. They became so inseparable that, rather than be parted from each other, they married sisters. Yet the whipsawing turned them into enemies so insensate that when they decided to divide their outfits, they insisted on cutting everything exactly in half. So bitter and obdurate was their enmity that, rather than divide twenty sacks of flour into two piles of ten sacks each, they persisted in sawing every one in two. Then each set off with his twenty broken halves, the flour spilling away from the torn and useless containers.¹¹⁴

Further west on the trail out of Port Valdez, the same scenes occurred: "There were three partners . . . who broke a small grindstone into three equal pieces, and there was another trio who, in order to split up two pairs of oars, each took one oar and then destroyed the fourth so that none should have it."¹¹⁵ In the interior of Alaska, Wickersham records a split-up which was not yet complete:

Carsh and his partner cut cordwood for the A.C.Co. steamboats. The contract is signed by both partners and brings in good wages. They live in a good-sized cabin with two front doors. Carsh goes in one door and his partner in at the other. Carsh lives on one side of a

line drawn across the middle of the floor, his partner on the other side. They do not speak to each other; each has a sheet iron stove and his own dishes. The grub pile is divided and each cooks his own food and eats it alone on his own board table. Each cuts the same amount of wood and the purser on the steamboat divides the money equally between them. We talked to both and found them pleasant fellows--to us--but on account of some misunderstanding, live solitary and speechless.¹¹⁶

One cannot help but recall "In a Far Country" and wonder what Wickersham might have discovered in that cabin the following spring.

Also interesting here is Beach's own experience with cabin-fever. Frozen in at Minook or Rampart, as it came to be called, in the fall of 1897, Beach was wintering with a partner, Sidney Cohen. As time progressed, tempers flared:

He and Cohen got on each other's nerves so badly that a meeting had to be called to straighten the matter out. Mayo, who had a dramatic flair for old-time justice, decided that they should settle the issue by personal combat. The two men accordingly stripped to their underwear and exchanged a few misplaced haymakers. Then, their sensitivities assuaged, they shook hands and called it a day.¹¹⁷

Given these examples of trail- and cabin-fever, once more it would seem that in rendering the code of the trail and violations of that code, Beach, Robins, and London are innocent before the charge of distorting reality. Instead, evidence is accumulating which would support a view taken by Fred Lewis Pattee, who, in London's work, at least, remarks "the freshness and the realism of the living North. . . ." ¹¹⁸

Striking it rich

Another element of the myth of the Northland involves the matter of purpose or meaning. Why do men take to the trail, confront hardship, learn to live by a code which will enable them to survive harsh natural conditions, or risk not learning or violating the code and consequently perishing? The answer, of course, is that they hope to find a pot of gold. They dream of striking it rich.

In some of the stories of this period, men do strike it or have already struck it rich. Ans Handerson in "Too Much Gold" is worth half a million as the result of a drunken purchase. McGill in "The Brand" is worth the same amount as a result of his strike. Axel Gunderson in "An Odyssey of the North" is one of the Eldorado kings. Scowl Austin in The Magnetic North possesses a rich Klondike claim.

Fabulous as such strikes might seem, this fiction is no stranger than truth. As we have already noted, Clarence Berry, previously a California fruit-farmer, took a million and a half dollars from his Klondike claims and then moved to the Fairbanks placer creeks where he made another fortune. Thomas Lippy, a former YMCA physical director in Seattle, staked a claim that produced over a million and a half. Dick Lowe's fractional claim eventually yielded half a million. Holding interests in twenty-eight claims, Big Alex McDonald was worth millions. In fact, every claim from One to Forty on Eldorado Creek, which turned out to be the richest placer creek ever discovered anywhere, eventually produced at least half a million dollars each.¹¹⁹

Even London's "Too Much Gold" was based on the experience of Al Thayer and Winfield Oler. The claim which they staked was actually 29 Eldorado instead of Twenty-Four. The name of the drunken Swede they sold it to is changed only slightly: Ans Handerson in real life was Charly Anderson, and he was drunk when he bought the claim. The purchase price was that given by London, \$800, but the value of the claim was understated in London's fiction: Ans Handerson believed he was worth five hundred thousand dollars; the claim which Charly Anderson obtained actually had a million dollars worth of gold lying down on bedrock.¹²⁰

Despite these prototypes for the successful gold-seeker, most of the characters in the fiction of Beach, London, and Robins do not find gold. We have already seen the fateful decision of the two prospectors in "Too Much Gold." Buck and Crowley in Beach's "The Stampede" fare no better. They reach a new creek to find that it has already been organized and claimed by the pencil-miners, a practice previously mentioned by Ernest Gruening in The State of Alaska. In this story, Beach also accurately records the general feeling of miners about pencil-mining: "It is not a popular practice, this blanketing, as the temper of the watchers showed."

None of the men in The Magnetic North finds gold either. In fact, one of the minor characters, Benham, a prospector-turned-trader, undercuts the very possibility of striking it rich on the Klondike, or anywhere else for that matter:

"Gen'lemen," he [Benham] said, "the best Klondyke claims'll be potted. Minook's the camp o' the future. You'd better come along with us."

"Got no dogs," sighed the Boy; but the two strangers looked hard at the man who hadn't that excuse.

Benham sat idly and watched preparations for the next course.

"Say, a nabob like you might give us a tip. How did you do the trick?"

"Well, I'd been playing your game for three years, and no galley slave ever worked half as hard--"

"That's it! work like the devil for a couple o' years and then live like a lord for ever after."

"Yes; well, when the time came for me to go into the Lord business I had just forty-two dollars and sixty cents to set up on."

"What had you done with the rest?"

"I'd spent the five thousand dollars my father left me, and I'd cleaned up just forty-two dollars sixty cents in my three years' mining."

The announcement fell chill on the company.¹²¹

Another of the gold-seekers, Potts, takes exception to this view, but Benham persists:

"Well," drawled Potts, "you can look after the fur trade; give me a modest little claim in the Klondyke."

"Oh, Klondyke! Klondyke!" Benham got up and stepped over Kaviak on his way to the fire. He lit a short briarwood with a flaming stick and turned about.

"Shall I tell you fellows a little secret about the Klondyke?" He held up the burning brand in the dim room with telling emphasis. The smoke and flame blew black and orange across his face as he said:

"Every dollar that's taken out of the Klondyke in gold-dust will cost three dollars in coin."¹²²

Most of the fictional characters who, like Benham, try to make their fortune from gold that is already out of the ground have no luck either. David Rasmunsen, for example, in London's "The One Thousand Dozen," was "a careful man, keenly practical, with a hard head and a heart that imagination never warmed," who hoped to make a profit of four thousand dollars in two months by transportating eggs to Dawson. All of his calculations, however, go to pieces

as he encounters one unexpected obstacle and hardship after another. Still, he finally makes it to Dawson and it seems that things are going to turn out fine after all: eggs are worth at least a dollar and a half each. But then comes the reversal: the eggs have gone rotten and the best offer Rasmunsen can expect is two hundred dollars for the lot, which will be used as dog food. In quiet despair, he hangs himself.

Here again, fiction is less strange than truth. Pierre Berton mentions many schemes which were much more far-fetched than carrying eggs to Dawson. Among them are these:

A noted electrical expert of the times, Nikalo Tesla, a onetime associate of Thomas Edison, attempted to market an X-ray machine which he said was essential for prospectors because it could detect the presence of gold hidden in small beds of sand and gravel. Three Washington State men worked out a scheme to suck gold from the riverbeds, using compressed air. Another optimist headed north with diving-equipment, explaining that he planned to walk along the bed of the Yukon River picking up nuggets. . . .

.
An organization called the Trans-Alaskan Gopher Co. offered shares at a dollar apiece and promised returns of ten dollars a minute when it got into operation: it proposed to take contracts for digging tunnels in Klondike claims with trained gophers. A root-beer salesman announced he was leaving for the Chilkoot Pass with a thousand packages of root beer; it was his intention to sell the beverage to thirsty argonauts at an eight-hundred-per-cent profit. A Dr. Armand Ravol, the city bacteriologist of St. Louis, planned to go to the Klondike armed with packages of deadly germs suitable for eliminating mosquitoes. And there was that abortive corporation with the jawbreaking name known as the Klondike and Cuba Ice Towing and Anti-Yellow Fever Company, which proposed, with a wild disregard for ocean geography, to tow icebergs from the Klondike to the South Seas, where, it was believed, they could be transformed into cold compresses to alleviate the suffering of fever victims.¹²³

Although--in accurate reflection of reality--few fictional characters find the pot of gold, many of them do strike it rich in another and more significant sense. This is the thought which is expressed in the epigraph to London's "Love of Life":

This out of all will remain--
 They have lived and have tossed;
 So much of the game will be gain,
 Though the gold of the dice has been lost.

Before looking at just what it is that characters in various Klondike stories gain, we might first determine what the man in "Love of Life" gains. Actually, what the man loses is more obvious. He loses his own gold by tossing it away as his strength leaves him. He also loses a very important belief: "He was compelled to think . . . that Bill would surely wait for him at the cache . . . , or else there would not be any use to strive, and he would have lain down and died." After he comes upon Bill's bones, which have been worked over by the wolves, he knows that he had been deserted by his partner; yet he survives, primarily as the result of the great life-force in him. But it would not be accurate to say that he had gained his life; rather, what had been his to begin with was merely saved. Nor, after he has recovered, does he reveal that he has gained an insight into himself, that is, that there is a life-force in him that struggles to live in the face of very bad odds. Such self-knowledge could be considered a gain, but the story does not make it clear that the man has come to this realization.

There is, however, one piece of self-knowledge that the man does discover. After days of nothing to eat but muskeg berries and rushes which he knew held no nourishment, a few small minnows, and four day-old ptarmigan chicks-- "thrusting them alive into his mouth and crunching them like eggshells between his teeth"--he becomes "hunger-mad": "He was mastered by the verb 'to eat.'" In this state he comes upon Bill's bones, "so pinky-white and clean"; but, it becomes evident, his instinct for survival has not totally mastered him:

He turned away. Well, Bill had deserted him; but he would not take the gold, nor would he suck Bill's bones. Bill would have, though, had it been the other way around, he mused as he staggered on.

Here, it would seem, is the self-knowledge which the man gains. Even though he has himself been betrayed by his friend and even though he is lost and close to death from starvation, he still does not break the code of brotherhood. Thus, later, when he has been rescued from death, he will be able to look back at his experience without shame, knowing that for his own part he has kept the faith with his fellow man.

This insight is almost identical with that reached by two characters in The Magnetic North. As the Colonel lies dying, he and the Boy summarize the value of their experience, with the Colonel mildly playing the role of devil's advocate:

"I'm not saying the time was wasted," he [the Colonel] went on; "I reckon it was a good thing you came."
 "Yes, it was a good thing I came."

"You've learned a thing or two."

"Several."

"Specially on the Long Trail."

"Most of all on the Long Trail."

· · · · ·
 "What was it we learned on the Trail, pardner.?"
 But the Boy had turned away. "Wasn't it--didn't we
 learn how near a tolerable decent man is to bein' a
 villain?"

"We learned that a man can't be quite a brute as
 long as he sticks to another man."

"Oh, was that it?"¹²⁴

Once more the implication is that a man, such as Bill in "Love of Life," can become an animal, a wolf who would suck his brother's bones, and men do have the wolf impulse in them; but man is also capable of being something more than a brute--if he practices the code of brotherhood. It was precisely this failure which characterized the relationship between the two Incapables of "In a Far Country." Instead of being able to "substitute unselfishness, forbearance, and tolerance" for "the courtesies of ordinary life" and thus obtaining "that pearl of great price--true comradeship," they become animals, "Kilkenny cats," and destroy each other.

Ironically, exposure to the wilderness is a two-edged sword. If the two Incapables had not turned their backs "upon the comforts of an elder civilization, to face the savage youth, the primordial simplicity of the North . . . ," they would have, it is implied, survived. Not having undertaken the test of the Great White Silence, they would not have failed. On the other hand, it seems that only by undergoing the test, by making a journey into a far

country does a man become exposed to those conditions which will refine the ore of which he is made, thus showing his true metal, and which in the same process will temper the metal of his character. Therefore, since the extreme experience seems necessary for gaining knowledge of one's self and for tempering that self, the quest or the struggle is desirable--even though some may be found wanting. This, of course, is not a new insight: it is as old, at least, as Oedipus Rex.

The important point here is not the originality of this theme, but rather the prevalence of this theme--or variations on it--in the very Klondike literature which is most often criticized for allegedly distorting reality. Before considering the theme of a quest and its relationship to the Alaskan myth, a couple more examples of assertion of the desirability of struggle might be cited.

London's "Brown Wolf" revolves about the contrasting values of civilization and the wilderness. Brown Wolf is called upon to make a choice about where he will live. He can remain in the civilized Southland, where

"He'll never want for food--you know that. He'll never suffer from cold and hardship. Here all is softness and gentleness. Neither the human nor nature is savage. He will never know a whip-lash again. And as for the weather--why, it never snows here."

Or he can return to the primitive North:

"Work without end, an' famine, an' frost, and the rest of the miseries--that's what he'll get when he comes with me. But he likes it. He is used to it. He knows that life. He was born to it an' brought up to it."

Eventually Brown Wolf does decide to return to the Northland, and some readers interpret this as London's own assertion of the values represented by the wilderness over the values represented by civilization; but such an interpretation probably reads too much into the story. The Southland and Northland, as presented in this story, do not have clusters of symbols around them. The choice is between a single meaning of the North and a single meaning of the South: struggle and hardship versus softness and gentleness. Thus, Brown Wolf's choice does not reflect all of London's thoughts on the relative values of the civilized and the primitive, and in any case it should be remembered that the decision did not come easily to Brown Wolf:

He wanted to be in two places at the same time, with the old master and the new, and steadily the distance between them was increasing. He sprang about excitedly making short nervous leaps and twists, now toward one, now toward the other, in painful indecision, not knowing his own mind, desiring both and unable to choose, uttering quick sharp whines and beginning to pant.

In The Magnetic North, Elizabeth Robins presents a similar value judgment in unambiguous terms. At the end of the novel, many men, not having found any gold, are preparing to take the steamboat downriver and Outside. Of these it is said:

They simply had failed--all alike. And yet there was between them and the common failures of the world one abiding difference: these had greatly dared. As long as the meanest in that crowd drew breath and held to memory, so long might he remember the brave and terrible days of the Klondyke Rush, and that he had borne in it his heavy share. No share in any mine save that--the knowledge that he was not among the vast majority who sit dully to the end beside what things they were

born to--the earnings of other men, the savings of other women, afraid to go seeking after better lest they lose the good they have. They had failed, but it could never be said of a Klondyker that he had not tried. He might, in truth, look down upon the smug majority that smiles at unusual endeavour, unless success excuses, crowns it. No one there, after all, so poor but he had one possession treasured among kings. And he had risked it. What could a man do more?¹²⁶

Thinly veiled here is a bit of contempt--"look down upon the smug majority"--for those who, in the context of the passage, have not journeyed to the Klondike. But within the larger context of the novel, gold-seeking becomes a symbol for a journey of greater latitude. The greater meaning of gold-seeking becomes clear in an earlier exchange between the Boy and a Jesuit priest. It is significant enough, I believe, to quote in its entirety:

The Boy sat up suddenly, a little annoyed.

The priest kept on: "But you feel a great longing to make a breach in the high walls that shut you in. You wanted to fare away on some voyage of discovery. Wasn't that it?" He paused now in his turn, but the Boy looked straight before him, saying nothing. The priest leaned forward with a deeper gravity.

"It will be a fortunate expedition, this, my son, if thou discover thyself--and in time!" Still the Boy said nothing. The other resumed more lightly: "In America we combine our travels with business. But it is no new idea in the world that a young man should have his Wanderjahr before he finds what he wants, or even finds acquiescence. It did not need Wilhelm Meister to set the feet of youth on that trail; it did not need the Crusades. It's as old as the idea of a Golden Fleece or a Promised Land. It was the first man's first inkling of heaven."

The Boy pricked his ears. Wasn't this heresy?

"The old idea of the strenuous, to leave home and comfort and security, and go out to reach for wisdom, or holiness, or happiness--whether it is gold or the San Grael, the instinct of Search is deep planted in the race. It is this that the handful of men who live in what they call 'the world'--it is this they forget. Every hour in the greater world outside, someone, somewhere, is starting out upon this journey. He may go

only as far as Germany to study philosophy, or to the nearest mountain-top, and find there the thing he seeks; or he may go to the ends of the earth, and still not find it. He may travel in a Hindu gown or a Mongolian tunic, or he comes, like Father Breachet, out of his vineyards in 'the pleasant land of France,' or, like you, out of a country where all problems are to be solved by machinery. But my point is, they come! When all the other armies of the world are disbanded, that army, my son, will be still upon the march."

They were silent awhile, and still the young face gave no sign.

"To many," the Travelling Priest went on, "the impulse is a blind one or a shy one, shrinking from calling itself by the old names. But none the less this instinct for the Quest is still the gallant way of youth, confronted by a sense of the homelessness they cannot think will last."¹²⁷

Perhaps we have come to the point where some generalizations might be made about the Alaskan myth which emerges from the fiction thus far considered and where, at the same time, a comparison might be made of Alaskan frontier fiction with frontier literature Outside.

The Alaskan frontier myth

Explicitly referring to Jack London and Rex Beach, Ernest Gruening says in The State of Alaska: "They wrote a new chapter, a postscript, to the great American romance of 'the west.'"¹²⁸ Not being a literary historian, Gruening does not elaborate upon this notion; but if there is truth in what he says, then it is worthwhile to consider just how Beach, London, and Robins fit into the tradition of American frontier literature that begins with Cooper and evolves into the dime novel and the modern horse-opera.

We recall that the most distinctive as well as significant characteristic of Cooper's interpretation of the

frontier was his genuine ambivalence toward the values of civilization and the values of the primitive forest. Highly responsive to the notions of communion with nature, he portrayed Leatherstocking as possessing natural, intuitive virtue as the result of reposing on nature's bosom; not endorsing Leatherstocking's enmity toward civilization, Cooper could still respond to the notion of anarchic freedom in the forest by making Leatherstocking an agent of progress. On the other hand, Cooper was also and even more strongly committed to the notion of civilization, which he narrowly equated with the upper-class social code: " . . . the sanctity of property, the desirability of material accumulation, the inevitability of progress, the stratification of society, the need for moral uplift, and the rule of the wisest (that is, the aristoi)."¹²⁹

By the time frontier literature reached the end of the nineteenth century, Cooper's vision had been greatly modified. As the frontiersman became the technical as well as dramatic hero of the romance, the values of the wilderness were asserted over the values of civilization. Moreover, the values of the wilderness were much simplified: the notion of communion with nature was dropped and the Wild West became a symbol of anarchic freedom. With anarchic freedom becoming the primary theme of frontier literature, adventure became an end in itself and the result of attempting to provide variation and novelty for such a limited theme is merely more and more sensationalism. The dramatic

tension generated between the competing values of the civilized and the primitive is lost by the neutralization of the civilized pole; furthermore, appealing as emphasis on physical exploits may be to certain readers, such an interpretation of the frontier lacks social significance.

Unlike the bastard children of the dime novel generations, the best Klondike-period writers may be considered as Cooper's true descendants. The Klondike stories of London, Beach, and Robins are, like the dime novels, filled with adventure, rugged and colorful adventure, but, as had been the case with Cooper, adventure is once again used to dramatize an ambivalent attitude toward the conflict between civilization and savagery--and the ambivalence is more truly ironic; that is, the tension between the two poles is more highly charged and the attractions from both ends more nearly equal.

The way in which these writers, London especially, manage to build up these opposite charges is worth looking at, for it shows a significant contribution which Alaskan literature makes to the literary interpretation of the American frontier. The illustration of this point might be clearer if a comparison of frontier visions is first limited to Cooper and London, respectively the foremost interpreters of the American and the Alaskan frontiers.

Cooper looked at America and saw essentially three stages of nature and three stages of human life. Inside the frontier line, nature was cultivated, brought under

man's hand and made to do his will; on the frontier line, nature was in the process of being brought into a state of cultivation; on the western side of the frontier line, nature was still untouched. In all cases, nature was essentially benevolent, but most obviously benevolent in the wilderness because least changed by man; one could more easily repose on nature's bosom beside a bubbling brook in a grassy vale than beside an irrigation ditch in a well-weeded cornfield.

Human life inside the frontier line was civilized, that is, ordered by social codes, harmonious, and genteel, but perhaps a little monotonous. Life on the frontier line was only roughly ordered at best, rather unharmonious, not at all genteel, and definitely a monotonous drudge. Life on the other side of the frontier line was definitely uncivilized, that is, not at all ordered by social codes and therefore potentially dangerous--the danger not arising from hostile nature but from hostile, unrefined human beings, that is, Indians and occasionally a renegade white man--but, nonetheless, exciting, colorful, and conducive to communion with God through nature.

Moving from this view into literary interpretation, Cooper ignored the middle stages of nature and human life--the squatter and his homestead--and concentrated on the competing values or attractions of the Wild West and the cultivated East. The conflict between civilization and savagery, as Cooper dramatizes it, is only a social conflict. Man

does not encounter a hostile nature in the untamed wilderness; in fact, in the wilderness he finds closer communion with nature. What he encounters in the primitive West that conflicts with what he finds in the East are untamed, uncivilized human beings who hold the appeal of freedom and individualism and action, but who ultimately must bow before progress and the spread of upper-class society.

Even though Cooper's attitude toward this conflict is ambivalent, the confrontation between civilization, as embodied in genteel heroes and heroines, and the wilderness, as embodied in backwoodsmen and Indians, is static. Cooper does experiment with different types of technical heroes, thus altering the social nature of the conflict between civilization and the wilderness, but his heroes are never changed by their experience in the wilderness. They may, as London might express it, "make the exchange of such things as a dainty menu for rough fare, of the stiff leather shoe for the soft, shapeless moccasin, of the feather bed for a couch in the snow . . . ," but this "after all is a very easy matter."¹³⁰ Such changes provide the color of adventure, but not the significance. These are, to use London's words again, only "material habits."

To put it another way, Cooper's vision of the frontier is limited to place--to use Turner's phrase, "the meeting point between savagery and civilization." Cooper does not, on the other hand, dramatize the frontier as process except, as previously noted, to describe changes in material

habits. The values of his characters are not substantially changed by their journeys into the wilderness; the frontier has no shaping effect on Cooper's characters.

The first difference which may be noted between Cooper's and London's visions of the frontier is that London sees two natures: the civilized Southland, which is warm, soft, and lush, and where there is little struggle to live; and the primitive, frontier Northland, which is cold, still, impersonal, unknown and opposed to life--not just human life but all life, although especially human life:

It is not the way of the Wild to like movement. Life is an offence to it, for life is movement; and the Wild aims always to destroy movement. It freezes the water to prevent it running to the sea; it drives the sap out of the trees till they are frozen to their mighty hearts; and most ferociously and terribly of all does the Wild harry and crush into submission man--man, who is the most restless of life, ever in revolt against the dictum that all movement must in the end come to the cessation of movement.¹³¹

Thus, unlike Cooper, the first conflict which London sees in the wilderness is a cosmic conflict: life struggling to live despite a hostile nature. The primary danger to all life on the frontier is not uncivilized men, white or red, but a hostile natural environment.

It is interesting to speculate about what London's view of nature on the frontier or in the wilderness might have been if he had been a '49er rather than a Klondiker. In the first chapter, it was noted how the view of nature's benevolence changes as the frontier moves farther to the west and into the nineteenth century. The mountain man no

longer reposes; he struggles against wolves, prairie fires, and blizzards. Although the California gold-seeker did endure hardship on his way to the West, once he reached his goal, he encountered conditions so much milder from the environment which London found in the North. One implication of this is that London would not have been able to so effectively symbolize his view of cosmic conflict had he been required to use nature as he would have found it in California; another possibility is that, depending on the role which his Klondike experience played in molding his vision, his view of cosmic conflict would not have been so important to his total vision of the frontier.

But, speculation aside, the fact is that London's view of life begins with two possibilities: the civilized Southland where there is relatively little struggle to live, and the primitive Northland where to live is to struggle against hostile nature. A second fact is that London's attitude toward these two possibilities is ambivalent: Brown Wolf decides to return to the frontier, but only after a wrenching decision; Jack Westondale is on his way Outside, but the Malemute Kid and others, including the hero in The Call of the Wild, will remain in the North; "So much of the game will be gain, / Though the gold of the dice has been lost." Cosmic conflict may have its attractions, but there is also appeal in a life without such conflict.

Another important difference between Cooper and London follows from London's emphasis on conflict. As man

leaves the benevolent nature of the Southland and moves to the frontier, the relationship between man and nature becomes one of struggle. This is most obvious in those stories depicting the rigors of the trail and the strain of cabin life during the winter. Because man must struggle harder and in a different manner in order to live in the wilderness, he is forced to undergo certain changes. At the beginning of "In a Far Country," London says:

When a man journeys into a far country, he must be prepared to forget many of the things he has learned, and to acquire such customs as are inherent with existence in the new land; he must abandon the old ideals and the old gods, and oftentimes he must reverse the very codes by which his conduct has hitherto been shaped.

Thus, in significant contrast with Cooper and other frontier writers, London emphasizes process as an essential characteristic of the frontier. As man confronts new and different conditions on the frontier, he must change not only his material habits but also, and more importantly, "his mind's attitude toward all things, and especially toward his fellow man."

The changes which London suggests must be made in a man's attitudes point to a third important difference between the visions of Cooper and London. These changes are specified in "In a Far Country":

For the courtesies of ordinary life, he must substitute unselfishness, forbearance, and tolerance. Thus, and only thus, he can gain that pearl of great price--true comradeship.

Or, to put this thought in terms which have already been used, man must learn to live by the code of brotherhood.

This is not merely a mental or emotional luxury: as we have observed in such stories as "To Build a Fire" and "In a Far Country," man's very survival may depend upon true comradeship, upon practicing the code of the trail; as we see in a story like "Love of Life," man may survive without the help of a trail-mate, but only up to a certain point: the man ultimately would have perished had he not been rescued by the crew of the Bedford.

True companionship, the code of brotherhood, or the code of the trail or cabin--all meaning the same thing and all necessary for survival on the frontier--turn out to embody the highest qualities which London sees in civilization. We recall that in the letter to George P. Brett in which London spoke of his intention in writing White Fang, civilization denotes "'domesticity, faithfulness, love, morality, and all the amenities and virtues.'" Passages from "In a Far Country" suggest that for London civilization also denoted "the courtesies of ordinary life" and "the bondage of commerce," "the ceaseless grind." Living among "the comforts of an elder civilization," that is, the Southland, man becomes soft and weak.

It becomes apparent that not only is London's attitude toward civilization, unlike Cooper's, ambivalent to begin with, because London sees both desirable and undesirable qualities; but, furthermore, the highest qualities which London sees in civilization differ from those social postulates which Cooper finally valued above all else. In

Cooper's novels, civilized man goes into the wilderness and returns to cultivated society essentially unchanged. He has adventures in the forest but no visions. In London's stories, as man confronts the Northland, the comforts and courtesies of civilization are stripped away and the finest qualities of the Southland become refined and fused into a code of the Northland, which differs greatly from Cooper's values. The sanctity of property is replaced by a sense of honesty which, for example, justifies Jack Westondale's "theft" of \$40,000. The desirability of material accumulation becomes the ceaseless grind and bondage of commerce. The inevitability of progress is replaced with a sense of man's frailty and relentless struggle in order to live. The evaluation of a man no longer rests on his position in a stratified society but on his fidelity to the code of brotherhood. The need for moral uplift is replaced by the inevitable testing of a man's moral fiber, a test through which he may be purified and strengthened or by which he may meet his doom.

Since severe toil, struggle, and hardship "lays a man naked to the very roots of his soul," as London says in "In a Far Country," the process of life on the frontier takes on spiritual overtones. The pioneering experience moves beyond mere adventure and becomes a quest for self-knowledge and for metaphysical meaning. London expresses this thought while describing a man who, in "To Build a Fire," became too late wise:

He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head.

In concluding a comparison of Cooper's and London's visions of the frontier, it seems accurate to say that the Alaskan frontier myth makes several contributions to the literary interpretation of the American frontier. To the older notion of the conflict between civilization and savagery there is added the cosmic conflict between life and the natural forces which would and eventually do bring an end to life; furthermore, the conflict between civilization and savagery becomes more complex because of the different values which are assigned to the two sides of this conflict. The most important change, however, is probably the predominance of the notion of the frontier as process. This is seen in the changes which take place in social and individual values, and most significantly in the portrayal of pioneering as a quest for knowledge and meaning. With the archetypal overtones attached to the idea of a quest, the Alaskan wilderness experience moves into the realm of universal human experience, and Alaskan frontier literature moves beyond the limitations of regional local color and

adventure into the literary themes which have engaged Western man from the Greeks down to Hemingway and Ken Kesey: the gold-seeker, the hero of the great American dream of material success, becomes a truth-seeker, who affirms the brotherhood of man as he engages in the struggle of life.

This, I would say, is frontier literature at its best and also, unfortunately, in its rarest form. Of all the other Klondike-period writers, probably Elizabeth Robins in The Magnetic North comes closest to London with the complexity of her interpretation of the frontier and the assertion of the universality of the pioneering experience. Still, it seems worthwhile to briefly examine a few other of Rex Beach's works, which are interesting for their preoccupation with social values and for their resemblance, in terms of their structure of values, to Cooper's static view of the conflict between civilization and the wilderness.

Alaskan frontier literature and Cooper's formulas

A common feature in most of the Alaskan frontier tales which Rex Beach wrote during this time is an ambiguity which arises from Beach's apparently divided commitment to the notion of the frontier as a process in which people undergo a desirable change in character and attitude, and at the same time a commitment to social values little different from those which commanded Cooper's loyalty. This ambiguity, which for the most part is not controlled, creates artistic faults in Beach's fiction, but these faults are interesting for illustrating one possible result of

attempting to accommodate the notion of the frontier as process within the limits of the sentimental romance.

The most concrete way in which the process of the frontier becomes apparent is in the depiction of changes which take place in a character's values and attitudes as he confronts new conditions on the frontier. Beach provides a good example of this process taking place in "When the Mail Came In." The hero, Montague Prosseris, is characterized as being rather exceptional in the Northland: " . . . he was too clean. He wore his virtue like a bathrobe, flapping it in our faces. . . . It wasn't so much these physical refinements that riled us as the rarefied atmosphere of his general mental and moral attitudes." He doesn't cuss and he refuses to associate with the dance-hall girls, catechizing that "if we encourage these girls in the lives they lead, we're just as bad as they are."

As winter sets in, one of the girls, Ollie Marceau, breaks through some ice and is rescued by Monty's partners, who take her to their cabin to dry out and to give her a "hootch." Monty returns and finds "the sight shocking to his Plymouth Rock proprieties": "'Too bad,' he said, coldly, 'If I can be of any assistance you'll find me down at the shaft-house.'"

Later one of his friends tries to explain that what he had seen at the cabin was merely innocent hospitality. Monty makes a remark about mixing with "that kind of people socially," and then the friend takes him to task:

"Trouble with you," said I, "you've got a juvenile standard--things are all good or all bad in your eyes--and you can't like a person unless the one overbalances the other. When you are older you'll find that people are like gold-mines, with a thin streak of pay on bed-rock and lots of hard digging above."

Soon thereafter the mail comes in and Monty discovers that his mother is ill. Ollie comforts him and they see each other several times. Then another miner makes slurring remarks about Ollie; and after beating the man, Monty is surprised to reflect that the man had spoken only the truth and yet he had felt compelled to defend her honor.

The mail comes in again and Monty decides to go home after hearing that his mother is still hanging onto life, but before leaving he asks Ollie to marry and go with him. Now her sense of social propriety and morality arises and she refuses, fearing that his mother might find out about her past. He recognizes this as a sufficient obstacle and leaves alone, but after having undergone even more change, he returns on the next up-river boat and marries Ollie. Allegiance to the social codes about morality, propriety, the stratification of society, and obedience to one's parents disappears as a result of Monty's frontier experience.

In three of the novels which Beach wrote during this period, the rejection of prevalent social postulates is not so clear-cut. In fact, the pattern of romantic match-making in The Spoilers clearly affirms the stratification of society and conventional morality despite assertions to the contrary. Early in the novel, the narrator,

presumably Beach, says:

The frontier is capable of no finer compliment than this utter disregard of one's folded pages. It betokens that highest faith in one's fellowman, the belief that he should be measured by his present deeds, not by his past. It says, translated: "This is God's free country where a man is a man, nothing more. Our land is new and pure, our faces are to the front. If you have been square, so much the better; if not, leave behind the taints of artificial things and start again on the level--that's all."¹³²

But this isn't all. Cherry, a beautiful, spirited woman, has her eye the hero but she does not get him because she is a dance-hall girl. However, since she does have a good heart, she is awarded romantic fulfillment with the Bronco Kid, a good sort but a faro-dealer and thus a member of Cherry's social class. The hero, who loves the North even though he is an educated, well-connected, Eastern man, claims the niece of a judge who has just come out to Nome; but before this romance can be blessed with matrimony, both the hero and heroine have to undergo slight changes.

Despite his genteel upbringing, Roy Glenister has already been transformed by the wilderness. This change is seen in his attitude toward the newly-arrived Judge Stillman, whose function is to bring "the first court and to introduce Justice into this land of the wild."¹³³ Speaking with the Judge's niece, Helen, who sees herself as a herald of the coming of the law, Glenister says:

"The law! Bah! Red tape, a dead language, and a horde of shysters! I'm afraid of law in this land; we're too new and too far away from things. It puts too much power in too few hands. Heretofore we men up here have had recourse to our courage and our Colts, but we'll have to unbuckle them both when the law comes. I like the court that hasn't any appeal." He laid hand upon his hip.¹³⁴

He elaborates even more:

"Frankly, I like the old way best. I love the license of it. I love to wrestle with nature; to snatch, and guard, and fight for what I have. I've been beyond the law for years and I want to stay there, where life is just what it was intended to be--a survival of the fittest."¹³⁵

With such an attitude, Glenister stands in opposition to one of society's most precious postulates, the notion of law and social order, and this attitude must be changed if civilization is going to prevail. On the other hand, Helen is a little too straight, a little too tame; therefore, she also must change but still not give up her gentility.

Plot details lend themselves very nicely to a resolution of character transformation. Unknown to Helen, the judge is conspiring with another crooked official to rob the richest gold mines, including one that Glenister holds an interest in. The conspiracy, which is based on fact, is simple: a lawyer clouds the title to a claim, after which it is jumped. The quarrel then comes before the judge who places the mine in receivership until the dispute is settled; the receiver operates and steals gold from the mine in the meantime. Since the law is corrupt, Glenister can operate outside the law without too seriously outraging the social code and still verbally acknowledge the necessity of law and order. Helen, likewise, can violate the letter of the law, thus demonstrating her development toward the frontier value on individual freedom, and still not break the spirit of the law. It is a compromise similar

to that which Cooper makes in The Pioneers: Judge Temple fines Leatherstocking for a violation of the game laws, but the Judge also pays the fine.

Finally, uncorrupted law prevails, but Helen is certain that she has been changed in the struggle:

As she hurried away, Helen realized with a shock the change that the past few months had wrought in her. In truth, it was as Glenister had said, his Northland worked strangely with its denizens. What of that shrinking girl who had stepped out of the sheltered life, strong only in her untried honesty, to become a hunted, harried thing, juggling with honor and reputation, in her heart a half-formed fear that she might kill a man this night to gain her end? The elements were moulding her with irresistable hands. Roy's contact with the primitive had not roughened him more quickly than had hers.¹³⁶

Glenister likewise asserts that he has been changed again:

"I mean that I was a savage till I met Helen Chester and she made a man of me. It took sixty days, but I think she did a good job. I love the wild things just as much as ever, but I've learned that there are duties that a fellow owes to himself, and to other people, if he'll only stop and think them out. I've found out, too, that the right thing is usually the hardest to do."¹³⁷

But these characters claim more than Beach demonstrates. Helen never violates any moral law, and Glenister never was as wild in deed as he thought himself to be. Both of them start and end as genteel characters. Thus, despite Beach's apparent intent, the conflict in this novel is not generated by the different values of civilization and the frontier but by the problems of a lapse in law and order; and the resolution is not found by changes in character but by cleaning up the legal corruption.

In Beach's next novel, The Barrier, there is no

corrupt legal machinery behind which the conflict between genteel and frontier values may become obscured. What Beach clearly intends to dramatize is the process by which the upper-class postulate of the stratification of society is replaced with a criterion of human worth based only on one's own character.

The hero, Lt. Burrell, is a thoroughly genteel hero, as he reveals when speaking about his background:

He told her of his father, the crotchety old soldier, whose absurd sense of duty and whose elaborate Southern courtesy had become a byword in the South. He told her household tales that were prized like pieces of the Burrell plate, beautiful heirlooms of sentiment that mark the honor of high-blooded houses; following which there was much to recount of the Meades, from the admiral who fought as a boy in the Bay of Tripoli down to the cousin who was at Annapolis. . . .

Without realizing it, the young man drifted further than he had intended, and further than he had ever allowed himself to go before, for in him was a clean and honest pride of birth, like his mother's glory in her forebearers, the expression of which he had learned to repress, inasmuch as it was a Dixie-land conceit and had been misunderstood when he went North to the Academy. In some this would have seemed bigoted and feminine, this immoderate admiration for his own blood, this exaggerated appreciation of his family honor, but in this Southern youth it was merely the unconscious commendation of an upright code.¹³⁸

Assigned to the new Yukon River post at Flambeau, the Lieutenant meets a girl who seems to be his match:

There was a sparkle, a fineness, a gentleness about her that seemed to make the few women he had known well dull and commonplace, and even his sister, whom till now he had held as the perfection of all things feminine, suffered by comparison with this maiden of the frontier.¹³⁹

But a barrier to the culmination of this romance lies in the fact that Necia apparently is a half-breed, a fact which was not initially made known to Burrell nor apparent

in her behaviour. The code by which the Lieutenant lives forbids such a match: though she be of sterling character, her blood is not pure. To marry her, the novel makes clear, would mean a breach of all ties with his family and an end to his promising military career.

Since Burrell is so strongly attracted to Necia, however, he thinks of an alternative, which would be acceptable to his upright code:

He was a strong man, and in his veins ran the blood of wayward forebears who were wont to possess that which they conquered in the lists of love, mingled with which was the blood of spirited Southern women who had on occasion loved not wisely, according to Kentucky rumor, but only too well.¹⁴⁰

Necia's mixed blood would prevent Burrell from marrying her but not from making love to her. On the evening when he is about to fulfill his desires, however, his conscience prevents him from taking advantage: "Her love had placed a barrier between them greater and more insurmountable than her blood."¹⁴¹

The frontier view on this subject becomes clear as Necia and one of Burrell's corporals discuss the problem of mixed marriages:

"I never thought of myself as an Indian," said Necia, dully. "In this country it's a person's heart that counts."

"That's how it ought to be," said the Corporal, heartily, "and I'm mighty sorry if I've hurt you, little girl. I'm a rough old rooster, and I never thought but what you understood all this. Up here folks look at it right, but outside it's mighty different; even yet you don't half understand."

"I'm glad I'm what I am!" cried the girl. "There's nothing in my blood to be ashamed of, and I'm white in here!" She struck her bosom fiercely. "If a man loves me he'll take me no matter what it means to him."¹⁴²

Burrell's switch of allegiance from the upper-class to the frontier code is difficult, but he finally decides to damn the consequences and marry Necia. She, however, realizing the social consequences for Burrell, refuses at first, but finally his insistence prevails.

Now comes the paradox. The conventions of the sentimental novel demand that virtue be rewarded, but what reward is suitable for a hero who has deserted the upper-class by adopting the frontier ethic? Only one: Necia turns out to be a full-blooded white; her Indian mother is only a step-mother. Burrell had been willing to desert his civilized code and thus is a good frontiersman; but he had not by his actions violated that code, therefore he can return to civilization and family blessings with a wife who possesses all the grace of the drawing room and all the freshness of the wilderness cabin. Imitating exactly one of Cooper's formulas, Beach solves the problem of conflicting values by begging the question. More accurately, Beach uses a formula which Cooper had used in his earlier treatment of the frontier, but the formula was not a new one: there is, for example, the fairy tale of the knight who marries the hag who then turns into the beautiful princess--virtue rewarded by miraculous transformation is a very old theme.

In The Silver Horde, Beach's next novel, this issue comes up again, and there the solution in the main plot does move closer to an unambiguous affirmation of the frontier outlook although a development in a subplot unintentionally qualifies the resolution. The hero, Boyd Emerson,

ultimately must chose between Mildred Wayland, a very rich, spoiled, insensitive girl who would not marry him until he had proven his financial acumen, and Cherry Malotte, a former dance-hall girl who risks her own wealth in order to help Emerson and, so Emerson thinks, has given her body to a financier, a Mr. Hilliard, in order to obtain backing for his enterprise, a salmon cannery which will yield about \$200,000 per year.

At one point, Emerson demonstrates his loyalty to the civilized notion of morality by condemning Cherry's dance-hall past and the price she has supposedly paid for Hilliard's backing, but Cherry refuses to be judged by the double standard:

"You knew I had followed the mining camps, you knew I had lived by my wits. You must have known what people thought of me. I cast my lot in with the people of this country, and I had to match my wits with those of every man I met. Sometimes I won, sometimes I did not. You know the North."

"I didn't know," he said slowly. "I never thought-- I wouldn't allow myself to think--"

"Why not? It is nothing to you. You have lived, and so have I. I made mistakes--what girl doesn't that has to fight her way alone? But my past is my own; it concerns nobody but me." She saw the change in his face, and her reckless spirit rose. "Oh, I've shocked you! You think all women should be like Miss Wayland. Have you ever stopped to think that even you are not the same man you were when you came fresh from college? You know the world now; you have tasted its wickedness. Would you change your knowledge for your earlier innocence? You know you would not, and you have no right to judge me by a separate code. What difference does it make who I am or what I have done? I didn't ask your record when I gave you the chance to win Miss Wayland, and neither you nor she have any right to challenge mine."¹⁴³

Her frontier attitude is also backed up by one of Emerson's

friends:

"For my part, I can't stand for an ingenue. If ever I get married, Cherry's the sort for me. I'm out of the kindergarten myself, and I'd hate to spend my life cutting paper figures for my wife. No, sir! If I ever seize a frill, I want her to know as much as me; then she won't tear away with the first dark-eyed diamond broker that stops in front of my place to crank up his whizz-buggy. You never heard of a wise woman breaking up her own home, did you? It's the pink-faced dolls from the seminary that fall for Bertie the Beautiful Cloak Model."¹⁴⁴

Finally Emerson does adopt the new ethic--the frontier has transferred his outlook--but having made his proposal to Cherry, he discovers that the one thing which "he had found most difficult to accept . . . her conduct with Hilliard" has been completely innocent. But this is only a partial begging of the question, for her dance-hall background is an emphasized fact.

A more complete qualification of this resolution, however, occurs in a subplot. In his efforts to establish an independent cannery, Emerson has to fight a salmon trust which is owned by Mildred's father and administered by a villain, Willis Marsh. Mr. Wayland has vowed to ruin Emerson and is in a financial position to do so, but he changes his mind when it is discovered that Marsh has an illegitimate half-breed son. Unlike Cherry, however, Marsh is not permitted to forget the past and to look only to the future; instead, Emerson is saved from financial ruin by Marsh's past moral failure.

On two other issues in this novel the question is also begged. Since Mildred is a very rich girl and loses

the hero to a supposedly poor girl, the implication is that material accumulation counts for little in human happiness; Cherry makes this point in the next to the last paragraph of the tale:

"What a wonderful Providence guides us, after all," she said. "That poor girl had everything in the world, and I was so poor--so poor--until this hour. God grant that she may some day be as rich as I!"¹⁴⁵

This implication falls to pieces, however, when we recall that Emerson and Cherry will have an annual income of \$200,000 from their cannery.

The last issue in this novel involves business ethics. The salmon trust, along with the monopolies in general, is depicted as being willing to use any means to accomplish its end of financial gain, and such a lack of scruples is condemned. On the other hand, Emerson's strong desire to succeed is presented as admirable even though he, too, is willing to use any method to become rich: his ethics are identical to those of Wayland and Marsh; only his power is less. At one point Emerson faces financial ruin and in his desperation is about to perform evil violence; however, fate steps in--the salmon begin to run at the very last moment--and Emerson, like the hero of The Spoilers, is permitted to espouse a doctrine which, if enacted, would violate conventional values. But despite the side-stepping of real issues, The Silver Horde is a significant novel of this period, for it dramatizes a very important economic and political issue: the conflict between the Guggenheims and

the sourdoughs or state-builders.

Having considered some of the Klondike-period literature which is most often credited with establishing the Alaskan myth and most frequently criticized for distorting the realities of that period, a final generalization might be made about the relationship between historical reality and the literary visions of these important Alaskan frontier writers. Many instances of literary fidelity to literal fact have already been observed, but such verisimilitude is not always the case, even with Robins, London, and Beach.

As sympathetic a critic as Fred Lewis Pattee remarks that London's "characters are not actual men whom he has himself seen and known: they are demigods, the unsung heroes of a heroic age now put into epic setting."¹⁴⁶ Certainly not all of London's protagonists are demigods or heroic, but some of them are, like Axel Gunderson in "An Odyssey of the North":

As has been noted, in the making of Axel Gunderson the gods had remembered their old-time cunning and cast him after the manner of men who were born when the world was young. Full seven feet he towered in his picturesque costume which marked a king of Eldorado. His chest, neck, and limbs were those of a giant. To bear his three hundred pounds of bone and muscle, his snowshoes were greater by a generous yard than those of other men. Rough-hewn, with rugged brow and massive jaw and unflinching eyes of palest blue, his face told the tale of one who knew but the law of might.

Likewise, many of Beach's heroes, like Glenister in The Spoilers, are cast in the mold of the conventional hero of the romance:

She noted him more carefully; noted his heavy shoulders and ease of bearing, an ease and looseness begotten of perfect muscular control. Strength was equally suggested in his face, she thought, for he carried a markedly young countenance, with thrusting chin, aggressive thatching brows, and mobile mouth that whispered all the changes from strength to abandon. Prominent was a look of reckless energy. She considered him handsome in a heavy, virile, perhaps too purely physical fashion.¹⁴⁷

But acknowledging the accuracy of such statements about some Alaskan literary heroes does not mean acceptance of the implied standard which makes verisimilitude necessary to significant literature. Application of such a standard would at once place The Iliad and Murder in the Cathedral on the back shelves of Western literature. A sounder point of view seems to be that taken by James I. McClintock: in some cases, the literary expression of London's visions "demands limited protagonists and a mythopoeic prose."¹⁴⁸

Beach's literary intention very likely did not require any stylized heroes, but the same defence can be made for him as has been made for Cooper. Twain's factual observations about Cooper's novels are accurate, but the judgment which Twain reaches assumes only one standard of significance. On the other hand, if, from the point of view of literary history, that literature is significant which seriously attempts to dramatize important social issues, that attempts to adapt older modes to new material is significant, then Beach deserves a place on the shelf beside Cooper. And the best Alaskan literature of this period should stand beside the best of American frontier literature.

Notes

¹Pierre Berton, Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush (Toronto, 1963), pp. 38-48. Credit for the discovery has been disputed, with some favoring Robert Henderson's claim.

²Ibid., p. 90.

³Actually, a Canadian government surveyor, William Ogilvie, had sent word of the discovery out to his government, but the news went unnoticed in Ottawa. There were also reports made in other places, but they likewise received little or no attention. (Ibid., pp. 73-74, 105).

⁴Ibid., pp. 97, 99.

⁵Ibid., p. 101.

⁶Ibid., pp. 101-102.

⁷Ibid., p. 104.

⁸Ibid., pp. 104-105.

⁹Ibid., p. 110.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 110, 111.

¹¹Ibid., p. 113.

¹²Quoted in ibid., p. 122.

¹³Berton, p. 121.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 123.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 203, 205.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 127. Jeannette Paddock Nichols records a lower figure. "The westward and northward movement of population started by the Klondike gold discovery approximated 60,000; about 50,000 reached Alaska . . .," she writes in Alaska: A History of . . . (Cleveland, 1924), p. 142.

¹⁷Berton, p. 68.

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 78-79.

¹⁹Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough (Norman, Okla., 1945), p. 235.

²⁰Berton, p. 301.

²¹Tompkins, p. 252.

²²Clarence C. Hulley, Alaska 1741-1953 (Portland, 1953), pp. 282-283.

²³Ernest Gruening, The State of Alaska (New York 1968), p. 120.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 120-121.

²⁵Hulley, p. 280.

- ²⁶Ibid., p. 282.
- ²⁷Tompkins, pp. 255-256.
- ²⁸Ibid., p. 11.
- ²⁹Gruening, p. 125.
- ³⁰Tompkins, pp. 254-255; C. L. Andrews, The Story of Alaska (Caldwell, Ida., 1944), p. 214.
- ³¹Gruening, pp. 117, 127.
- ³²Ibid., p. 127.
- ³³Ibid., pp. 127-128.
- ³⁴Andrews, p. 213.
- ³⁵Gruening, p. 219.
- ³⁶Andrews, pp. 213-214.
- ³⁷Gruening, p. 129.
- ³⁸Ibid., p. 209.
- ³⁹Ibid., p. 128.
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²Quoted and summarized in ibid., p. 132.
- ⁴³Quoted in Gruening, p. 126.
- ⁴⁴Andrews, p. 214.
- ⁴⁵Gruening, p. 130.
- ⁴⁶Ibid.
- ⁴⁷Ben Adams, Alaska: The Big Land (New York, 1959), p. 109.
- ⁴⁸Gruening, p. 143.
- ⁴⁹Tompkins, p. viii.
- ⁵⁰Gruening, pp. 143-145.
- ⁵¹Ibid., pp. 150-151.
- ⁵²Quoted in ibid., p. 141.
- ⁵³Gruening, pp. 75, 121, 141.
- ⁵⁴John William Arctander, The Lady in Blue: A Sitka Romance (Seattle, 1911), p. 58.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 59.
- ⁵⁶Gertrude Atherton, Rezanov (New York, 1906), p. 254.
- ⁵⁷William Marion Reedy, "Introduction" to Atherton's Rezanov, p. vii.

- ⁵⁸Adams, pp. 14-15.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., pp. 6, 14-15.
- ⁶⁰Henry W. Clark, History of Alaska (New York, 1930), p. 13.
- ⁶¹Hulley, p. 366.
- ⁶²Tompkins, pp. vii-viii.
- ⁶³A copy of this poem was given to me by its author, a widely published poet and formerly a colleague of mine at the University of Alaska until his death in 1971.
- ⁶⁴This exchange appeared in The Klondike Nugget, which began publishing in Dawson on June 16, 1898, and is reprinted in Lowell Thomas, Jr., ed., The Trail of Ninety-Eight (New York, 1962), pp. 97-99.
- ⁶⁵Berton, p. 434.
- ⁶⁶Jeannette Paddock Nichols, "Advertising and the Klondike," Washington Historical Quarterly, XIII (January, 1922), 20-26, reprinted in Morgan B. Sherwood, ed., Alaska and Its History (Seattle, 1967), p. 346.
- ⁶⁷Berton, p. 434.
- ⁶⁸Nichol's essay provides more details as well as Berton, pp. 116-117, 119, 124-126, 224-225, 231-244. For similar distortion and use of propaganda during the California gold rush, see Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York, 1956), pp. 222-223, 261-262.
- ⁶⁹Berton, p. 118.
- ⁷⁰Jack London, "Love of Life," in Love of Life and Other Stories (New York, 1917).
- ⁷¹Rex Beach, "The Stampede," in The Crimson Gardenia and Other Tales of Adventure (New York, 1916).
- ⁷²Jack London, "The One Thousand Dozen," in The Faith of Men (New York, 1909).
- ⁷³Jack London, "An Odyssey of the North," in The Son of the Wolf (Boston, 1900).
- ⁷⁴Jack London, "To Build a Fire," in Lost Face (New York, 1910).
- ⁷⁵Jack London, White Fang (New York, 1906), reprinted in Great Short Works of Jack London, ed. Earle Labor (New York, 1965), p. 99.
- ⁷⁶Elizabeth Robins, The Magnetic North (New York, 1904), pp. 127-128.
- ⁷⁷Rex Beach, The Silver Horde (New York, 1909), pp. 72, 78-79.

⁷⁸Rodman W. Paul, California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West (Cambridge, 1947), pp. 29-35; Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860 (New York, 1956), pp. 224-232.

⁷⁹Hamlin Garland, The Trail of the Goldseekers: A Record of Travel in Prose and Verse (New York, 1899), pp. 252-253.

⁸⁰Berton, p. 225.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 232-233.

⁸²Ibid., p. 215.

⁸³Ibid., p. 216.

⁸⁴Ibid., pp. 219-224.

⁸⁵Ibid., pp. 169, 263-267.

⁸⁶Garland, pp. 208, 210.

⁸⁷Berton, p. 224.

⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 166, 250.

⁸⁹Ibid., pp. 278-280.

⁹⁰Ibid., pp. 199-200.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 200.

⁹²Robins, p. 6.

⁹³Ibid., p. 241.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 355.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 383.

⁹⁶Rex Beach, "The Stampede."

⁹⁷Rex Beach, "The Weight of Obligation," in The Crimson Gardenia and Other Tales of Adventure (New York, 1916), p. 255.

⁹⁸Rex Beach, "The Brand," in The Crimson Gardenia and Other Tales of Adventure (New York, 1916), p. 354.

⁹⁹Jack London to George P. Brett in 1904, quoted by Earle Labor, ed., "Introduction," Great Short Stories of Jack London (New York, 1965), p. xiii.

¹⁰⁰Jack London, White Fang, p. 268.

¹⁰¹Jack London, "To the Man on the Trail," in The Son of the Wolf (Boston, 1900).

¹⁰²Jack London, "Too Much Gold," in The Faith of Men (New York, 1909).

¹⁰³Jack London, "Bâtard," in The Faith of Men (New York, 1904).

- 104 Robins, pp. 11, 34, 130.
- 105 Rex Beach, "When the Mail Comes In," in The Crimson Gardenia and Other Tales of Adventure (New York, 1916).
- 106 Beach, The Silver Horde, p. 11.
- 107 Rex Beach, The Spoilers (New York, 1905), p. 31.
- 108 Robins, pp. 130-131.
- 109 Jack London, "In a Far Country," in The Son of the Wolf (Boston, 1900).
- 110 James Wickersham, Old Yukon: Tales--Trails--and Trials (Washington, D.C., 1938), p. 53.
- 111 Berton, pp. 80-82.
- 112 Ibid., p. 421.
- 113 Ibid., p. 285.
- 114 Ibid., p. 271.
- 115 Ibid., pp. 213-214.
- 116 Wickersham, p. 68.
- 117 Berton, p. 208.
- 118 Fred Lewis Pattee, "The Prophet of the Last Frontier," in Side-Lights on American Literature (New York, 1922), p. 160.
- 119 Berton, pp. 57, 59, 79, 85, 420.
- 120 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
- 121 Robins, p. 156.
- 122 Ibid., p. 158.
- 123 Berton, pp. 129-130. See pp. 128-136 for other examples.
- 124 Robins, pp. 411-412.
- 125 London, "Brown Wolf."
- 126 Robins, pp. 414-415.
- 127 Ibid., pp. 230-231.
- 128 Gruening, p. 104.
- 129 Arthur K. Moore, The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman (Lexington, 1957), p. 160.
- 130 London, "In a Far Country."
- 131 London, White Fang, p. 99.
- 132 Beach, The Spoilers, p. 24.
- 133 Ibid., p. 48.

- 134 Ibid., p. 30.
135 Ibid., p. 31.
136 Ibid., p. 244.
137 Ibid., p. 257.
138 Beach, The Barrier (New York, 1908), pp. 86-87.
139 Ibid., pp. 59-60.
140 Ibid., p. 91.
141 Ibid.
142 Ibid., pp. 129-130.
143 Beach, The Silver Horde, p. 363.
144 Ibid., p. 367.
145 Ibid., p. 390.
146 Pattee, p. 122.
147 Beach, The Spoilers, p. 10.
148 James I. McClintock, "Jack London's Short Stories"
(Michigan State University, 1968), abstract.

CHAPTER IV
THE POST-KLONDIKE PERIOD (1913-PRESENT)

History

At the close of the Klondike period in Alaska's history, two conditions were clear. First, the frontier, which had been limited to gold mining in those areas of surface placer deposits, was already closed in most regions and fast closing in all regions of Alaska. Second, if Alaska were to grow rather than decline with the closing of the gold-mining frontier, then transition would be necessary. A transition to corporate methods was required for mining the deeper placer deposits, and other resources would also need to be developed: copper, coal, and lumber were immediate possibilities; and for these possibilities to become realities, improved transportation was vital, especially a railroad into the interior.

A third issue, which was not so clear, involved the manner in which the general development of Alaska's economic potential might take place. Clearly it was not going to be in the usual frontier pattern of small enterprise, nor, on the other hand, was it clearly evident that large corporations provided the answer. It was true that the Alaskan Syndicate, without government assistance, had successfully

built a railroad to tap the rich Kennecott copper deposits; but private enterprise, even on a large scale, had twice gone broke trying to put a railroad through from a year-round port to the interior of Alaska. Apparently the government would need to take an active role in providing the railroad which was so necessary to economic development inside Alaska, and certainly the government would need to lift its restrictions on utilization of the timber and coal resources. What Frederick Jackson Turner had said in 1910 of the pioneer in arid regions seemed also to be true of the pioneer in post-Klondike Alaska: he "must be both a capitalist and the protégé of the government."¹

During the first few years of this new period, it appeared that Congress might contribute to Alaska's growth. No new laws were passed to remove the restrictions on the timber resources, but a federal leasing program passed by the Sixty-third Congress (1913-1915) did remove a major obstacle which had made coal mining impossible, and active aid seemed forthcoming as well: a land-grant college was approved and the construction of a railroad to the interior was authorized.²

Given Alaska's needs, these pieces of legislation were very meager, though well-intentioned; moreover, they did not produce the effect which might have been expected. In 1924, Jeannette Paddock Nichols pointed out that even before the restrictions on the coal lands were lifted, "it had become evident that the market for Alaska coal could not

"for many years attain the importance expected of it, for the completion of the Panama Canal and the booming of California oil affected the demand adversely."³ Writing forty years later, Ernest Gruening makes a more pointed observation about the role which the federal government played in the development of Alaska's coal resources:

Had Alaska coal resources been available twenty years, or even a decade earlier, there is little doubt that a substantial coal industry would have been flourishing in Alaska, reflected in metalliferous mining and related activities and stimulating an entire economy. The episode demonstrated, as subsequent events would again, that in government the power to delay may be the power to destroy.⁴

Another way in which Congress delayed Alaska's economic development may be seen in the construction of the Alaska Railroad. Congress had authorized the construction of this railroad in 1914, but annual resistance to making the necessary appropriations dragged out its completion to the summer of 1923. Because the railroad was indispensable to the economy of interior Alaska, Congressional delay on the Alaska Railroad effectively put the brake on Alaska's development as a whole.⁵ That the federal government was committing both sins of commission and omission was emphasized by Alaska's Governor Thomas Riggs, Jr. in his second annual report in 1919:

"Unless the government pursues a more liberal policy in connection with the development of Alaska . . . , the territory can never reach that stage of productiveness for which there is every possibility and so become one of the great sources of revenue now so greatly needed in this period of national adjustment.

"We hold out our hands to Washington, not as supplicants for bounty but in petition to be allowed to

"develop as were the greatest western territories, now the great western states."⁶

Alaska's economic condition during the first decade of the post-Klondike period also suffered from the side-effects of World War I. Despite the spurt given to the copper and canned-salmon industries by the demands of the war, many people left Alaska for army enlistment and to follow the attractions of better wages in the States.⁷ The post-war economic boom Outside also adversely affected Alaska's growth, a fact which was noted in a U.S. Geological Survey report:

"During the post-war period Alaska suffered through the fact that in the States scales of wages and opportunities for the employment of capital seemed to offer more advantages and as a result there was more or less fluctuation in the mineral output."⁸

The economic slump of Alaska's industries reached a bottom point in the 1920's. Just how extreme this slump was may be indicated in the examples of Alaska's two most important industries, fishing and mining.

Mining in all forms reached a new peak in 1916, with copper accounting for nearly \$30,000,000 of the total of \$49,000,000, but by 1921, copper production had dropped to less than half its 1916 value. In 1916, gold production reached its highest level since the peak years of 1906 to 1909 with over \$17,000,000; but it also declined rapidly and by 1927, the value of placer gold had shrunk to less than \$3,000,000.⁹ The decline after 1916 in the value of mineral production was naturally reflected in a reduction of

the number of those engaged in this industry:

Mining in Alaska employed somewhat more than eight thousand men in the years 1911 to 1914, 9,110 in 1915, the high point being reached the next year, 1916, with a total, in all forms of productive mining, of 9,840. There was decline thereafter--to 7,990 in 1917, and then a sharp drop, to 6,010 in 1918, 4,710 in 1919, to 4,570 in 1920.¹⁰

The fact that the number of men dropped by over 50 per cent in the four years between 1916 and 1920 becomes even more revealing in its consequences when it is remembered that one in twelve of the local population--men, women and children, both white and native (the ratio for the actual work force would be much stronger, of course)--was dependent on mineral production for the livelihood of himself and his family.

As had been the case during the Klondike period, the value of Alaska's fisheries still exceeded that of mining. Because ownership in this industry was predominantly Outside and because only a sixth of those employed were Alaskan residents, the rise and decline in fishing did not affect Alaska's economy so directly as fluctuations in mining; still the values of successive salmon packs might be noted: in 1913, \$46,000,000; 1914, \$19,000,000; 1915, \$19,000,000; 1916, \$23,000,000; 1917, \$46,000,000; 1918, \$51,000,000.¹¹ By 1921, the value of the pack had sunk to barely half the figure of the peak year, 1918.¹²

The economic decay which was evident by 1920 was also reflected in Alaska's shrinkage in population.. Between 1910 and 1920, the population of the United States had

increased by 14.9 per cent; in Alaska the percentage of change was nearly identical, 14.7 per cent--but in the opposite direction! The 1920 census showed a drop to 55,000 from the 1910 figure of 64,000.¹³

Post-Klondike economic conditions not only produced a decrease in Alaska's population but also damaged the morale of those who remained. During the 1920's,

An increasing number, while doing well in some retail enterprise, began to think of Alaska as merely a temporary abode. "Get in, get it and get out," became their motto, and not a few pursued such a course successfully. That attitude did not in turn stimulate or maintain concern for the building up of the territory. . . . And so the profits of many an enterprise were sent "down below" to be invested there--principally in Seattle real estate. Not all, by any means, so thought and acted. But enough to create doubt, instability, and the contagion of disparagement.¹⁴

Although the 1920's was a period of stagnation and even decline, there were a couple signs of revival in Alaska's development. In 1926, the salmon pack jumped back up to an all-time record of 6,700,000 cases, but this rise was like salt on a wound to those who compared the contribution of fishing to Alaska's prosperity with the situation in British Columbia:

With an annual pack of some five million cases the Alaska fisheries were employing some 5,960 independent fishermen, while British Columbia with a pack of only a million and a quarter cases was using the services of 7,312 fishermen. So Delegate Dan Sutherland informed the Congress, saying that with the same proportion Alaska would have a resident population of eighteen thousand fishermen.¹⁵

The explanation for this contrast was to be found in the large number of nonresidents employed by the

canneries and in the widespread use of fish traps, which increased from 458 in 1924 to 799 in 1927.¹⁶ Since these two practices had existed from the beginning of Alaska's most profitable industry, it is not surprising that "Alaskans' principal aspiration" was "control of their fisheries."¹⁷ Furthermore, since it was Congressional legislation, the White Act, which foreclosed such control, it was the fisheries issue which had, did still, and in the future would generate much of the thrust for Alaskan statehood.

Mining in all forms declined during the 1920's and even into the 1930's: by 1920, total production had dropped to \$23,000,000, less than half what it had been in 1916, the peak year. By 1925, it was down to \$18,000,000; by 1930, \$14,000,000; and in 1933, it dropped to \$10,000,000--the lowest level since 1904, two years before the peak years of the Klondike period.¹⁸ Despite the overall decline in mineral production, two areas of mining did begin to stir. With the completion of the Alaska Railroad in 1923, one coal mine, owned by the millionaire Austin E. Lathrop, began operations in the Nenana fields south of Fairbanks;¹⁹ furthermore, the railroad, along with the discovery of a cold water thawing process, permitted gold dredging in the interior of Alaska to be conducted on an expanded scale.²⁰ In 1928, a subsidiary of the United States Smelting, Refining & Mining Company of Boston assembled three dredges near Fairbanks--this company already was operating in the Nome area--and in the following year, dredges were extracting

71 per cent of Alaska's placer gold.²¹ With these more efficient methods, placer gold production started an upswing: from less than \$3,000,000 in 1927, it had climbed to \$5,500,000 in 1932.²²

Once again the slight stirrings of economic activity were reflected in population figures. Between 1910 and 1920, the population had decreased by 14.7 per cent; between 1920 and 1930, the figure went up to 59,000, an increase of 7.7 per cent. This slight growth--the total population of the United States had risen by more than 16 per cent in the same period--suggests that while Alaska might have passed its low point, it still was not keeping apace with the rest of the country. Furthermore, the fact that the 1930 figure was, despite increases since 1920, still lower than the figures for both 1910 and 1900 indicates that Alaska was having a very difficult time in trying to make a transition to a more permanent and healthier economy.²³

During the 1930's, however, there was a sharp jump in Alaska's population. The 1940 figure showed a total population of 73,000, an increase of 22.3 per cent during the previous ten years. The implications of this increase become more apparent when growth in the entire United States is considered:

Only two states, New Mexico and Florida, exceeded Alaska's growth percentagewise. The national population had in the fourth decade increased by 7.2 per cent, the first time, except in 1900, that the national growth percentage was less than Alaska's. Alaska's population at the end of the century's fourth decade was the largest it had ever been. It had overcome the losses of

the second and third decades.²⁴

The explanation for this growth in population and increased economic prosperity during the 1930's is found largely in the more active role which was taken by the federal government. The first action which had immediate effect in Alaska occurred late in 1933, when President Roosevelt ordered an increase of almost 75 per cent in the price of gold. In 1933, the value of Alaska's placer and lode gold had been less than \$10,000,000. By 1940, the number of dredges operating in Alaska had increased from 28 to 48, and in that year the total value of gold produced had shot up to more than \$26,000,000, the greatest yearly value in Alaska's history.²⁵

Government measures also stimulated the two coal mines which were operating in Alaska, one each in the Nenana and Matanuska fields. From a yearly output of about 100,000 tons during the late 1920's, production reached 174,000 tons in 1940, with a value of \$700,000.²⁶

In 1935, agricultural development in Alaska jumped ahead with the famous Matanuska colonization project. Although 104 of the 200 families chosen for the project returned to the States at government expense, the venture soon proved successful despite much public outcry at the notion of the government so directly taking a hand in the development of economic activity. The federal government expended over \$3,600,000, but only nine years later the community produced over a million dollars worth of products in

a single season. Agriculture could not be called big business in Alaska, but it definitely was established.²⁷

Extension of the Federal Housing Administration benefits to Alaska permitted the financing of homes which could not have been constructed otherwise, and the settlement of Alaska was helped also by projects of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Public Works and Work Projects Administrations:

They not only gave employment to the numerous previously unemployed, but erected projects of enduring worth--schools, paved streets, playgrounds. They provided a great steel bridge across Gastineau Channel connecting Juneau on the mainland with Douglas on Douglas Island. They included a hotel at the entrance of Mount McKinley Park, intended as the first unit in a plan to make the park available to visitors and to stimulate one little-developed Alaska potential--the tourist industry. . . . Of great practical value were the harbor improvements, breakwaters, and small-boat harbors, some of them earlier examined and approved by the U.S. Army Engineers, and now carried to completion.²⁸

Valuable as these emergency government measures were for stimulating Alaska's economic and population growth in the 1930's, no real groundwork was being made for permanent future development. Solid growth would depend on solving the basic problems of the territory, and such solutions were neither achieved nor attempted:

The continuing memorials of successive legislatures, pleading, as they had for nearly three decades--for increased road construction with extension to Alaska of the Federal Aid Highway Act, for measures to improve maritime transportation, for revision of the land laws, with a cessation of reservations and withdrawals, for better law enforcement, with salaries for United States commissioners, for transfer of the fisheries and wild life to territorial control, for full territorial government--were ignored by the Congress and the bureaus despite the earnest pleas of Alaska's delegate Anthony

J. Dimond, and his repeated introduction of bills to achieve the ends that required legislation.²⁹

The pattern of the 1940's and most of the 1950's repeated that which had been established during the 1930's: a great increase in population and economic prosperity due to federal spending but little advance in solving the basic problems which stood in the way of Alaska's permanent development. Between 1941 and 1945, thousands of construction workers and some 300,000 soldiers were stationed in Alaska while over one and a quarter billion dollars of federal money went into the territory.³⁰ After 1945, the Cold War maintained high levels of federal military expenditures in Alaska; and by 1953, Alaska's population numbered 182,000.³¹

Even though World War II brought money into Alaska, it actually crippled the two basic industries, mining and fishing, by creating a scarcity and high cost of labor.³² By 1948, the total value of Alaska's mineral production had dropped to only slightly more than \$11,000,000 and by 1952, this industry still had not recovered its former status. The salmon pack in 1945 had dropped to \$59,000,000 from the 1941 value of \$63,000,000, but by 1950 the wholesale value of the pack had shot up to nearly \$100,000,000. Although fishing retained its position as Alaska's leading basic industry, federal defense spending in this post-war time remained the keystone in Alaska's economy.³³ Clarence C. Hulley's summary of Alaska's economic position in 1953 was identical in its essentials to the pattern which had emerged

at the end of the 1930's:

The postwar era has been one of great prosperity in Alaska. Population increase, transportation betterment, the growth of the larger towns, educational improvement and the tourist upsurge . have been noteworthy. However, too much of this great prosperity and too much of the development have been based on federal spending and a war-time economy. Many Alaska industries have failed to develop or even have stagnated because of the high cost of production. Too much of the wealth and population brought into Alaska by the postwar boom failed to establish themselves permanently in the territory. There has been remarkable prosperity but many of the basic problems of Alaska, both economic and political, are not yet solved; they have been mitigated but not removed.³⁴

One of the most important of these basic problems in Alaska's economy, which Hulley did not specify above, appeared on the front pages again in 1953. Despite the record value of the salmon pack in 1950, this industry was in serious trouble through overfishing. In 1953, the pack dropped to less than 3,000,000 cases, the lowest figure since 1911.³⁵

Given predominant nonresident ownership of the canneries, predominant employment of nonresident workers, a refusal of the canning industry to adopt effective conservationist measures, and federal control of the territory's fisheries, it is not surprising that a large segment of Alaska's population renewed its demand for self-government in the form of statehood. Other Alaskans likewise saw statehood as the solution to different economic problems. By 1955, demand for self-government reached such a pitch that the Territorial Legislature called for a constitutional convention to draw up a constitution for a future state, and

by 1958, there was enough moral and political force to get a statehood bill passed in Congress. Alaskans' aspiration to greater control of their destiny was fulfilled when President Eisenhower signed the statehood proclamation on January 3, 1959.³⁶

For some, the achievement of statehood has signified the opening of the last frontier--frontier here being used with Ray Allen Billington's emphasis on individual opportunity for economic advancement. Ben Adams, for example, writing in the same year that Alaska became a state, asserts that "the magnet which has drawn thousands of men and women to Alaska since World War II and will draw thousands more" is "the challenge and the rewards of a new country": "The word is opportunity. . . . It is in this sense that Alaska remains the last frontier."³⁷

Adams' interpretation of Alaska's history seems plausible when it is remembered that the most important ideological conflict through-out Alaska's ninety-two years as a territory was between promyshleniki or Guggenheims and the sourdoughs, between those who sought to achieve and maintain monopolized exploitation of Alaska's resources and those who hoped to develop a civilization in Alaska and sought statehood as a means of opening up economic and cultural growth. Statehood, from Adams' point of view, would thus mean breaking the control of large corporations and a consequent rise in opportunity for the small-moneyed entrepreneur, which is to say, a creation of frontier conditions

in Alaska.

But the argument against calling Alaska a frontier is much more convincing. In the first place, the majority of people living in Alaska today do not find economic opportunity the chief attraction of the 49th state. In a survey conducted in 1969, David R. Klein, Unit Leader of the Alaska Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at the University of Alaska, found

. . . that the Alaskans sampled, whether they planned to continue to live in Alaska or not, looked upon the low population density and the scenic beauty and wilderness aspect of Alaska as her greatest attractions. These were closely followed in preference by the opportunities for outdoor recreation. All of these characteristics are more or less dependent one upon the other. The scenic beauty and wilds of Alaska provide the opportunities for outdoor recreation as does the low population density.³⁸

Before making this survey, Professor Klein apparently held an assumption similar to that of Ben Adams, that is that the magnet which draws people to Alaska and keeps them there is the economic opportunity of the last frontier; for Klein continues:

Somewhat surprisingly the characteristics listed in the questionnaire which are related to earning a living, the high wages and special opportunities for employment or business opportunities, were not checked as frequently as those relating to the natural environment in spite of the fact that earning a living is an obvious requisite for life in Alaska.³⁹

Although most Alaskans do not find unusual individual economic opportunities a main attraction of their state, it might be possible that such opportunities have existed since statehood, in which case Alaska would in fact

now be a frontier. Up to the time of statehood, individual opportunity of the frontier mode was certainly not the rule of the post-Klondike period. The two basic industries, mining and fishing, were controlled by corporate organizations; and while federal spending did create economic prosperity for individuals, the distinguishing feature of the frontier was missing--"the opportunity for the self-employed to win personal vertical advancement through individual enterprise. . . ."⁴⁰

Since statehood, the strides in Alaska's growth have not been made by individual enterprise but have been taken by government expenditures and large corporate investment. In the area of water transportation, for example, the monopoly of the Alaska Steamship Company has been cracked: "In 1959 it had been virtually the sole carrier to the railbelt; but in 1964 its share of the trade had been reduced to less than one-third of the total tonnage delivered to Alaska's south central ports. . . ."⁴¹ Those challenging the Alaska Steamship Company were not individual entrepreneurs but large financial interests: Puget Sound-Alaska Van Lines; the Canadian National Railroad; Sea-Land Service, Incorporated; and even the State of Alaska, which put a fleet of ocean-going ferries into service during the summer of 1963.⁴² Examples can also be drawn from all other significant fields of development. The hydroelectric power projects near Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau are all financed by the government. The \$100 million plant for liquifying natural gas at

Port Nikiski has been financed by Phillips Petroleum and Marathon Oil; the \$50 million fertilizer complex at the same location is owned by Japan Gas-Chemical Company and Collier Carbon and Chemical Company.⁴³ The wood pulp plants at Ketchikan and Sitka represent investments of \$56 million and \$60 million respectively.⁴⁴

Probably the most striking example of the change which had taken place in the manner of economic development is found in the area of mineral resources, particularly oil:

Alaska entered the oil industry on July 19, 1957, when Richfield Oil Company struck oil in the Swanson River field on the Kenai Peninsula. Sixty years before, the cry had been "Gold!" and thousands of individual adventurers had made their way north and reminded Americans of the existence of Alaska. Now the adventurers were sophisticated multibillion dollar industrial complexes whose "grubstake" was provided by thousands of stockholders, who gambled on the profitability of investing millions of dollars in high-cost exploratory activities in Alaska.⁴⁵

Corporate gambling in this field has had spectacular results. By 1968, Alaska was almost in tenth place among the largest oil-producing states, and the richness of its wells was fabulous: 56.2 barrels was the daily average for wells in Louisiana, the second largest producer; Alaska's position was maintained by only ninety wells which each produced more than 1,600 barrels per day.⁴⁶ And the North Slope resources promise to be even richer.

Despite the numerous advances which have been achieved in developing Alaska's resources, economic growth continues to be the number one problem of the new state. In 1964, a special Presidential study group specified the

obstacles to Alaska's future economic development; the study reported that Alaska had a

. . . chronic shortage of capital for development; that its economy was narrowly based and dependent on extractive industry; that it had a serious import imbalance in its trade relations; that selective inflation was a problem; that modern managerial and marketing methods were relatively unused; and that social-overhead-capital expenditures were needed to help create a climate for development.⁴⁷

As Ernest Gruening summarizes it, Alaska's "economy bore many of the marks of that of one of the emerging nations of Latin America or Asia"; but Alaska's problems also differed from those of the emerging nations: "it was underpopulated; it had a transient population; it was part of the republic."⁴⁸

Just how these problems may be solved is uncertain, although most observers envision a great future. C. L. Andrews, for example, based his prediction in 1944 on a comparison between Alaska and Scandinavia:

Alaska is a greater area than that of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark combined. They have nearly sixty million people, while Alaska has about sixty thousand. They have been drawing on their natural resources for hundreds of years. Alaska is almost a virgin country. Alaska has almost every resource that those lands have and room for millions--when they come she will be greater than all these nations.⁴⁹

Although the future is uncertain, it is possible that Alaska will fulfill such visions. But one thing is certain: Alaska's settlement will not follow the pattern which was established in the westward expansion across America. Most of Alaska is still a wilderness today, but it is not a frontier. The Alaskan wilderness was, as it

frequently is still called, America's last frontier, but that frontier closed with the end of the Klondike period even though the wilderness remained.

Literature

Given the decline in population and economic prosperity which followed in the first fifteen or twenty years after the Klondike period, one might also expect to find diminished literary interest in Alaska during the early years of the post-Klondike period, but this is not the case. In fact, on a novels-per-year basis, more Alaskan literary activity took place between 1913 and 1930 than during any other time. For the seventeen years of the Klondike period, the rate had been 2.8 novels per year. Between 1913 and 1930, the rate shot up to 4.4 and then dropped down to 3.4 novels per year for the time from 1931 to the present (this last figure may be a bit low due to an incomplete bibliography).

Altogether in the post-Klondike period, about 220 longer works of fiction have been published, and of these I have been able to classify the subject matter of about 140. As might be expected, the range of theme and action is much wider than it had been in the Klondike period; but less expected and more significant is the incidence of historical fiction: of the 140 works classified, 80 novels, nearly 60 per cent, look back to the past. Since historical novels constitute such a high percentage of post-Klondike Alaskan literature, perhaps it is appropriate to separate a review

of the literature of this period into two categories--the historical and the present.

Historical Fiction

Several historical subjects occupy the creative energies of authors in the post-Klondike period. N. C. McDonald's Shaman (1959), for example, deals with the Tlingit Indians of southeastern Alaska just as white men were beginning to visit there. Hiran Alfred Cody's The Chief of the Ranges; a Tale of the Yukon (1913) focuses upon the Chilcat and Ayana tribes as they make initial contact with white fur traders.

A more frequently encountered aspect of Alaskan history is fishing and sealing. Margaret E. Bell's Love Is Forever (1954) portrays the life of a young wife whose husband opens a salmon cannery in southeastern Alaska, and N. C. McDonald's Fish the Strong Waters (1956) depicts roustabouts and river-men at the turn of the century. Sealing and the Pribilof Islands finds representation in three novels: Edison Marshall's The Far Call (1928), Alice Desmond's The Sea Cats: Alaska Sealing Story (1946), and Peter Tutein's The Sealers (1938), a novel originally published in Danish as Faengstmaend.

More variety is found in the thirteen novels which deal with the Russian discovery and occupation of Alaska. Frequently these novels focus upon historical characters, as, for example, Bering in Mildred Masterton McNeilly's Praise at Morning (1947), in Cornelia Goodhue's Journey with

the Fog; the Story of Vitus Bering and the Bering Sea (1944), and in Lucile Saunders McDonald's Bering's Potlatch (1944); Danilez Chernov in McNeilly's Heaven Is Too High (1944); Baranov in Hector Chevigny's Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure (1942); and Rezanov in Chevigny's Lost Empire: The Life and the Adventures of Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov (1958). But other subjects are also represented. Edison Marshall's Seward's Folly (1924) revolves about the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States, and tales of the Boston men and fur poaching are told in Florance Barrett Willoughby's Sitka, Portal to Romance (1930), Stewart Edward White's Pole Star (1935), Rex Beach's The World in His Arms (1945), and Louis L'Amour's Sitka (1957).

As might be expected, the historical subject which receives greatest attention is the gold rush: 75 per cent, that is, about 60 of the historical novels involve themes, characters or plots related to the realities of this era. Such a large number of novels does not, however, result in a correspondingly large number of literary visions, for just four authors account for half of these novels: Edison Marshall and Emerson Hough have each written four Klondike-type novels, Ridgwell Cullum five, and James B. Hendryx tops the list with nineteen, four of them in his "Connie Morgan" series.

As writers turn to the past, regardless of the particular topic which they chose, it is possible that they may

interpret history in a realistic manner; and such is the case with a few of the novels about Alaska's past. Hector Chevigny's novels about Baranov and Rezanov, for example, are so accurate in their details that they are used occasionally as sources in factual histories of Alaska. Not only are his details accurate but his tone rings true-- which is something that cannot be said, for instance, about Gertrude Atherton's romance about Rezanov written during the Klondike period, nor, for that matter, be said about very many Alaskan historical novels without at least some qualification.

Bering's Potlatch (1944) by Lucile Saunders McDonald is based upon material in the diaries of Georg Wilhelm Steller, the scientist who accompanied Bering on his voyage of discovery, and upon material from the records of that time; and the protagonist, Andreas, is modelled after a real person, Thoma Lipikhin, a Kamchatkan Cossack youth who had been employed to accompany Steller.⁵⁰ But since the narrative point of view is controlled by Andreas and Andreas is only sixteen years old, the sense of reality in this novel seems to conflict with the details of reality.

Another novel which has much to commend it is Stewart Edward White's Wild Geese Calling (1940), which tells the story of a young man who marries and then moves from Washington to southeastern Alaska during the 1890's, not as a gold-seeker but as a pioneer. The details of ranch life and more importantly of lumbering and sailing all seem

authentic, and the theme is significant: the protagonist, John Murdock, is a Werther of the Western frontier. But as this Bildungsroman develops, a real limitation appears in the literary vision which White creates--a limitation which seems to proceed from either or both a partial commitment to naturalism or a lack of psychological insight.

Orphaned at the age of twelve on a ranch in Oregon, John decides three years later to leave his two brothers. As he was about to ride away, "He told the brothers he could not stand them any longer, bossing him around; but the impulse of his forthfaring was a deeper compulsion."⁵¹ Quickly we discover just what this compulsion is: John is searching for "a woman and a place in work that suited his whole desire."⁵²

Soon he finds a woman and then the rest of the novel portrays his search for "the sufficing outlet for his abilities and energies."⁵³ He seems to find that opportunity for what psychologists would call self-realization in a lumber operation in Washington, but still he leaves that position and goes to Alaska. There John finds the answer to what has been calling him: an opportunity to get into the lumbering business as an independent logger. But John is denied the insight which would enable him to understand why that opportunity "seemed so flamingly to have possessed him":

He was not self-analytical and could not himself have realized that the deep-hidden spring of his enthusiasm lay in the simple fact that this was the first

reality offered his hand, since he had left the Big Basin, of which he was the Boss and not the Hired Man.⁵⁴

Here it would seem that White, as the omniscient author, does understand the motivations of his protagonist even though the hero lacks self-understanding himself. But soon it appears that John's limited self-awareness is not so much the natural consequence of his own psychic abilities as the mechanical application of the author's own assumptions about the character of a pioneer. Further describing John's response to the new opportunity, White says:

He did not have to see farther ahead than the immediate thing: the task next to his hand. That was all that was needed. But it had to be real and worth while. John was at heart a pioneer. The pioneer is driven by an urge, not persuaded by a plan. If he thought things away out to a conclusion he would never be a pioneer.⁵⁵

White makes this point even more explicit when he says later: "The fatalistic philosophy of the wilderness is wisest after all: let each day take care of itself."⁵⁶

One has only to think of Scarlet O'Hara--"I'll think about that tomorrow"--and he begins to suspect not only the accuracy of White's insight into pioneer psychology but into human nature as well. Once this suspicion is aroused, it is easy to find other instances where an apparent psychological limitation of the protagonist may very well be a reflection of the author's own restricted view of life. Such an example is seen in John's courtship of his wife:

Riding early one morning into Siler's Bend, near the Deschutes, he came upon the woman, seated under a cottonwood tree outside the little settlement. This was Sarah Slocum, spinster and orphan; age twenty, schoolteacher, native of Borlund, which is west of the Cascades, reduced to penury after the decease of her father after a disastrous law suit, lineal descendent of Joshua Slocum, trader, immigrant of '51, and therefore also possibly harboring in her life essence the genes and hormones of attunement to the racial urge of which we write. Of these statistics John Murdock remained ignorant until much later. More pressing matters claimed his enterprise; and so masterfully did he press them, and perhaps so predestined were they to fulfillment, that he and the schoolteacher rode out from Siler's Bend that very afternoon as man and wife.⁵⁷

If a writer, for any reason, choses not to portray the psychic operations of his characters, then genes and predestination become convenient although not enlightening alternatives.

White's metaphysical framework becomes even more apparent when he describes why John will leave what seems to be fulfillment in Washington:

Nature always gets her way. Men, and the destinies of men, must move along her course. No price too high to pay. She creates and destroys a million individuals that one may carry her purpose. She safeguards him and sacrifices to him freely and is his fairy godmother of unblemished fortune, as long as he follows freely her urge. She spares him no spur of suffering or tragedy if he lags or strays. But when his impetus is spent she turns from him in divine disregard.

One of each generation, since old John Murdock had so unaccountably turned his face westward, had inherited and must forsake and go. He felt and was stirred by the first quiver of the waters; he was borne irresistably forward with the wave; he rested only when the wave was spent. To this John had become the attunement. For ten years he had eddied with the indecisive whirls until the urge had defined its direction. He had lifted at last to it, and it had borne him here: and here, it seemed, he was content to rest. His nature was fulfilled. He had the woman, and the work that best suited him. It appeared to John that here, in the lumber woods, he had found all that he needed in life. . . .

He was satisfied; but the forces of his destiny were not.⁵⁸

Not every writer is or needs to be a George Eliot or Henry James but even without making loaded comparisons, White seems too easily to use formula explanation where psychological analysis would be more appropriate. Despite such a limitation, Wild Geese Calling is a worthwhile novel, for it attempts a serious and realistic portrayal of a specific instance of the pioneering movement in Alaska.

Edison Marshall's Princess Sophia (1958) begins at about the same historical time as Wild Geese Calling, but the scope of Marshall's novel is much larger. Unlike the earlier Alaskan novels of Robins, London, and Beach, Princess Sophia does not emphasize the hardships of nature, although confrontation with the great white silence is mentioned in passing as an essential in the Alaskan experience: "In the back of every sourdough's mind is the endless awareness of having spent vast periods of time alone and, if he lives on, of the certainty of doing the same hereafter."⁵⁹ And Marshall does affirm the code of the trail as a response to the condition of life in the North. This code finds expression in small acts, such as the practice of leaving the cabin door unlocked and dry kindling in the stove with matches handy as well as in other customs which "had been imposed by natural dependence on one another in a vast, sparsely populated country."⁶⁰

But Marshall's historical depiction of Alaska differs

significantly in two ways from earlier frontier visions which had found literary expression during the reality of the Klondike period. Both differences involve extensions of the notion of brotherhood.

First, concern for one's fellowman can move in the direction of public service. Eric Anderson, the hero of Princess Sophia, takes his first step when he leaves his placer claim to become a U.S. marshall:

"I'd enjoy the work. My hands have got to be busy, and, what head I've got, the same. Alaska's changing and only a few old-timers can live to themselves any more, wit' the weat'her and the game and maybe a squaw for company. The day of those old lone wolves is almost gone. I've got to learn how to work wit' other men."⁶¹

Learn he does and although he is defeated as a candidate for the Alaska delegate to Congress in 1910, he is elected to the first Territorial Legislature. Since Eric is active in politics, there is dramatic justification for the attention which Marshall gives to significant issues of the time: the transition from individual to corporate placer mining, the dispute over the Cunningham coal claims, the role of private capital in developing Alaska's resources, and the conflict between large trusts and corporations and those who favored home rule for Alaska. These political concerns, which Marshall depicts as developing from Eric's basic sense of brotherhood, are not to be found in fiction written during the Klondike period.

Marshall further extends the code of brotherhood after noting its absence in two areas: the low social

esteem frequently assigned to women who follow the mining camps is mentioned as well as

. . . the contempt that many northern Alaskans, especially newcomers, show all Eskimos--regardless of the fact that they could not possibly survive with primitive tools on the hostile coasts where the undegenerate tribes made their brave fight against appalling odds--and which southern Alaskans are prone to feel toward Indians. These white men called all Eskimos "huskies," all Indians "siwash."⁶²

Alternatives to such prejudice are advocated by having a clergyman marry an Eskimo girl and, even more importantly, by showing the acceptance of Eric's illegitimate half-breed son, Joe, into white high-class circles. After winning a scholarship to a military academy in the States, he goes on to become an ace pilot in World War I, after which he is accepted at a Governor's ball in Alaska and has a promising future as a bush pilot. But his greatest reward is that at the end of the novel he will be able to marry his childhood playmate, a white girl. Many years previous, Rex Beach had also focused upon this theme in The Barrier, but Beach had begged the resolution which Marshall does not.

The major qualification which needs to be made about this novel involves the bizzare characterization and courtship of Eric's wife, Sophia. Born on a Southern plantation and left motherless at an early age, Sophia develops an unnatural attachment to her father, who likewise feels strong incestuous urges. Later, as she accompanies her father who is traveling by boat to Alaska where he will accept an appointment as a superintendent of education, she

is attracted to Eric but cannot agree to marry him until he fulfills her request for him to rape her, the only way that the emotional fixation on her father can be broken. Then, after almost three years of marriage, she learns that Eric had been unfaithful once and so walks unclothed out of their cabin and freezes to death lying on the snow. The first half of the novel concludes with Eric blasting a grave for Sophia's body in the permafrost. The incidents might all pass the test of Freudian psychology, but they serve only a sensational rather than a thematic function in the novel: the psychological emphasis does not evolve naturally from the frontier materials; rather the frontier is forced to carry a Freudian burden.

The qualification which has been made about Princess Sophia does not apply to many Alaskan historical novels; instead, the criticism which needs to be made about most Alaskan historical fiction is much simpler. As we have noted, historical novels may attempt to interpret the past seriously and realistically, and there are such novels in Alaskan literature. But, as Edward Wagenknecht suggests, a writer's interest in historical subjects may represent a retreat from unpleasant realities of the present, in which case we would expect to find distortion in the writer's literary vision of the past. In American literature, a favorite historical subject has been the frontier of the Wild West, and literary distortion in this area has taken on a pattern which is recognizable in formulas of character,

theme, and action. Lawrence S. Kaplan makes both these observations when he says,

The frontier becomes an escape, a day dream, a way of life that is the very antithesis of the life led by the harried urban dweller of the twentieth century. . . . There is a continuing appeal in the western story of good struggling with evil--cowboy against Indians, cowboy against rustler, or merely cowboy against the elements of nature. . . .⁶³

Since the formulas of the frontier adventure story were already well-established when the Alaskan gold-mining frontier closed at the end of the Klondike period, it is not surprising that most later writers who turned to Alaska's past have simply adapted the Western literary conventions to the Northern setting. Sourdough Gold (1952), one of the last of nineteen novels which James Hendryx has written about the Northern frontier, shows how the Western story has been superficially modified.

Instead of being a cowboy, the young hero is a sourdough but, like all sourdoughs, he possesses the same attributes as the good cowboy. These qualities are referred to in a general way when the author says of the heroine:

". . . she knew and appreciated the sterling worth of the sourdoughs who created raw gold from the creeks and mountains."⁶⁴ More specific traits appear when a gambler says to a cohort who has tried to cheat an old-timer: "'Sourdough brains, an' sourdough guts to back 'em! All the tricks in the book can't beat that combination, Buckley. You was a damn fool to try.'"⁶⁵

Instead of being rustlers or Indians, the bad guys

are "the scum and the dregs of all the North--thieves, tin-horns, and petty rogues--swept into the country on the crest of the big stampede. . . ."⁶⁶ Although they are not usually active villains, the newcomers or cheechaquos occupy a social position even less respectable than the gamblers and other crooks:

The scene, as he opened the door [to the Klondike Palace], was a familiar one. Bright lights flooded the interior. Cheechakos lined the long bar or played cards at the various tables. Other cheechakos crowded the roulette wheel and the faro layout in the rear of the big room, and through the wide arch leading to the dance hall blared the incessant jangle of the tinny piano. . . .

Buckley's glance took no note of the cheechakos. Probably none of them would recognize him anyway--and what difference if they did? Cheechakos came, and went. No one took them seriously. As he had anticipated, no sourdoughs were present. They rarely invaded the Palace, having small liking for the rococo dump with its blatant cheechakos, its importuning women.⁶⁷

The action of the story follows a familiar pattern. The young hero falls in love with the beautiful daughter of an old sourdough and by striking it rich proves that he is worthy of her hand. But before the marriage can take place, he is accused of stealing gold from his future father-in-law and must go into hiding for a month in order to clear himself. The hero's efforts to establish his innocence involve numerous disguises, kidnapping, and, incidently, contact with a Robin Hood in sourdough's clothing:

Steve knew Black John by sight, having seen him at Fort Yukon and again at Circle City. And he knew him well by reputation. Many were the tales he had heard recounted by the sourdoughs of the exploits of the big man who delighted in robbing crooks of their ill-gotten wealth and either hanging them or sending them on their way with a lecture on honesty. It was said that he never failed to return the loot stolen from a poor man

or a prospector--and never failed to keep it if another crook or any big outfit had been the loser.⁶⁸

Finally, true to the ethical code of Western fiction, virtue is rewarded and dishonesty punished: the real crooks are arrested and the hero and heroine will marry and live off the income from their rich claim.

Will Henry moves the setting in The North Star (1956) from Dawson to Nome and the Seward Peninsula, but he also uses the Western formulas. The conflict is between Black Angus McLennon, a murderous claim-jumper, and Murrah Starr, owner of "the richest single strike in American Alaska."⁶⁹ Since Black Angus also controls the powerful Miner's Association, the conflict between good and evil becomes a duel between corporate method and individual enterprise; and since Murrah Starr is a half-breed Indian, the ideal of social equality is also at stake.

The resolution to the conflict is cast in the form of a question: Will Murrah be able to elude Black Angus and his henchmen who hope to follow Murrah to his claim and then kill him? In the course of his struggle, during which he is aided by a white girl, Murrah proves his mettle, even to the extreme of amputating his own leg after it is frozen. Finally, Murrah kills Black Angus in a hand-to-hand fight and good prevails: Murrah keeps his fabulous claim, he is granted "acceptance as an equal among the board-and-batten lodges of the White Brother's camp on the beach at Norton Sound," and, most importantly, "he found a mate with whom

"to share the lonely fires and faraway nights, and with whom to listen, when the springtime came again, to the wild cry of the south wind sobbing in the spruce tops."⁷⁰

Although the author is willing to assert what by some standards would be a subversive notion--the union of a white female and a half-breed male--he does not do so without special preparation. First, both Murrah and the heroine, Erin O'Farrell, are virgins, a fact which throws an atmosphere of innocence over their relationship. Second, the heroine is not a typical white woman:

Her face was that of a pagan, her body that of a savage. Her hair was as dark as Starr's, her eyes as jarringly blue, her mouth as wide and sensuous. Her cheekbones were as high and angular, her small ears as flat and close to her head.⁷¹

Quite simply, she is a white woman only by the color of her skin. Murrah, likewise, is not an ordinary half-breed. Not only has he made it in the white man's world, he also comes of fine Oglala Sioux stock: his godfather was Sitting Bull! Rephrasing Henry Nash Smith's remark about the significance of cowboys being introduced into Wild Western fiction, one might say that Will Henry's use of a half-breed Indian as the hero of an Alaskan frontier story does not change the shape of Alaskan historical literature; rather it is merely a superficial attempt to achieve contemporary social significance. The essential social values have not been altered.

Just how much complication can be worked into the Western romance formula is demonstrated in Sitka (1957),

authored by Louis L'Amour, who seems to have a new western on the bookstands every month. Born near the Great Swamp on the Susquehanna and left parentless at an early age, Jean LaBarge, the hero, and a friend, Rob, "shared a dream, the dream to go west, far across the plains where the buffalo were, far away to the land of the Sioux and the Blackfoot, and there to be mountain men."⁷²

Reaching his mid-teens, Jean does head west where he traps for a while and then further west, even crossing the Pacific on sailing ships. By the time he reaches his mid-twenties, he is a well-seasoned man of action:

Jean LaBarge looked what he was, a man born to the wild places and the tall winds. The mountain years had shaped him for strength and molded him for trial, the desert had dried him out and the sea had made him thoughtful.⁷³

His friend, Rob, on the other hand, has pursued the active life of the mind:

He had borrowed money and gone to college. He had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania at the age of eighteen and paid the money back by his own efforts. Then he had married the granddaughter of Benjamin Franklin and moved to Mississippi. A successful lawyer, he was now rapidly gaining eminence as a senator. . . . Rob had always had a gift for words and a way with people.⁷⁴

As Rob proceeds to push in political circles the notion of territorial expansion, particularly the acquisition of Alaska, Jean begins to visit Alaska on trading voyages with the Russian Americans. He has close calls with Russian patrol ships, becomes involved in political intrigue in Sitka, and falls in love with a Russian princess. She

returns Jean's love but since she is married to an official of the Colony and is loyal to him, their love cannot be consummated.

After safely escorting the princess to Petersburg, Jean has an audience with the Czar and the sale of Alaska is mentioned. Then the princess returns to Sitka while Jean goes on to Washington and meets his old friend, Rob, who takes up negotiations for the purchase. Jean returns again to Sitka, hoping to see the princess, but he is captured by an old enemy, a Russian naval officer, who has murdered the husband of the princess during her absence. Jean is first sent to hard labor in Siberia and then transferred back to Sitka where the naval officer intends to hang him for theft, smuggling, and murder. Despite his hardships, Jean is still a hero:

He stood straight and tall, and he wore his chains in this town where he was remembered as another man might have worn a badge of honor. His face was shaggy with beard and his hair was long . . . he was much, much thinner! But he stood tall and he walked tall. He carried his head up and his eyes were clear. How could she ever have imagined they could break or tame him? He was one of the untamed, and so he would ever be.⁷⁵

It is not Jean's unbreakable spirit that saves his neck, however; rather it is the propitious transfer of Alaska to the United States that takes Jean out of prison and into the arms of the widowed princess.. The Greeks called it deux ex machina, and that is what the structure of Sitka rests on--Western deux ex machina, Western even though many characters wear Russian uniforms and even though the

protagonist travels from the Great Swamp westward across the Northern Pacific and Siberia to Petersburg, on to Washington, D.C. and back to Alaska again.

Another way in which the interpretation of Alaska's past becomes distorted is through the use of true romance formulas. Margaret E. Bell's Love Is Forever (1954) provides a fine example. The novel opens in 1889 on the wedding day of the heroine, Florence Monroe, who had moved with her family to southeastern Alaska from Victoria, British Columbia, in 1887, and the hero, Beldon Craig, who is never characterized in detail but who does possess the general attributes of the romantic lover: he is "daring and even audacious," "brave and debonair," and has "the kind of intelligence that some people call luck. He had done impossible things--like building his saltery on Thorne Bay. . . . "76

The conflict of the novel is generated from the competing values of gentility and primitivism. During the morning of her wedding day, Florence is reminded of her Aunt's remark: "' . . . living off at a fish saltery is no life for a lady and never will be.'"77 If Florence adheres to the genteel code, then obviously she can never be happy living with Beldon. On the other hand, Florence's mother qualifies the genteel outlook by affirming the romantic notion of true love:

"Don't mind her, dear," Ma soothed. "When she is ready to marry, she will realize that one doesn't marry a place or a society. . . . When any young lady

"marries, she cleaves to her husband for the rest of her life. No matter where life takes him, she goes with him; no matter what it brings him, she shares it whole-heartedly. A wife is one with her husband--his support and his comfort."⁷⁸

Florence's path to happiness seems obvious enough, but complications result when her mother goes on, contradictorily, to reaffirm the code of gentility as embodying the essential values of civilization:

"Darling, you must watch the wilderness and not let it defeat you. Guard your complexion and your hands--and, above all, your manners. Never give in to the wilderness. That is the secret of colonial settlement. Pa has said it often."⁷⁹

Allegiance to her father's teachings soon begins to interfere with her happiness. First she is disappointed with her wedding and birthday presents: a short dress which would be well-suited for fishing, a pair of knee-length rubber boots, a pocketknife, which "can save your life if you get stuck on the beach somewhere," a fully equipped trout rod, and a rifle.⁸⁰ She insists that she cannot go hunting or fishing and she would never fire a gun. Even after her fancy attire proves impractical for wilderness boating, she refuses to wear bloomers let alone breeches.

Finally Florence's disappointment reaches the point where she verbally expresses it, and then Beldon tries to coach her into a new attitude:

"When you come to a brand-new frontier like this," Beldon went on, "you have to size it up and learn how to live in it. For instance, you would never need your rifle in Victoria, but here it would be silly to be without it. But we can use the old silver set and enjoy it. We have to chose from the old things and then invent and find new ways of living so that we change to

"suit our new frontier. That's real pioneering."⁸¹

The essential obstacle to the fulfillment of true love is that Florence is not yet grown up: she cannot solve the contradiction in the teachings of her parents until she is willing to go against her father's dictum about not changing one's natural habits, as London would express it. But given the warm support of her husband, she is finally able to make these superficial changes: she shortens a couple of dresses to make it easier to get in and out of boats, she even starts to wear bloomers and finally breeches, she thrills to catching trout, and ultimately she shoots a deer.

Having made an adjustment in her attitude toward the genteel code, Florence is able to love Beldon without qualification; and at the very end of the novel, the hero and heroine are rewarded with the greatest blessing of romantic love. Florence tells Beldon that she is going to have a baby, and then "they stood silent, lost in their realization of each other, surrounded by the sea and the stars, in the eternity of their love."⁸² What pretends to be an examination of serious emotion within the complex conflict of civilization and the wilderness turns out finally to propagate a very simple moral: if you want to be happy and have a baby, raise the hem of your dress a few inches.

Before considering those novels which look at the here and now instead of turning to the past, attention might

be given to one more historical novel, N. C. McDonald's Shaman (1959), which exemplifies either very inept application of conventional formulas or else a rather skilled manipulation of formulas to achieve an effective burlesque. Dealing with the Klinkit Indians of southeastern Alaska just as they were coming into contact with white men, the novel seems authentic and serious in its depiction of native society: pot-latching, the significance of totem poles, dietary habits, war practices, class distinctions, and the social role of the shaman.

But humor results, intentionally or otherwise, when interior monologues reveal that the power-hungry, all-sufficient shaman, Kwak, is a self-conscious faker who is worried about potential plots against himself and who has trouble keeping up his act of knowing everything and of being able to evoke the aid of spirits on a moment's notice. An additional twist is given to this form of humor by casting the shaman's gad-fly in the person of a saucy, spirited young girl. For example, at one point in the story, Kwak and other Klinkits have captured a Yankee brig which is slowly sinking. Kwak thinks only of returning to the village with this captured prize, while Princess Rainy, the girl, tried to explain to Kwak the necessity of pumping water out of the bilge. Part of their exchange goes as follows:

"Never mind, Princess, that mixed up talk of yours will breed confusion among the Supernaturals. Let the foreigners brawl as Eagle pulls along. Come, let's

"sing together--'Tide Woman Pushes Canoe.'"

"Better sing 'High Tide in the Hold'--I think she's going down."

"Princess, your flippancy is disturbing at a time like this. Your association with foreigners has done you no good. Be a Klinkit and concentrate soberly on your needs."⁸³

Kwak's ignorance, which is revealing in such obvious ways as calling a brig a canoe and in naming the ship's cannon Thunder Speaking and assuming that it throws rocks, also results in more subtle humor. One of the captives on the brig is an ex-slave from the Congo, who attempts to explain his history to Kwak:

"Solid black, everybody solid black. First white skin I ever see stole me but I got loose and am a sailor boy. I go to Canton, Sandwich Islands, Nootka, Sitka. I been trying to get out this cold country long time. I'm homesick for Kongo. River warm, rain warm, sunshine warm, no clothes--"

"Warm snow, I suppose," said Kwak solemnly. The black man merely glanced at him.⁸⁴

McDonald's use of many of the standard formulas of burlesque in this novel certainly results in a distortion of history. Still, the humorous effect of such distortion, intentional or not, stands in welcomed contrast to the many historical novels which warp reality by employing the conventions of Wild Western or true romance fiction.

Contemporary fiction

Contemporary Alaskan literature depicts certain topics which had found expression both in historical fiction and in the literature of previous periods and additionally spreads out to reflect more recent developments in Alaska. In addition to novels involving the major industries of

fishing and mining, the activities of those in the medical and missionary professions, the confrontation of Alaskan native culture with white civilization, and the political thrust toward statehood, there is also literary attention given to the presence of military personnel in Alaska, to homesteading efforts, including the Matanuska project, reindeer grazing, and the construction of railroads, bridges and pipelines. Such a wide range of literary topics could be interpreted as suggesting the emergence of realism as a predominant characteristic of the fictional representation of Alaska, but this is not the case. Despite the fact that the major Alaskan realities became subjects in contemporary Alaskan fiction, the predominant literary mode is still the romance or sentimental novel.

One of the earliest and most popular of the contemporary romances written during the post-Klondike period is Rex Beach's The Iron Trail (1913), which takes as its background the successful completion of the railroad from Cordova up the Copper River to the Kennecott copper deposits. The protagonist, a railroad-builder, possesses the usual attributes of the romantic hero: he is handsome and a charmer--"Murray O'Neil had a way of making people do what he wanted, and women invariably yielded to him."⁸⁵ But since he is also a self-made man, other qualities are emphasized as well. He possesses an "innate power of supreme resistance": ". . . deep down beneath his consciousness was a vitality, an inherited stubborn resistance to death, of

"which he knew nothing."⁸⁶ Despite his desire to win financial success, he altruistically places the welfare of his workers before his own interests; a fact which he reveals in conversation:

"Yes, I was asked to figure on a contract in Manchuria the other day. I could have had it easily, and it would have meant my everlasting fortune, but--"

"But what?"

"I found it isn't a white man's country. It's sickly and unsafe. Some of my 'boys' would die before we finished it, and the game isn't worth that price. No, I'll wait. Something better will turn up. It always does."⁸⁷

He is also a man who is willing to risk everything he has on his judgment; but most important of all, Murray is a dreamer:

The world owes all great achievements to dreamers, for men who lack vivid imaginations are incapable of conceiving big enterprises. No matter how practical the thing accomplished, it requires this faculty, no less than a poem or a picture. Every bridge, every skyscraper, every mechanical invention, every great work which man has wrought in steel and stone and concrete, was once a dream.

O'Neil had no small measure of the imaginative power that makes great leaders, great inventors, great builders. He was capable of tremendous enthusiasm; his temperment forever led him to dare what others feared to undertake. And here he glimpsed a tremendous opportunity. The traffic of a budding was waiting to be seized. To him who gained control of Alaskan transportation would come the domination of her resources.⁸⁸

The heroine, Eliza, possesses the beauty required of her romantic role; but being a journalist, she also has brains, and her intellectual views initially interfere with the blossoming of romance:

She had come to Alaska sharing her newspaper's view upon questions of public policy, looking upon Murray O'Neil as a daring promoter bent upon seizing the

means of transportation of a mighty realm for his own individual profit; upon Gordon [another railroad builder] as an unscrupulous adventurer; and upon the Copper Trust as a greedy corporation reaching out to strangle competition and absorb the riches of the northland.⁸⁹

Gradually, however, Eliza's opinions change. She sees that the success of O'Neil's venture would help to open up developments of Alaska's resources, and she considers the Trust as merely "a fair and dignified competitor,"⁹⁰ which certainly expects to make a fortune from its enterprise but will not merely exploit Alaska's riches. The villains, on the other hand, are the wildcat promoters and schemers and the federal government, whose policies, determined by misguided conservationists and Outside interests, are creating stagnation and decline in the Northland. Since her attitudes do change by the end of the novel, she is able to accept O'Neil's marriage proposal and to share his two million dollars profit on the railroad.

Along with the expected distortions resulting from a sentimental, Horatio Alger plot, another contradiction appears. The novel propagates the notion that the frontier is still open in Alaska--that the individual can fulfill his dream of financial success--but the details of the novel clearly show that big government and big business are in control of Alaska's growth. Like some non-fiction interpreters of Alaska, Beach seems to confuse a wilderness with a frontier.

At first glance, James Oliver Curwood's The Alaskan: A Novel of the North (1923) seems to resemble closely The

Iron Trail, even though the hero, Alan Holt, is engaged in reindeer-grazing rather than railroad-building. Alan would, like Murray O'Neil, make his future by developing Alaska's resources, and the villain, John Graham, like Gordon in The Iron Trail, would use his money and power to "make of this great land nothing more than a shell out of which he and his kind have taken all the meat."⁹¹

Soon, however, it becomes apparent that the essential conflict does not so much involve economic issues as moral issues. This is implied when the hero speaks of Alaska's past:

"Because we happened to find gold up here, they think Alaska is an orange to be sucked as quickly as possible, and that when the sucking process is over, the skin will be worthless. That's modern, dollar-chasing Americanism for you!"⁹²

This seems to be an ethical criticism--at least as well as, if not instead of, an economic criticism--of materialism.

Moral concern becomes more evident in the qualities which are emphasized in the various characters. The finest compliment which the heroine can pay to the hero is calling him "'the very finest gentleman in all the world!'"⁹³ The outstanding qualities of the heroine, Mary Standish, include her long hair and abstinence from tobacco--she is not a flapper--and her fine brain: she is a descendant of Captain Miles Standish and thoroughly an American patriot, a fact which she demonstrates by spending \$500 on a fireworks display to celebrate the Fourth of July on the Arctic tundra.

Conversely, the villain, John Graham, is un-American

and thus poses a threat similar to that of the Japanese and Russians:

It will pour like a flood through Siberia and jump to Alaska in a night. It isn't the danger of the yellow man alone, Olaf. You've got to combine that with Bolshevism, the menace of blackest Russia. A disease which, if it crosses the little neck of water and gets hold of Alaska, will shake the American continent to bed-rock.⁹⁴

To dramatize the moral threat of John Graham, and by extension the danger of America's national enemies, the plot develops into melodramatic sensationalism, culminating in Graham's desecration of the grave of Alan's mother and then an attack upon the hero and heroine. who, along with two beautiful Eskimo girls, have barricaded themselves in a house on the Arctic range.

Just before the attack commences, Alan urges Mary to leave with the girls, arguing thusly:

"Go--for their sakes, if not for your own and mine," he insisted, holding her away from him. "Good God, think what it will mean if beasts like those out there get hold of Keok and Nawadlook! Graham . . . will protect you for himself, but for them there will be no hope, no salvation, nothing but a fate more terrible than death. They will be like--like two beautiful lambs thrown among wolves--broken--destroyed--"⁹⁵

Sexual depravity is emphasized again at the conclusion.

Alan lies wounded and unconscious, and Graham is about to rape Mary. But the good Eskimos, like the U.S. Cavalry, arrive mounted on reindeer and during the battle to defeat the bad guys, Graham is killed.

Written some twenty years after Curwood's novel, Florance Barrett Willoughby's The Golden Totem: A Novel of

Modern Alaska (1945) provides yet another example of an Alaskan reality being distorted by the romantic formulas. In this case, the conflict involves a native-born Alaskan who, in opening a nickel mine, hopes "to develop something worthy, something substantial that will go on being of benefit to Alaska and its people long after I'm gone,"⁹⁶ and a "professional Alaskan" who schemes to get rich by selling shares in an untested gold deposit. But the romantic emphasis is upon Lynn Clonard who, after going to Alaska to get married, discovers that her fiance is an irresponsible drinker and then must find a good husband. Naturally, that good husband turns out to be the Alaskan developer, Court Faber, who ultimately exposes the Alaskan exploiter. Personal financial success, Alaska's development, and romantic fulfillment all go hand-in-hand.

True romance also provides the plot for novels dealing with two other Alaskan topics, military life and the medical profession. Behind the Cloud (1958), one of over forty romances written by Emilie Loring, depicts the adventures of twenty-four-year-old Delight Tremaine, who goes to live with her brother, the commander of an Army post at Totem, Alaska. In addition to aiding in the capture of a Russian spy, Delight discovers that the Army officer she falls in love with is already her husband! A few years before, they had been married--he on a dare and she for payment of a thousand dollars--and then had never seen each other again or even remembered each other; he had been drunk

and she had been suffering from amnesia. Thus, from behind the dark cloud of their pasts steps out the sunniest of futures. Grace Muirhead Hendron's Nurse in Alaska (1965), written for Dell's "Candlelight Romance" series, is fully as realistic and significant as Behind the Cloud.

Actually, instead of being classified with military fiction, Behind the Cloud might be placed in a new category which appears in contemporary Alaskan literature--the mystery story. At least seven novels are of this type, including James French Dorrance's The Golden Alaskan (1931), Fred-eric Arnold Kummer's The Perilous Island; a Story of Mystery in the Aleutians (1942), and Eunice Mays Boyd's Doom in the Midnight Sun and Murderer Wears Mukluks (1945). A variant form of the mystery story may be found in Captain Henry Toke Munn's Tales of the Eskimo (1925) and Harry D. Colp's Strangest Story Ever Told (1953), both of which relate tales about abominable snowmen in the wilderness.

Numerically, the most important group of contemporary novels are those which focus upon northern natives; the various tribes of southeastern Alaska, the Aleuts, and particularly the Eskimos--those of both the Alaskan and Canadian Arctic. A few of these novels, like Marie Bolanz's So Hago (1963), seems authentic and serious, but others, which bear close resemblance to each other, suggest a variation on the formula treatment of the mountain man during the mid-1800's.

In Peter Freuchen's Eskimo (1931), Hans Reusch's Top

of The World (1944), and, most recently, Alexander Knox's Night of the White Bear (1971), for example, several common elements appear. First, the hardship of native life is emphasized, with particular attention being given to the struggle to keep warm and to find food by hunting seals and bears. The primitiveness of native life is seen in such customs as wife-swapping, leaving the old to die on the ice, and eating such uncommon food as raw liver, roasted entrails, and bear droppings. In all of these novels, the primitive way of life comes into contact with civilization in some form--missionaries, traders, whalers, or even DEW-line workers--and the result is always bad for the natives. They may innocently violate white man's law and thus become fugitives from justice; they may become dependent on the traders for ammunition or alcohol; or they may be abused sexually. Following such unsavory contact with civilization, the natives invariably attempt to retreat to the wilderness, but they are never able to re-establish their previous way of life. The details and themes of these novels may be authentic; but when it is remembered that the standard themes of the mountain men stories were immunity to hardship, enmity toward civilization, and a love of the primitive, it seems quite possible that, as had been the case with so many other Alaskan subjects, the interpretation of Alaskan natives is also being distorted by conventional literary formulas.

Contrasting with the many sentimental novels or

romances in contemporary Alaskan literature are a few novels which do seem authentic and serious. These stories, like the tales of adventure, are filled with vivid life, but, like London's better stories, the adventure moves beyond mere action and takes on a pattern of significant meaning. Gore Vidal's Williwaw, a Novel (1946), for example, involves action on a small ship stationed in the Aleutians during World War II, but besides the details of storms and man-slaughter at sea there is a dramatic inquiry into the psychological problems of getting to the truth of reality.

Actually, the setting of Williwaw is more accidentally than necessarily Alaskan: the Aleutian williwaw could easily be replaced with a South Pacific typhoon without any change being made in the psychological details. But two more recent novels--Robert Lund's The Alaskan (1953) and Jack Curtis's The Kloochman (1966)--are thoroughly interlaced with details of Alaskan life: life on the docks and boats along Alaska's coast, work on the gold-dredges near Fairbanks, homesteading, summer forest fire-fighting, and sexual encounters with Eskimo and Indian women. Significant structure is given to these details by having them recorded through the active psyches of relatively young protagonists who are on a quest, like many of the Klondikers, to discover metaphysical meaning and personal identity or self-realization. To use Lucy Lockwood Hazard's terminology, these heroes are spiritual pioneers, seeking self-knowledge and individual significance in a wilderness of concrete

experience. To put it still another way, these protagonists become aware that the frontier is closed, that human fulfillment is limited by the conditions of life, and still they struggle to discover and establish equilibriums within these limits.

These two novels are among the finest in post-frontier Alaskan literature, and a third might be Edna Ferber's Ice Palace (1958), certainly a very popular novel and one which Ernest Gruening has called the Uncle Tom's Cabin in Alaska's battle for statehood.⁹⁷ The novel is filled with accurate details about life in Alaska, and yet the novel is not a fine example of literary realism. The departures from verisimilitude, however, do not proceed from the use of sentimental conventions but from a decision to dramatize Alaskan political and ideological conflicts through the depiction of symbolic characters.

Two figures of the older generation, Czar Kennedy and Thor Storm, represent Alaska's past and present and the two basic attitudes toward Alaska's future. Kennedy, a self-made Alaskan millionaire who "saw with the shrewd eyes of the born trader, the canny commercial opportunist," is allied with Outside interests which are fighting statehood in order to keep control over the exploitation of Alaska's resources; Storm, descendant of Scandinavian aristocracy, "looked out at the world through the eyes of the natural student of the humanities, his gaze colored--and perhaps handicapped--by love, compassion and curiosity toward the

"human race"⁹⁸ and saw Alaska as a potential Arctic Garden of Eden:

"I'm here because there's never been anything like this since the world was made. Men have roamed the world through the centuries for plunder and for land and for adventure. Europe and Asia and Afric and American North and South. Just a few years ago Oregon and Washington and California. But those were warm and lovely lands. Sun and rich valleys. But this! This is as it was at the beginning of the world. You wait. You'll see. . . .
 "The future there can be anything you want to make it. It can be a model for civilization."⁹⁹

Chris Storm, grand-daughter of both Kennedy and Storm, represents Alaska's future, and each grandfather attempts to persuade Chris to his own point of view. By the end of the novel, both grandparents have died, and Chris has adopted Storm's idealism and rejected Kennedy's materialism, even though she inherits his millions: presumably she will use the Kennedy wealth and power to help realize Storm's vision. Romantically Chris rejects Bayard Husack, heir to a Seattle fortune, and apparently will accept the hand of Ross Guildenstein, part native and a crack pilot for an Alaskan airline. Published in 1958, just as a new bill for statehood was being debated in Congress, and remaining on the bestseller lists for nine months, Ice Palace undoubtedly did help generate public sentiment sympathetic with the aspirations of a majority of Alaska's population.

The relationship between post-Klondike literature and Alaskan literature as a whole will be considered in the conclusion, but here brief regard may be given to the issue

verisimilitude, which for some critics is the primary criterion for determining the significance of literature. In Chapter I, it was noted that Jay B. Hubbell seems to require verisimilitude of significant literature and then finds this quality missing in frontier literature as a whole. In Chapter III, it was noted that Stuart Ramsay Tompkins finds this quality missing in Alaskan literature specifically--not only in the literature of the Klondike period but of the present as well.

This trend towards the unusual has continued unabated. Hollywood lends its aid to crown with a halo of romance northern prospectors, miners, Eskimos, and mounted policemen. It is time that a note of realism should be struck to redress the balance and to enable us to understand the peculiar problems of the sourdough.¹⁰⁰

Certainly there is truth in Tompkins's generalization. Much of the fiction in the post-Klondike period, both historical and contemporary, does take "northern prospectors, miners, Eskimos, and mounted policemen" as its heroes and then treats them with the formulas of adventure and romance. Furthermore, a halo of romance does hang over many of those novels dealing with other Alaskan heroes, such as railroad builders, reindeer ranchers, nurses, military men, and solvers of mysteries. But this is not the whole story. The note of realism which Tompkins asks for had been struck already in the Klondike period and continues to be struck--at least at times--by such authors as Hector Chevigny, Stewart Edward White, Edison Marshall, Gore Vidal, Robert Lund, Edna Ferber, and Jack Curtis. What might be hoped for in the future is that more literature will appear, filled with vivid life and bearing significant pattern.

Notes

¹Frederick Jackson Turner, "Pioneer Ideals," The Frontier in American History (New York, 1920, 1947), p. 279.

²Ernest Gruening, The State of Alaska (New York, 1968), p. 191.

³Jeanette Paddock Nichols, Alaska . . . (Cleveland, 1924), p. 408.

⁴Gruening, p. 226.

⁵Ibid., pp. 191, 224-225.

⁶Quoted in ibid., pp. 230-231.

⁷Henry W. Clark, History of Alaska (New York, 1930), p. 182.

⁸U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 933-A-1940, quoted in Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough (Norman, Okla., 1945), p. 286.

⁹Gruening, p. 208; Clark, p. 182; Tompkins, p. 287.

¹⁰Gruening, p. 209.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 209-211.

¹²Clark, p. 182.

¹³Gruening, p. 227.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 282.

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 282-283.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 283.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 282.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 274.

²⁰Clark, p. 162.

²¹Gruening, p. 273.

²²Tompkins, p. 287.

²³Gruening, p. 291.

²⁴Ibid., p. 306.

²⁵Ibid., p. 298; Tompkins, p. 289.

²⁶Gruening, p. 298.

²⁷C. L. Andrews, The Story of Alaska (Caldwell, Ida., 1944), p. 238.

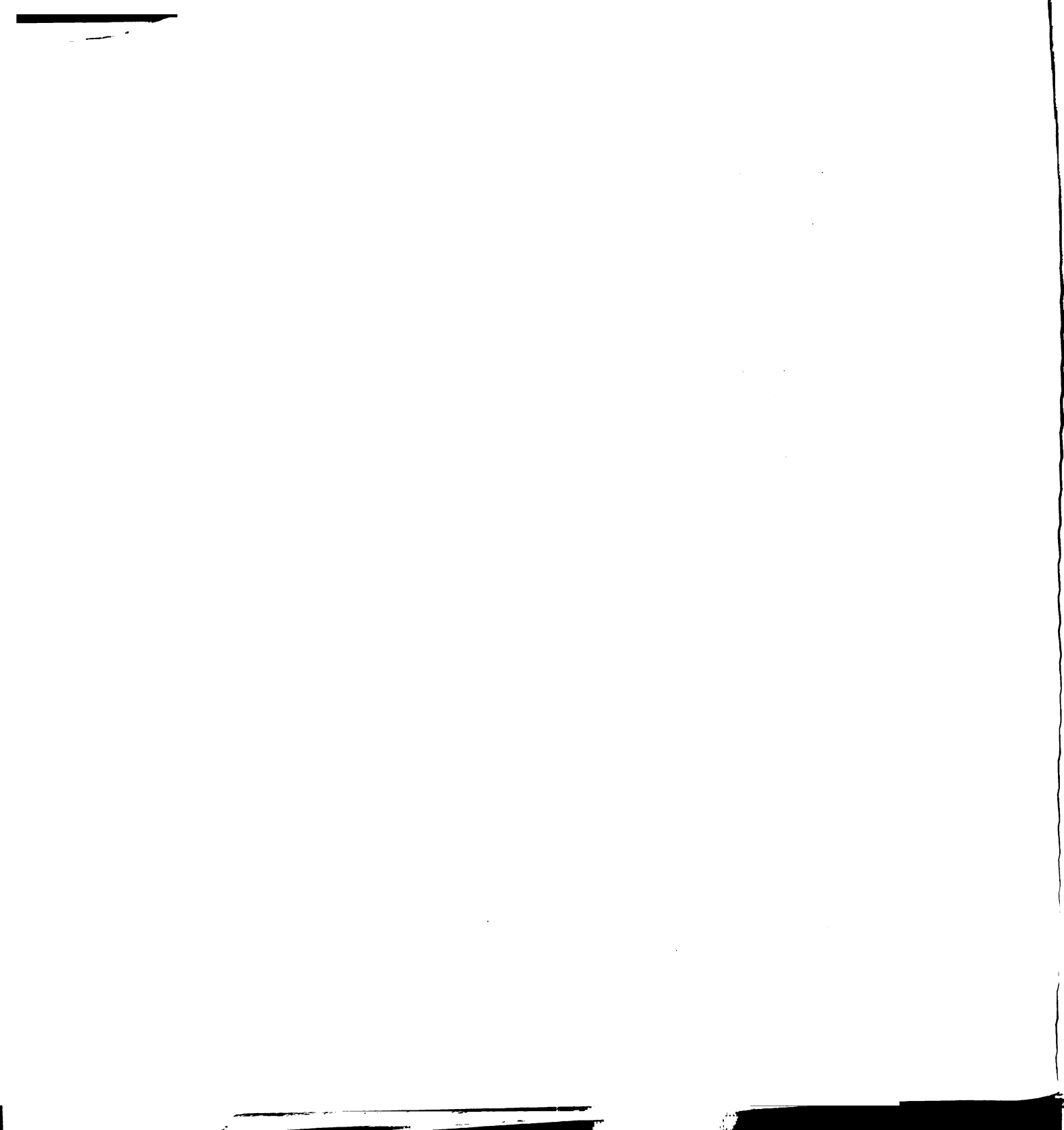
²⁸Gruening, p. 300.

²⁹Ibid., p. 301.

- ³⁰Ibid., p. 316; Clarence C. Hulley, Alaska 1741-1953 (Portland, 1953), p. 335.
- ³¹Gruening, p. 318.
- ³²Hulley, p. 345.
- ³³Ibid., pp. 345, 354, 356-357; Tompkins, p. 301.
- ³⁴Hulley, p. 369.
- ³⁵Gruening, pp. 404-405.
- ³⁶Ibid., pp. 318-319, 406-407, 497, 504.
- ³⁷Ben Adams, Alaska: The Big Land (New York, 1969), pp. 126-127.
- ³⁸David R. Klein, "Alaskans and the Paths," Alaska Sportsman (August, 1969), 4-5.
- ³⁹Ibid., 5.
- ⁴⁰Ray Allen Billington, America's Frontier Heritage (New York, 1966), p. 228.
- ⁴¹Gruening, p. 513.
- ⁴²Ibid., pp. 514-516.
- ⁴³Ibid., pp. 238-239.
- ⁴⁴Lou Jacobin's Guide to Alaska and the Yukon, 22nd ed. (Anchorage, 1968), p. 70.
- ⁴⁵Gruening, p. 535.
- ⁴⁶Ibid.
- ⁴⁷Economic Development in Alaska, Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska, Washington, D.C., August 1966, p. 6; summarized in Gruening, p. 527.
- ⁴⁸Gruening, p. 527.
- ⁴⁹Andrews, p. 247.
- ⁵⁰Lucile Saunders McDonald, Bering's Potlatch (New York, 1944), p. ix.
- ⁵¹Stewart Edward White, Wild Geese Calling (New York, 1940), p. 4.
- ⁵²Ibid., p. 5.
- ⁵³Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., p. 390.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., p. 391.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., p. 467.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., p. 6.
- ⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 32-33.

- ⁵⁹Edison Marshall, Princess Sophia (New York, 1958), p. 34.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., p. 282.
- ⁶¹Ibid., p. 177.
- ⁶²Ibid., pp. 104-105.
- ⁶³Lawrence S. Kaplan, et. al., "The Frontier and the American Character," The Frontier in American History and Literature (Frankfort am Main, [1960?]), p. 32.
- ⁶⁴James B. Hendryx, Sourdough Gold (New York, 1952), p. 118.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., p. 94.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., p. 145.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 93.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., p. 151.
- ⁶⁹Will Henry, The North Star (New York, 1956), p. 3.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 183, 184.
- ⁷¹Ibid., p. 16.
- ⁷²Louis L'Amour, Sitka (New York, 1957), p. 7.
- ⁷³Ibid., p. 41.
- ⁷⁴Ibid., p. 38.
- ⁷⁵Ibid., p. 235.
- ⁷⁶Margaret E. Bell, Love Is Forever (New York, 1954), pp. 9-10.
- ⁷⁷Ibid., p. 14.
- ⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 14-15.
- ⁷⁹Ibid., p. 17.
- ⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 54-55, 59.
- ⁸¹Ibid., pp. 74-75.
- ⁸²Ibid., p. 218.
- ⁸³N. C. McDonald, Shaman (New York, 1959), p. 80.
- ⁸⁴Ibid., p. 84.
- ⁸⁵Rex Beach, The Iron Trail (New York, 1913, reissued in 1965), p. 26.
- ⁸⁶Ibid., p. 18.
- ⁸⁷Ibid., p. 31.
- ⁸⁸Ibid., pp. 57-58.
- ⁸⁹Ibid., p. 174.

- ⁹⁰Ibid.
- ⁹¹James Oliver Curwood, The Alaskan: A Novel of the North (New York, 1923), p. 217.
- ⁹²Ibid., p. 13.
- ⁹³Ibid., p. 270.
- ⁹⁴Ibid., p. 128.
- ⁹⁵Ibid., p. 295.
- ⁹⁶Florance Barrett Willoughby, The Golden Totem: A Novel of Modern Alaska (Boston, 1945), p. 293.
- ⁹⁷Gruening, p. 503.
- ⁹⁸Edna Ferber, Ice Palace (New York, 1958), p. 94.
- ⁹⁹Ibid., p. 97.
- ¹⁰⁰Tompkins, pp. vii-viii.



CONCLUSION

Having looked at the essential features of Alaska's history and at novels and short stories representative of Alaskan fiction, we are finally in a position to make some generalizations about Alaska's history and the literary interpretation of Alaska. For clarity, these conclusions may be divided into two logical groups: those regarding Alaska's economic, social, and cultural developments and those regarding the literary depiction of Alaska's realities.

History

One of the most frequently encountered assertions about Alaska's settlement is that it was and today still is America's last frontier. Even if this statement is accepted without reservations about the definition of the term frontier, further observations remain to be made about important differences between Alaska's pattern of development and the settlement of the frontier elsewhere in America. In The State of Alaska, Ernest Gruening points out that after the purchase of Alaska many Americans, including several of Alaska's governors, believed that the new territory signified a westward expansion of the American frontier and expected that the development of this northern possession would closely follow the pattern which had emerged as

American civilization spread out from the Atlantic seaboard. Gruening himself argues and also shows how other observers believed that the failure of this expectation to materialize could be traced to the interference, both active and passive, of Outside business interests and the federal government.

The point which Gruening goes on to make is that Alaska needed to be freed of financial and political hamstringing and allowed to grow in the traditional frontier manner. To make such a suggestion, however, is really to ask that history be changed. By the time Alaska became a possession of the United States, the agrarian period in American history was already being replaced by the industrial age. It seems unrealistic to expect that Alaska might be exempted from the influence which technology, capital, and commerce were increasingly exerting elsewhere in America. Marvin. W. Mikesell makes a similar point when he illustrates the notion of "basic historical differences" determining different patterns of cultural evolution:

The American, Canadian, Australian, and South African frontiers were formed during a period of accelerated economic and social evolution. This fact distinguishes them from the German and Russian migrations which were influenced by federalism.¹

Similarly then, since the United States was leaping into the industrial age just when Alaska became a U.S. possession, Alaska's development could be expected to differ from that of other regions which had been settled when agrarianism was predominant.

Even without the industrial revolution taking place in the United States, other conditions would have made Alaska's growth different from that of other American frontiers. First, despite the fact that Alaska is geographically part of North America, until just recently it was not linked by land with the United States. As Stuart Ramsay Tompkins points out, its position was not continental but insular.² Potential settlers could not gradually drift into Alaska; to go there, they had to take a boat and travel at least seven hundred miles. Alaska's lack of contiguity with the rest of the United States would not only require a departure from the American pattern of westward migration, but would also create unique problems in transporting manufactured items to the wilderness and, conversely, in shipping raw materials to the industrial centers. Furthermore, Alaska's climate and soil as well as her geographic location eliminated many of the possibilities which had been open to pioneers elsewhere in America. Geographic location, climate, and soil effectively imposed the same conditions which Frederick Jackson Turner saw facing the pioneer who wished to settle in an arid region of the United States: he "must be both a capitalist and the protégé of the government."³

When the economic, geographic, and climatic factors influencing Alaska's development are put together, it becomes clear that Alaska more closely resembled the Australian "frontier" than any American frontier: like Australia, Alaska started as a "big man's frontier" instead of a

"homesteader's frontier." Just as the corporate-backed pastoralist had dominated Australia's economic development, so the shipping, mining, fishing, and trading companies seized and exploited Alaska's economic potential. What this means, given Ray Allen Billington's definition of a frontier, is that Alaska was not a frontier--nor was Australia, for that matter: widespread opportunity for individual advancement did not exist. Placer gold mining did make a few individuals wealthy during the Klondike period in Alaska; but still it should be remembered that even during the golden years of placer mining, the value of the gold produced was exceeded by the value of the corporate salmon pack. Frontier conditions did exist briefly in certain areas of Alaska, but they never were predominant. Thus, rather than call Alaska a big man's frontier or any other kind of frontier, it seems more accurate to say that Alaska was America's last wilderness.

Still, the development of Alaska does provide an instance of novelty in the American pattern of settling sparsely populated regions. We have already noted the resemblance between the role of capital in Alaska and Australia. A further departure from the American tradition of settlement may be seen in the attitudes of those who actually dominated Alaska's growth. Analyzing essential differences between the American and Brazilian frontiers, Vianna Moog focuses upon pioneer motivation:

. . . for three centuries in Brazil the main motive for

going to the frontier was to get rich quickly, to find gold or other precious minerals. . . , while the English and later American settlers looked for new homes based on their own work.⁴

The development of Alaska, it would seem, more closely resembles the Brazilian pattern than the American pattern: Alaska's pioneers were not Reformation settlers but Portugues bandeirantes or Spanish conquistadores. "Get in, get it, and get out" was the slogan of many prospectors as well as of the Outside businessman. If, as Moog further suggests, the exploitive attitude of its settlers explains "why Brazil, the largest, most populous, and most richly endowed of the Latin American states has done so much more poorly than the United States,"⁵ then we might extend the analogy to further explain why Alaska has developed so much more slowly than the other American Territories.

Having come to the conclusion that Alaska was not really one of America's frontiers--or at best, was so only in a very limited sense--perhaps we have also found an explanation for the omission of Alaska from studies of the American frontier movement. But while this may be an explanation, it is not a very satisfactory one. Since so many people have affirmed and still do believe that Alaska is a frontier, this issue seems to deserve the attention of scholars of American westward expansion. Furthermore, comparative studies of settlement in Alaska and elsewhere in the United States might provide new insights into the nature of the American frontier and into the characteristics of the

American pioneer as well as into the significance of a closed frontier.

Literature

Between the realities of the American frontier and the frontier vision in American literature, there has always been a wide gap. After noting that the sentimental novel or romance has been the usual literary mode for depicting the frontier, Arthur K. Moore, for example, remarks: "Almost nothing of the truth of the expansion appears in the romances. . . ." ⁶ Likewise, Henry Nash Smith finds Cooper's literary vision significant--primarily because of his dramatization and ambivalence toward the competing notions of progressivism and primitivism, or civilization and savagery--but then sees the Western story becoming insignificant as it moves in the direction of primitive sensationalism and away from the ethical and social meaning, thus increasing the divergence between fact and fiction. ⁷ Benjamin T. Spencer also notes that regional literature tends to be romantic rather than realistic and also frequently exploits geographic novelty and other sensational elements rather than attempts a serious interpretation of a given area. ⁸

Like other regional literature, Alaskan fiction has been dominated by various formulas of the sentimental romance; and as a result, the intrinsic value of Alaskan literature is slight. To put it another way, it is too easy to find violations of Robert Penn Warren's advice to literary regionalists.

The first of Warren's "don'ts" is that

Regionalism is not quaintness and local color and folklore, for those things when separated from a functional idea are merely a titillation of the reader's sentimentally or snobishness.⁹

Into this category would fall many of the true love romances of Margaret E. Bell, Florance Barrett Willoughby, Emilie Loring, and Grace Muirhead Hendron. These novels could be said to have functional ideas, but the ideas are so mundane that emphasis shifts to the local color of Alaskan materials. The same could be said for many of the other formula novels and short stories whose apparent intent is to exploit the novelty of the Alaskan setting.

Warren also observes that "regionalism based on the literary exploitation of a race or society that has no cultural continuity with our own tends to be false and precious. It is a touristic regionalism."¹⁰ Novels which obviously fit into this class would include Willis Boyd Allen's Gulf and Glacier; or, The Percivals in Alaska and most of those depicting Eskimo and Indian life.

The third observation which Warren makes is that

Regionalism does not necessarily imply an emphasis on the primitive or underprivileged character. A novel about a brave cowpuncher or an honest sharecropper is not necessarily more honest, more regional, more convincing, more important, or more anything else, except faked, than a novel about J. P. Morgan or the late Fatty Arbuckle. There is a literature of false primitivism as well as the literature of superficial sophistication. . . .¹¹

This standard would catch a novel like Stewart Edward White's Wild Geese Calling as well as most of those action stories written according to the Wild West formulas.

One more "don't" is that "regionalism does not mean that literature is tied to its region for appreciation. When it is so tied, it is so much the less literature."¹² This seems to be merely another way of saying that good regional literature must also have universal significance. Since adventure-for-the-sake-of-adventure stories are not usually structured around any kind of universal theme, they would tend to be insignificant. Unfortunately, many tales of Alaskan adventure seem to have little point besides presenting sensational action.

Although there are certain exceptions--most notably, Jack London--it seems accurate to say that Alaskan literature is of little intrinsic value. In terms of extrinsic worth, however, Alaskan fiction fares much better. Since, as Ernest Gruening suggests, the fiction from the Klondike period writes a new chapter to the literature of the American frontier, Alaskan frontier literature should be of interest to the literary historian. Furthermore, despite the gap between fiction and fact which stands out clearly in so many Alaskan romances, these novels are still, as Arthur K. Moore says of the literary depictions of the Kentucky frontiersman, social documents valuable for intimating the cultural assumptions of a large segment of the American population as well as revealing a specific revival of the Great American Dream and, occasionally, an acceptance of and adjustment to the fact of a closed frontier.

To speculate upon where Alaskan literature may go in

the future seems useless, except in general terms. Perhaps Benjamin T. Spencer's statement about regional literature in general applies to Alaska as well:

. . . a regional literature will be firm and predictable to the degree that a region and its people have come to terms. A regional literature is the articulation of these terms. If they are patiently and wisely achieved, they will not go unnoticed in other regions and in other lands.¹³

Since popular literature--the dime novel, the sentimental novel and romance, the mystery--imposes literary conventions upon reality, fiction of this sort would not be expected to articulate the specific terms which have been reached between a region and its people. If Alaskan literature of the future is to leave more than footprints on the snows of time, then the models of the formula writers will obviously need to be put aside and greater attention given to the examples provided by those literary artists who have wrought a universal vision from the colorful materials of a particular region.

Notes

¹Marvin W. Mikesell, "Comparative Studies in Frontier History," in Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Lipset, ed., Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier (New York, 1968), p. 165.

²Stuart Ramsay Tompkins, Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sourdough (Norman, Okla., 1945), p. 3.

³Frederick Jackson Turner, "Pioneer Ideals," The Frontier in American History (New York, 1920, 1947), p. 279.

⁴Summarized by Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Turner Thesis in Comparative Perspective: An Introduction," in Hofstadter and Lipset, p. 11.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Arthur K. Moore, The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman (Lexington, 1957), p. 160.

⁷Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth (New York, 1950), pp. 114, 135.

⁸Benjamin T. Spencer, "Regionalism in American Literature," in Regionalism in America, ed. by Merrill Jensen (Madison, Wis., 1951), pp. 226, 228.

⁹Robert Penn Warren, "Some Don'ts for Literary Regionalists," Am Rev, Vol. VIII (December, 1936), 148.

¹⁰Ibid., 148-149.

¹¹Ibid., 149.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Spencer, p. 257.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliographies, guides, and other sources

Listed in this section are general and specialized bibliographies of or containing Alaskana. The following departures from standard bibliographical form should be noted. First, preceding twelve of the entries is a number, in parenthesis, which will be used to indicate the sources of works listed in the next section, "Alaska fiction." Thus, entries in this section without a prefixed number are not an essential source of Alaskan fiction but may still be helpful to those interested in Alaskan literature. Second, in the three sections following this one, an asterisk indicates those works which have been cited in the text.

- (1) "Alaskan Books." Juneau: The Baranof Book Shop, n.d.
A 15-page list prepared by one of the best book stores in Alaska. The classification system is not sophisticated, but it does separate juveniles.

The Alaska Press Club. The Alaska Blue Book. 1st ed.
Anchorage: The Alaska Press Club, 1963.
Contains a small and not very helpful general bibliography (pp. 199-201).

Alaska: Magazine of Life on the Last Frontier. "Book Catalog." Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Co.
This catalog is frequently revised and published in issues of Alaska.

Alaska Review. Anchorage: Alaska Methodist University, 1963- .
Frequently publishes original short fiction, poetry, and critical articles on Alaskan writers.

- Alaska Travel Division. "Reading Material on Alaska."
Juneau: Alaska Travel Division, n.d.
A brief (4-page) list of general works,
but the entries are annotated and there is a section of juveniles.
- Andrews, Clarence Leroy. The Story of Alaska. Caldwell, Ida.: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1944.
The bibliography (pp. 317-322) lists biographies, personal and travel narratives, letters, government and military reports, and other historical works.
- Berton, Pierre. Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1958.
Published simultaneously in the U.S. as The Klondike Fever. The bibliography (pp. 446-457) is most useful for titles of personal accounts.
- (2) Bibliographic Committee. "A Cache of Alaskan Reading, Fiction and Non-Fiction Currently in Print."
Juneau: Alaska State Library Association, 1967- .
Each list contains about 150 titles, with annotations and identification of juveniles.
- Bowen, Robert O. Alaska Literary Dictionary. Anchorage: Alaska Methodist University, 1964.
- Brinsmade, Ellen Martin. Books on Alaska for Young People; Annotated Bibliography. Fairbanks: Adler's Book Shop, 1961.
- _____. Children's Books on Alaska; an Annotated List. Fairbanks: Adler's Book Shop, 1956.
- Coan, Otis W. and Lillard, Richard G. America in Fiction: An Annotated List of Novels That Interpret Aspects of Life in the United States. 4th ed. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1956.
Has sections on "Pioneering" and "The Plains and the Northwest" but none on Alaska.
- (3) Colby, Merle. A Guide to Alaska: Last American Frontier. Federal Writers' Project. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1940.
- (4) Crosno, May Frances. A Partial Bibliography of Alaska. Seattle: typewritten, 1922.
- Department of Reader Services and Government Documents.
"Bibliography of Alaskana." College: University of Alaska Library, 1969- .
Compiled monthly from periodicals currently received by the library.

Frederick, Robert A. "Caches of Alaskana: Library and Archival Sources of Alaskan History." Alaskan Review, II (Fall and Winter, 1966-1967), 39-79.

- (5) Fuller, Grace Hadley, comp. Alaska: A Selected List of Recent References. Washington, D.C.: The Library of Congress, 1943.

Intends to update Wickersham but is limited to "the more important works, chiefly in the English language." Identifies juveniles.

Gohdes, Clarence. Literature and Theater of the States and Regions of the U.S.A. An Historical Bibliography. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967.

- (6) Harkness, David J. "Alaska." University of Tennessee Newsletter, XXXVIII (December, 1959), 52-55.

Hinckley, Ted C. The Americanization of Alaska, 1867-1897. Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books, Publishers, 1972.

No Alaskan belles-lettres but an excellent selection of historical scholarship (pp. 253-274).

Hulley, Clarence. Alaska 1741-1953. Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1953.

The bibliography is oriented to historical studies (pp. 371-384).

Johnson, Thomas H., ed. Literary History of the United States. Vol. III. New York, 1948.

Jack London and Elizabeth Robins are mentioned in "The Pacific Northwest."

Lada-Mocarski, Valerian. Bibliography of Books on Alaska Published Before 1868. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969.

- (7) Logan, Eunice and Wheeler, June, comp. Annotated Bibliography on Alaska. Rev. ed. Juneau: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1960.

Lotz, James R. Yukon Bibliography. Preliminary ed. Ottawa: Dept. of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, 1964.

- (8) Ricks, Melvin. "Bibliography of Alaskan Literature." 4 vols. Juneau: Alaska Historical Library, 1960. (Typewritten)

Updates Wickersham, Smith, and Brinsmade.

- (9) Skinner Collection. College: University of Alaska Library.

- (10) Smith, Charles W. Pacific Northwest Americana: A Checklist of Books and Pamphlets Relating to the History of the Pacific Northwest. 3rd ed., revised and extended by Isabel Mayhew. Portland: Binfords & Mort for the Oregon Historical Society, 1950.
- Tompkins, Stuart Ramsay. Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sour-dough. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945.
The bibliography (pp. 305-338) contains an excellent selection of historical studies and personal accounts.
- Tremaine, Marie. Arctic Bibliography. 14 vols. U.S. Dept. of Defense. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1953-1969.
Currently continued by the McGill-Queens University Press, Montreal. More helpful to the scientist than the literary scholar.
- (11) Van Derhoof, Jack. A Bibliography of Novels Related to American Frontier and Colonial History. Troy, N.Y.: The Whitson Publishing Company Incorporated, 1971.
- (12) Wickersham, James. A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature 1724-1924, Containing the Titles of All Histories, Travels, Voyages, Newspapers, Periodicals, Public Documents, etc., Printed in English, Russian, German, French, Spanish, etc., Relating to, Descriptive of, or Published in Russian America or Alaska From 1724 to and Including 1924. Cordova, Alaska: Cordova Daily Times Print for the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, 1927.
An essential work.

Alaskan fiction

The parenthetical number which precedes most of these entries refers to a source in the previous section. In many cases, works of fiction are listed in more than one bibliography, in which case the number refers to the first source in which it was found. Those entries without a number were located by luck rather than by scholarly methodology.

To the best of my knowledge, this section contains

the most comprehensive listing of Alaskan fiction in existence, but the following qualifications should be noted:

(1) poetry and native tales are omitted as well as short stories which were never published in a collection of short fiction; (2) since I have not examined all of the entries, complete authenticity is not guaranteed--some of the novels listed may not deal with Alaska--but the risk of too much inclusion seems better-advised than the fault of too much exclusion; (3) although an attempt has been made to exclude juvenile literature, some of the works listed are borderline cases, and a few others may never have been intended for an adult audience.

- (4) Akers, F. Boy Fortune Hunters in Alaska. Chicago: Reilly & B. Reilly & Britton Co., 1908.
- (9) Aldridge, James. A Captive in the Land. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963.
- (10) Allen, Willis Boyd. The Gold Hunters of Alaska. New York: H. M. Caldwell Co., 1889.
- (12) _____. Gulf and Glacier; or, The Percivals in Alaska. Boston: D. Lothrop Co., 1892.*
- (12) _____. The Red Mountains of Alaska. Boston: Estes and Lauriat, 1889.*
- (12) Anderson, Ada W. The Rim of the Desert. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1915.
- (12) Arctander, John William. The Lady in Blue; a Sitka Romance. Seattle: Lowman & Hanford, 1911.*
- (12) Atherton, Gertrude F. Rezánov. New York: The Authors and News~~papers~~ Association, 1906.*
- (9) Bailey, Millard [Bailey, Frank]. The Lure o' Gold. New York: E. J. Clode, 1904.
- (9) Balcom, Mary Gilmore. Creek Street. Chicago: Adams Press, 1963.

- (3) Beach, Rex Ellingwood. Alaskan Adventures. New York: A. L. Burt, 1937.
Contains The Barrier, The Silver Horde, The Spoilers.
- (12) _____. The Barrier; a Novel. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1908.*
- (12) _____. The Crimson Gardenia and Other Tales of Adventure. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1916.*
- (2) _____. The Iron Trail. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1913.*
Notes refer to the Dolphin Books edition. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1965.
- (12) _____. Pardners. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1905.
- (12) _____. The Silver Horde. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1909.*
- (12) _____. The Spoilers. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1906.*
- (5) _____. Valley of Thunder. New York: Farrar & Rinehard, 1939.
- (12) _____. Winds of Chance. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1918.
- (5) _____. The World in His Arms. New York: Putnam, 1945.
- (9) Bell, Bailey E. Alaska Snowtrapped. New York: Vantage, 1960.
- (10) Bell, Margaret Elizabeth. Danger on Old Baldy. New York: Morrow, 1944.
- (7) _____. Love Is Forever. New York: W. Morrow, 1954.*
- (2) _____. Totem Casts a Shadow. New York: Morrow, n.d.
- (9) Benjamin, Philip. Quick Before It Melts. New York: Random House, 1964.
- (10) Bishop, Ernest Franklin. The Timber Wolf of the Yukon. Chicago: Digest Press, 1925.
- (9) Blond, Georges. The Plunderers. Trans. by Frances Frenaye. New York: Macmillan, 1951.

- (1) Bolanz, Maria. So Hago. New York: Vantage Press, 1963.*
- (10) Bone, Scott Cardelle. Chechacho and Sourdough; a Story of Alaska. Atascadero, Calif.: Western Pub. Inc., 1926.
- (5) Boyd, Aubrey. Smoky Pass. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1932.
- (7) Boyd, Eunice Mays. Doom in the Midnight Sun. New York: Farrar & Reinhart, Inc., 1944.
- (10) _____. Murderer Wears Mukluks. New York: Farrar & Reinhart, Inc., 1945.
- (9) Brooks, Alice M. The Clenched Fist. Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1948.
- (4) Browne, Belmore. The White Blanket: the Story of an Alaskan Winter. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1917.
- (9) Bryant, Charlotte Margaret (Kruger). Top o' the World. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951.
- (9) Buhro, Harry. Rough-Stuff and Moonlight; of Deeper Love Hath None. Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1948.
- (7) Burglon, Nora. Lost Island. Chicago: John C. Winston Co., 1949.
- (11) Burnett, William Riley. The Goldseekers. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1962.
- (11) Bushnell, Oswald A. The Return of Lono; a Novel of Captain Cook's Last Voyage. Boston: Little, Brown, 1956.
- (10) Calvin, Jack. Fisherman 28. Alaska Story. Boston: Little, 1930.
- (5) Case, Robert O. West of Barter River. A Double D Western. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1941.
- (5) _____. The Yukon Drive. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1930.
- (7) Chase, Will. Sourdough Pot. Kansas City: Burton Publishing Co., 1943.
- (12) Cheney, Warren. The Challenge. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1906.

- (12) Cheney, Warren. His Wife. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1907.
- (12) _____. The Way of the North; a Romance of the Days of Baranaof. New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1905.
- (2) Chevigny, Hector. Lord of Alaska: Baranov and the Russian Adventure. Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1942.*
- (7) _____. Lost Empire; the Life and the Adventures of Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1937. Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1958.*
- (9) Christopher, John. The White Voyage. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961.
- (8) Clark, Susie Champney. Lorita, an Alaskan Maiden. Boston: Lee, 1892.
- (12) Clemens, Samuel L. The Esquimau Maiden's Romance. Mark Twain's Library of Humor. Vol. II. New York, 1906.
- (11) Cody, Hiran Alfred. The Chief of the Ranges; a Tale of the Yukon. New York: Doran, 1913.
- (11) _____. The Frontiersman; a Tale of the Yukon. New York: Hodder, 1910.
- (12) Collins, Archie Frederick. Jack Heaton, Gold Seeker. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1921.
- (1) Colp, Harry D. The Strangest Story Ever Told. 1st ed. New York: Exposition Press Inc., 1953. 2nd ed. Petersburg, Alaska: The Petersburg Press, 1966.*
- (11) Cooper, Courtney Ryley. Poor Man's Gold. Boston: Little, 1936.
- (4) Crane, Alice Rollins. Smiles and Tears from the Klondike; a Collection of Stories and Sketches. New York: Dorey's Publishing Co., 1901.
- (11) Cullum, Ridgwell. Child of the North. New York: Doran, 1926.
- (11) _____. The Law of the Gun. Philadelphia: Jacobs, 1919.
- (11) _____. The Luck of the Kid. New York: Putnam, 1923.

- (11) Cullum, Ridgwell. The Triumph of John Kars; a Story of the Yukon. Philadelphia: Jacobs, 1917.
- (11) _____. The Way of the Strong. Philadelphia: Jacobs, 1914.
- (11) Curtis, Jack. The Kloochman; a Novel. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966.*
- (12) Curwood, James Oliver. The Alaskan; a Novel of the North. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1923.*
- (10) _____. Danger Trail. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1910.
- (10) _____. The Flaming Forest; a Novel of the Canadian Northwest. Toronto: C. Clark Co., 1921.
- (10) _____. Honor of the Big Snows. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1911.
- (10) _____. Philip Steele of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1911.
- (10) _____. The Valley of Silent Men; a Story of the Three River Country. New York: Triangle Books, 1910.
- (12) Dana, Marvin. The Shooting of Dan McGrew; a Novel Based on the Famous Poem of Robert W. Service. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1915.
- (4) Darling, Esther Birdsell. Baldy of Nome. Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Co., 1916.
- (5) _____. No Boundary Line. New York: Wm. Penn Publishing Corp., 1942.
- (10) De Laguna, Frederica. Fog on the Mountain. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., Inc., for the Crime Club, Inc., 1938.
- (7) Denison, Merrell. Klondike Mike. New York: W. Morrow, 1943.
- (10) Denison, Muriel (Goggin). Susannah of the Yukon. New York: Dodd, 1937.
- (10) Desmond, Alice (Curtis). The Sea Cats. Alaska Sealing Story. New York: Macmillan, 1946.
- (9) Dibner, Martin. The Deep Six. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953.

- (10) Dodge, Howard Lewis. Attraction of the Compass; or, The Blonde Eskimo; a Romance of the North Based Upon Facts of a Personal Experience. 2nd ed. Long Beach: Seaside Printing Co., 1916.
- (12) Donnelly, Eleanor C. A Klondike Picnic; the Story of a Day. With Genuine Letters From Two Gold-Seekers in Alaska. New York: Benziger Bros., 1898.
- (10) Dorrance, James French. The Golden Alaska. New York: Macaulay Co., 1931.
- (9) Downes, Anne Miller. Natalia; a Novel of Old Alaska. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1960.
- (12) Dunn, Robert. The Youngest World; a Novel of the Frontier. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1914.
- (11) Dunn, Joseph Allan Elphinstone. Jim Morse, Gold Hunter. Boston: Small, 1920.
- (9) Earl, Lawrence. The Frozen Jungle. 1st American ed. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1956.
- (11) Ellis, Edward Sylvester. Among the Esquimaux; or, Adventures Under the Arctic Circle. Philadelphia: The Penn Pub. Co., 1894.
- (12) _____. Klondike Nuggets; and How Two Boys Secured Them. New York: Doubleday, 1898.*
- (12) _____. The Young Gold Seekers of the Klondike. Philadelphia: The Penn Pub. Co., 1899.*
- (12) Ellis, T. Mullett. Tales of the Klondike. London: Bliss Sands & Co., 1898.
- (9) Erspamer, Alice McGill. Klondike Widow. New York: Pageant Press, 1953.
- (9) Evans, Allen Roy. Reindeer Trek. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1935.
- (11) Evans, Muriel Naomi. The Moccasin Telegraph. Boston: Little, 1927.
- (9) Felps, Jettie Irving. Such a Folly. Boston: Meador Pub. Co., 1956.
- (12) Fenwick, George. An Athabascan Princess. New York: The Alice Marriman Co., 1910.
- (11) Ferber, Edna. Ice Palace. New York: Doubleday, 1958.
Notes refer to the Macfadden Books' edition.
New York: Macfadden-Bartell Corporation, 1964.

- (11) Franklin, Frieda Kenyon. The Cleft in the Rock. New York: Crowell, 1955.
- (1) Freedman, Benedict and Nancy. Mrs. Mike. Bantam Books. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, Inc., 1948.
- Freuchen, Peter. Eskimo. Trans. by A. Paul Maerker-Branden and Elsa Branden. New York: Ace Books Inc., 1931.*
- (9) _____. Ivalu, the Eskimo Wife. Trans. by Janos Jusztis and Edward Price Ehrich. New York: L. Furman, Inc., 1935.
- (9) _____. The Law of Larion. Trans. by Evelyn Ramsden. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952.
- (9) _____. Men of the Frozen North. Edited and with a preface by Dagmar Freuchen. Cleveland: World Pub. Co., 1962.
- (9) _____. The Sea Tyrant. Trans. by Edwin Bjorkman. New York: Liveright, Inc., 1932.
- (9) _____. White Man. New York: Rhinehart & Company, Inc., 1946.
- (10) Gabriel, Gilbert Wolf. I Got a Country, a Novel of Alaska. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1944.
- (10) Garland, Hamlin. The Long Trail, a Story of the Northwest Wilderness. New York: Harper, 1907.
- (9) Gilbert, Kenneth. Alaskan Poker Stories. Seattle: Robert D. Seal Publications, 1958.
- (12) Goodchild, G. The Alaskan. London: J. Long, 1926.
- (10) Goodhue, Cornelia. Journey Into the Fog, the Story of Vitus Bering and the Bering Sea. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1944.*
- (6) Grant, Douglas [Ostrander, Isabel Egerton]. The Single Track. New York: W. J. Watt & Company, 1919.
- (1) Gregory, Tall (But True) Tales of Alaskan Sourdoughs. . . . : Craftsman,
- The gaps reflect an incomplete listing in the source, I presume, rather than omissions in the format of the original publication.
- (9) Grinnel, Michael. Song of the Wild Land. New York: Pageant Press, 1952.

- (2) Gruening, Ernest, ed. An Alaskan Reader 1867-1967. New York: Meredith Press, 1967.
Contains non-fiction as well as fiction.
- (11) Hall, Olof [Hallstrom, Olof Alfred]. Youth North. Caldwell, Ida.: The Caxton Printers, 1936.
- (9) Hall, Warner. Even Jericho, a Novel. Philadelphia: Macrae-Smith Company, 1944.
- (9) Hampton, Kathleen. The Patch. New York: Random House, 1960.
- (9) Hansome, Marius. Appointment with Fortune, a Novel. New York: Vantage Press, 1955.
- (11) Hart, Alan. In the Lives of Men. New York: Norton, 1937.
- (8) Hayes, Florence. The Eskimo Hunter. New York: Random House, 1945.
- (9) Head, Helen Smith. Death Below Zero. New York: Comet Press Books, 1953.
- Hendron, Grace Muirhead. Nurse in Alaska. New York: Thomas Bouregy and Co., Inc., 1965. Candlelight Romance Series. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968.*
- (5) Hendryx, James Beardsley. Blood of the North. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1938.
- (10) _____. Blood on the Yukon Trail, a Novel of Corporal Downey of the Mounted. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1930.
- (10) _____. Connie Morgan Hits the Trail. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1929.
- (10) _____. Connie Morgan in Alaska. New York: Putnam, 1916.
- (10) _____. Connie Morgan in the Arctic. New York: Putnam, 1936.
- (12) _____. Connie Morgan in the Fur Country. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921.
- (11) _____. Edge of Beyond. New York: Doubleday, 1939.
- (11) _____. Gold and the Mounted. New York: Doubleday, 1928.

- (11) Hendryx, James Beardsley. Gold Is Where You Fint It. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1953.
- (11) _____. Grubstake Gold. New York: Doubleday, 1936.
- (11) _____. Hardrock Man. New York: Carlton, 1940.
- (11) _____. Man of the North. New York: Doubleday, 1929.
- (10) _____. North. New York: Burt, 1923.
- (11) _____. On the Rim of the Artic. New York: Doubleday, 1951.
- (10) _____. Outlaws of Halfaday Creek. New York: Burt, 1935.
- (11) _____. Raw Gold. New York: Doubleday, 1933.
- (12) _____. Snowdrift; a Story of the Land of the Strong Cold. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922.
- (11) _____. Sourdough Gold. New York: Doubleday, 1952.*
- (5) _____. The Yukon Kid. Garden City, N.Y.: 1934.
- (11) Henry, Will [Allen, Henry]. Orphan of the North. New York: Random, 1958.
- (6) _____. The North Star. New York: Random House, Inc., 1956.*
Notes refer to Bantam edition. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1969.
- (9) Herbert, Agnes. The Moose. London: A. & C. Black, 1913.
- (12) _____. Two Dianas in Alaska. New York: J. Lane Co., 1909.
- (9) Herron, Edward Albert. Dimond of Alaska, Adventure in the Far North. New York: J. Messner, 1957.
- (4) Hines, J. C. Blue Streak. New York: Doran & Co., 1917.
- (11) Hough, Emerson. Mother of Gold. New York: Appleton, 1924.
- (11) _____. The Young Alaskans. New York: Harper, 1908.

(4) Hough, Emerson. The Young Alaskans in the Far North. New York: Harper, 1918.

(4) _____. The Young Alaskans in the Rockies. New York: Harper, 1918.

(11) _____. The Young Alaskans on the Missouri. New York: Harper, 1922.

(4) _____. The Young Alaskans on the Trail. New York: Harper, 1911.

Irving, Washington. Astoria; or Anecdotes of an Enterprise Beyond the Rocky Mountains. Edited and introduced by Edgeley W. Todd. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964.*

(12) Irwin, Violet Mary. The Shaman's Revenge, Based on the Arctic Diaries of Vilhjalmur Stefansson. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.

(10) Jones, Livingston French. Indian Vengeance. Alaskan Indian Story. Boston: Stratford Co., 1920.

(10) Jordan, David Starr. The Story of Matka; a Tale of the Mist Islands. San Francisco: Whitaker & Ray, 1897. School ed., 1909.*

(12) Keesing, Louise Dearborn (Eldes). Gorham's Gold. Boston: R. G. Badger, 1915.

(4) Kilbourne, Charles Evans. An Army Boy in Alaska. Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Co., 1915.

Knox, Alexander. Night of the White Bear. New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1971.*

(9) Kokko, Yrjo. The Way of the Four Winds. Trans. by Naomi Walford. New York: Putnam, 1954.

(9) Kosmos, George. Alaska Sourdough Stories. Ed. by Mary Lou Patton. Seattle: Robert D. Seal & G. R. West, 1956.

(10) Kummer, Frederic Arnold. The Perilous Island; a Story of Mystery in the Aleutians. Philadelphia: Winston, 1942.*

(6) L'Amour, Louis. Sitka. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957.*

Notes refer to Bantam edition. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1958.

- (4) Leisher, J. J. The Decline and Fall of Samuel Sawbones, M.D., on the Klondike, by His Best Friend. New York: Neely, 1900.
- (11) Levy, Melvin D. Last Pioneers. New York: King, 1934.
- (5) Lide, Alice A. and Johnson, Margaret A. Ood-le-uk the Wanderer. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1930.
- (10) London, Jack. Burning Daylight. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1910.
- (12) _____. The Call of the Wild. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1903.*
- (12) _____. Children of the Frost. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902.
- (12) _____. A Daughter of the Snows. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, Co., 1902.
- (12) _____. The Faith of Men and Other Stories. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904.*
- (12) _____. The God of His Fathers and Other Stories. New York: McClure, Phillips & Co., 1901.
- (12) _____. Lost Face. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1910.*
- (12) _____. Love of Life and Other Stories. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1906.*
- (12) _____. The Sea-Wolf. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1904.*
- (12) _____. Smoke Bellew Tales. New York: Century, 1912.
- (12) _____. The Son of the Wolf; Tales of the Far North. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900.*
- (12) _____. White Fang. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1906.*
- Notes refer to the Perennial Classics edition, edited and with an introduction by Earle Labor. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1965.
- (6) Loring, Emilie. Behind the Cloud. New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1958.*
- Lund, Robert. The Alaskan. New York: The John Day Company, Inc., 1953. Bantam Books. New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1955.*

- (9) Lyttleton, Edith J. The World Is Yours. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1934.
- (11) Macbeth, Madge Hamilton (Lyons). Kleath. Boston: Small, 1917.
- McCorkle, Ruth. The Alaskan Ten-Footed Bear. Seattle: Robert D. Seal Publications, n.d.
- (5) McCracken, Harold. Beyond the Frozen Frontier. New York: Robert Speller Publishing Corporation, 1936.
- (2) _____. Sentinel of the Snow Peaks: A Story of the Alaskan Wild. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1945.
- (10) _____. Son of the Walrus King. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1944.
- (12) MacDonald, Alexander. The White Trail; a Story of the Early Days of Klondike. Boston: H. M. Caldwell & Co., 1908.
- (12) McDonald, Lucile Saunders. Bering's Potlatch. London: Oxford University Press, 1944.*
- (8) MacDonald, Malcolm. The Favorites of Fate, a Novel. New York: Exposition Press, 1954.
- (6) McDonald, N. C. Fish the Strong Waters. New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1956.*
- (8) _____. Shaman. New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1959.*
Previously published as Witch Doctor, a Novel.
- (11) Machetanz, Sara. Rick of High Ridge. New York: Scribner's, 1952.
- (9) MacLean, Alistair. Ice Station Zebra. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963.
- (11) McNeilly, Mildred Masterson. Great Is the Glory. London: Jarrolds, 1946.
- (10) _____. Heaven Is Too High. New York: Hampton Publishing Co., 1944.*
- (10) _____. Praise at Morning. New York: Morrow, 1947.*
- (5) Mansfield, Norma B. The Girl from Frozen Bend. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1933.

- (5) Mansfield, Norma B. Keeper of the Wolves. New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1934.
- (6) Marshall, Edison. Child of the Wild; a Story of Alaska. New York: Cosmopolitan, 1926.
- (10) _____. The Deadfall. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1927.
- (10) _____. The Deputy at Snow Mountain. New York: Kinsey, 1932.
- (9) _____. Dian of the Lost Land. Philadelphia: Chilton Books, 1966.
- (10) _____. Doctor of Lonesome River. New York: Burt, 1931.
- (10) _____. The Far Call. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Co., 1928.
- (10) _____. The Fish Hawk. New York: Burt, 1929.
- (12) _____. The Land of Forgotten Men. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1923.
- (10) _____. The Missionary. New York: Cosmopolitan, 1930.
- (6) _____. Ocean Gold; a Novel for Young People. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1925.
- (6) _____. Ogden's Strange Story. New York: H. C. Kinsey & Company, Inc., 1934.
- (6) _____. Princess Sophia. Garden City: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1958.*
Notes refer to the Popular Library edition.
New York: Popular Library, Inc., n.d.
- (12) _____. A Romance and Adventure in America's Last Frontier--Alaska. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1926.
- (3) _____. Seward's Folly. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1924.
- (10) _____. The Sleeper of the Moonlight Ranges; a New Novel. New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corp., 1925.
- (12) _____. The Snowshoe Trail. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1921.
- (9) _____. The Voice of the Pack. New York, A. L. Burt, 1920.

- (9) Marshall, James Vance. My Boy John That Went to Sea. New York: Morrow, 1967.
- (9) _____. A River Ran out of Eden. New York: Morrow, 1963.
- (12) Matteson, H. H. The Trap. New York: W. J. Watt & Co., 1921.
- (12) Mighels, Ella S. Wawona; an Indian Story of the Northwest. San Francisco: Harr Wagner Publishing Co., 1921.
- (9) Mikkelsen, Enjar. Frozen Justice; a Story of Alaska. Trans. by A. G. Jayne. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1922.
- (11) Morey, Walt. Home Is the North. New York: Dutton, 1967.
- (5) Morrow, Honore Willsie (McCue). Argonaut. New York: W. Morrow & Co., 1933.
- (12) Mowery, William Byron. The Bering Wolf. A Complete Novelette. Adventure, LIV, 4 (September 10, 1925), 3-41.
- (10) _____. Forbidden Valley. New York: Burt, 1933.
- (9) _____. Heart of the North. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran, 1930.
- (10) Muir, John. Stickeen. Boston: Houghton, 1909.*
- (9) Munn, Henry Toke. Tales of the Eskimo; Being Impressions of a Strenuous, Indomitable, and Cheerful Little People. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1925.
- (12) Munroe, Kirk. Fur-Seal Tooth, a Story of an Alaskan Adventure. New York: Harper & Bros., 1894.
- (10) _____. Snow-Shoes and Sledges; a Sequel to "The Fur-Seal's Tooth." New York: Harper & Bros., 1895.*
- (8) Myers, C. V. Through Hell to Alaska; a Novel. New York: Exposition Press, 1955.
- (8) Northrup, Truman. Arctic Raider; Being the Story of the Trials and Tribulations of a Young Superintendent of a Government Reindeer Station on the North Coast of Alaska. Boston: W. A. Wilde, 1936.

- (11) Norton, Roy. The Frozen Trail. New York: Clode, 1932.
- (9) Noyes, Sherman A. Faith Creek. New York: Vantage Press, 1956.
- (11) O'Brien, John Sherman. Silver Chief, Dog of the North. Philadelphia: Winston, 1933.
- (9) Olds, Lee. Too Much Sun, a Novel. New York: Vanguard Press, 1960.
- (4) Packard, Winthrop. Young Ice Whalers. New York: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1903.
- (11) Page, Elizabeth Merwin. Wild Horses and Gold; from Wyoming to the Yukon. New York: Farrar, 1932.
- (9) Palmer, Aitis. There's No Place Like Nome. New York: Morrow, 1963.
- (8) Parker, Mary Moncure. This Was Alaska. Seattle: Tewkesbury, 1950.
- (4) Peary Robert E. Snowland Folk, a Collection of True Stories Written for the Snow Baby by Her Father. New York: F. A. Stokes Co., 1904.
- (7) Pinkerton, Kathrene. Three's a Crew. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1940.
- (4) Prentice, Harry. Boy Explorers; or, Adventure of Two Boys in Alaska. New York: A. L. Burt & Co., n.d.
- (9) Purdy, Anne. Dark Boundary. New York: Vantage Press, 1954.
- (12) Raine, William McLeod. The Yukon Trail; a Tale of the North. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917.
- (12) Robins, Elizabeth. Come and Fine Me. New York: The Century Co., 1908.
- (12) _____. The Magnetic North. New York: F. A. Stokes Co., 1904.*
- _____. Raymond and I. New York: Macmillan, 1956.
- (4) Rolt, Wheeler F. Boy With the U.S. Survey. U.S. Service Series. N.p.: n.p., 1909.
- (9) Roper, Edward. A Claim on Klondyke; a Romance of the Arctic El Dorado. London: Blackwood, 1899.

- (9) Roscoe, W. F. Icebound. New York: Vantage Press, 1954.
- (5) Rouquette, Louis F. The Great White Silence. Trans. by O. W. Allen and A. Le Rebeller. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.
- (1) Ruesch, Hans. Top of the World. New York: Harper & Row, 1950. Pocket Book edition. New York: Pocket Books, Inc., 1951.*
- (12) Rutzebeck, Hjalmar. Alaska Man's Luck; a Romance of Fact. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1920.
- (12) _____. My Alaskan Idyll. New York: Boni and Liveright, 1922.
- (11) Sabin, Edwin Legrand. Klondike Pardners; Where in Are Told the Haps and Mishaps of Two Fortune-Seekers Who in the Klondike Stampede Hit the Trail of Rain & Ice, Mountains, Lakes and Rivers, for 600 Miles So That Rainbows End in a Frozen Land of "Gold Is Where You Find It." if You Don't Quit First. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1929.
- (10) Samson, Sam. The Eskimo Princess; a Story of a Million Dollar Gold Discovery in the Cyrus Noble in Nome, Alaska, as Told to Mignon Maynard Chisam by Sam Samson. Souvenir ed. Stevenson, Wash.: Columbia Gorge Pub., 1941.
- (10) Savage, Alma Helen. Eben the Crane. Alaska Story. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944.
- (10) _____. Smoozie, the Story of an Alaskan Reindeer Farm. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1941.
- (12) Savage, Richard Henry. The Princess of Alaska, a Tale of Two Countries. A Novel. Chicago: F. T. Neely, 1894.
- (10) Searce, Stanley. Northern Lights to Fields of Gold. Caldwell, Ida.: Caxton, 1939.
- (5) Selle, Ralph A. A Daughter of the Midnight Sun. His Outdoor Nature Series. Houston: Carroll Printing Co., 1933.
- (9) Semushkin, Tikhon Zakharovich. Children of the Soviet Arctic. New York: Hutchinson, 1944.
- (12) Service, Robert William. The Trail of '98; a North-land Romance. New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1911.

- (9) Shaw, Stanley. A Siren of the Snows. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1915.
- (9) Shurtleff, Betrand Leslie. Escape from the Icecap; a Tale of Huskie and Spareribs. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1952.
- (9) _____. Two Against the North; a Story of Huskie and Spareribs. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merril, 1949.
- (11) Simonsen, Sigurd Jay. Among the Sourdoughs. New York: Fortuny's, 1940.
- (10) Sinclair, Bertrand William. Big Timber; a Story of the Northwest. Toronto: Copp Clark, 1916.
- (11) _____. The Land of the Frozen Suns; a Novel. New York: Dillingham, 1910.
- (10) _____. North of Fifty-Three. New York: Grosett, 1914.
- (11) _____. Raw Gold; a Novel. New York: Dillingham, 1908.
- (9) Slayden, Thelma (Thompson). Miracle in Alaska. New York: F. Fell, 1963.
- (12) Small, Austin J. The Frozen Trail. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924.
- (5) Smitter, Wessel. Another Morning. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941.
- (12) Snell, Roy J. Captain Kituk. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1918.
- (12) _____. An Eskimo Robinson Crusoe. Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1917.
- (12) _____. Little White Fox and His Arctic Friends. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1916.
- (9) Snider, Gerrit Heinie. 100 Stories of Alaska. Anchorage: Color Art Printing Co., 1966.
- (12) Stanley, William M. Miles of Gold; Strange Adventures on the Yukon. Chicago: Laird and Lee, 1898.
- (12) Stefansson, Vilhjalmur. Kak, the Copper Eskimo. With Violet Irwin. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1924.
- (10) Stegner, Wallace Earle. The Big Rock Candy Mountain. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1943.

- (10) Stratemeyer, Edward. To Alaska for Gold; or, The Fortune Hunters of the Yukon. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1905.
- (5) Stringer, Arthur J. A. The Lamp in the Valley, a Novel of Alaska. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1938.
- (11) _____. The Wife Traders; a Tale of the North. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1936.
- (11) _____. The Wolf Woman. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1928.
- (9) Sullivan, Alan. Under the Northern Lights. London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1926.
- (9) Sullivan, May Kellog. The Trail of a Sourdough; Life in Alaska. Boston: R. G. Badger, 1910.
- (4) _____. A Woman Who Went to Alaska. Boston: James H. Earle & Co., 1903.
- (2) Thomas, Lowell, Jr., ed. The Trail of '98. New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1962.*
- (4) Thompson, A. R. Gold-Seeking on the Dalton Trail, Being the Adventures of Two New England Boys in Alaska and the Northwest Territory. . . . , 1900.
Again, I suspect omissions in the source listing rather than in the original publication.
- (5) Tutein, Peter. The Sealers. Trans. by Eugene Gay-Tifft. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938.*
Originally published as Faengstmaend.
- (10) Tweeddale, George Witeman. North of 62, a Story of Adventure. Buffalo: Foster & Stewart, 1946.
- (9) Velter, Joseph Matheus. Artic SOS. Trans. by R. M. and W. J. Braithwaite. New York: Harper, 1935.
- (10) Vidal, Gore. Williwaw. New York: Dutton, 1946.*
- (5) Wagner, Elby. Partners Three. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1928.
- (9) Wallenius, Kurt Martti. Men from the Sea. Trans. by Vilhjalmur Steffansson. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955.
- (10) Wheeler, James Cooper. Captain Pete in Alaska. New York: Dutton, 1910.

- (11) White, Stewart Edward. Conjuror's House, a Romance of the Free Forest. New York: McClure, 1903.*
- (10) _____. Pole Star. With Harry DeVighne. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1935.
- _____. Secret Harbour. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1926.
- _____. The Silent Places. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1921.
- (10) _____. Skookum Chuck; a Novel. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1925.
- (10) _____. Wild Geese Calling. New York: Doubleday, 1940.*
- (10) Willard, Caroline McCoy (White). Kin-da-shon's Wife; an Alaskan Story. New York: Revell, 1892.
- (5) Williamson, Thames R. The Earth Told Me. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1930.
- (9) Willis, Arthur Robert. North of the Yukon. New York: Avalon Books, 1955.
- (10) Willoughby, Florance Barrett. The Golden Totem, a Novel of Modern Alaska. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1945.*
- (10) _____. River House. New York: Triangle Books, 1936.
- (10) _____. Rocking Moon. A Romance of Alaska. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1925.
- (10) _____. Sondra O'Moore. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1939.
- (10) _____. Sitka, Portal to Romance. Boston: Houghton, 1930.
- (10) _____. Sitka; to Know Alaska One Must First Know Sitka. London: Hodder, 1930.
- (10) _____. Spawn of the North. New York: Triangle Books, 1932.
- (10) _____. The Trail Eater; a Romance of the All-Alaska Sweepstakes. New York: Putnam, 1929.
- (10) _____. Where the Sun Swings North. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922.

- (4) Young, Egerton Ryerson. Three Boys in the Wild Northland. San Francisco: Methodist Book Concern, n.d.
- (4) _____. Winter Adventures of Three Boys in the Great Loneland. San Francisco: Methodist Book Concern, 1899.
- (12) Young, Samuel Hall. The Klondike Clan; a Tale of the Great Stampede. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916.

Alaskan History and Description

A complete listing of relevant titles would run to nearly fifteen hundred entries. The list given here is limited to those works actually consulted.

Adams, Ben. Last Frontier. New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1961.

_____. Alaska: The Big Land. New York: Hill & Wang, Inc., 1959.*

Andrews, Clarence Leroy. The Story of Alaska. Caldwell, Ida.: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1944.*

Atwood, Evangeline. We Shall Be Remembered. Anchorage: Alaska Methodist University Press, 1966.
Description of the Matanuska Project.

Bailey, Thomas A. "Theodore Roosevelt and the Alaska boundary Settlement." Alaska and Its History. Edited by Morgan B. Sherwood. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.

Bancroft, Hubert Howe. History of Alaska, 1730-1885. San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft, 1886.

Berton, Pierre. Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Limited, 1958.*
Published simultaneously in the U.S. as The Klondike Fever.

Chevigny, Hector. Russian America. The Great Alaskan Venture, 1741-1867. New York: Viking Press, 1965.

Clark, Henry W. History of Alaska. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930.*
Published in 1939 as Alaska: The Last Frontier.

- Colby, Merle. A Guide to Alaska: Last American Frontier. Federal Writers' Project. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1940.
- Gruening, Ernest, ed. An Alaskan Reader 1867-1967. New York: Meredith Press, 1966.*
- _____. The State of Alaska. Rev. New York: Random House, 1968.*
- Hilscher, Herb and Miriam. Alaska, U.S.A. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1959.*
- Hinckley, Ted C. The Americanization of Alaska, 1867-1897. Palo Alto, Calif.: Pacific Books, Publishers, 1972.*
- Hulley, Clarence C. Alaska 1741-1953. Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1953.*
- Keithahn, Edward L. "Alaska Ice, Inc." Pacific Northwest Quarterly, XXXVI (April, 1945), 121-131. Alaska and Its History. Edited by Morgan B. Sherwood. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.*
- Kerner, Robert Joseph. "The Russian Eastward Movement: Some Observations on Its Historical Significance." Pacific Historical Review, XVII (May, 1948), 135-148. Alaska and Its History. Edited by Morgan B. Sherwood. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.*
- Klein, David R. "Alaskans and the Paths." Alaskan Sportsman. (August, 1969), 4-5, 50.*
- Lou Jacobin's Guide to Alaska and the Yukon. 22nd annual ed. Anchorage: Guide to Alaska, Inc., 1967.
- Luthin, Reinhard H. "The Sale of Alaska." Alaska and Its History. Edited by Morgan B. Sherwood. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.*
- The Milepost--Guide to the Land of the Midnight Sun. Edited by Bob Henning. Juneau: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1967.*
- Nichols, Jeannette Paddock. "Advertising and the Klondike." Washington Historical Quarterly, XIII (January, 1922), 20-26. Alaska and Its History. Edited by Morgan B. Sherwood. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.*

- Nichols, Jeannette Paddock. Alaska: A History of Its Administration, Exploitation, and Industrial Development During Its First Half Century Under the Rule of the United States. Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1924.*
- Sherwood, Morgan B., ed. Alaska and Its History. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.*
- Smith, Richard Austin, et. al. The Frontier States: Alaska and Hawaii. New York: Time-Life Books, 1968.
- Tompkins, Stuart Ramsay. Alaska: Promyshlennik and Sour-dough. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1945.*
- Welch, Richard E., Jr. "American Public Opinion and the Purchase of Russian America." American Slavic and East European Review, XVII (1958), 481-494. Alaska and Its History. Edited by Morgan B. Sherwood. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.*

Personal Accounts

The bibliographies mentioned in Section I would yield a very large number of works in this category, but here the list is limited to those accounts actually read.

- Annabel, Russell. Hunting and Fishing in Alaska. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.
- Barber, Olive. Meet Me in Juneau. Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1960.
- Beach, Rex. Personal Exposures. New York: Harper & Row, 1940.
- Berto, Hazel. North to Alaska's Shining River. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc., 1959.
- Brower, Charles D. Fifty Years Below Zero: A Lifetime of Adventure in the Far North. With Philip J. Farrelly and Lyman Anson. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1942.
- Carrighar, Sally. Icebound Summer. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953. Pyramid Edition. New York: Pyramid Publications, Inc., 1965.
- _____. Moonlight at Midday. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1958. Pyramid Edition. New York: Pyramid Publications, Inc., 1967.

- Carrighar, Sally. Wild Heritage. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965. Fawcett Crest edition. New York: Fawcett World Library, 1967.
- Day, Beth. Glacier Pilot. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1957.
- Dufresne, Frank. My Way Was North. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.
- Garland, Hamlin. The Trail of the Gold-seekers; a Record of Travel in Prose and Verse. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1899.*
- Heller, Herbert, ed. Sourdough Sagas: The Journals, Memoirs, Tales and Recollections of the Earliest Alaskan Gold Miners, 1883-1923. Cleveland: The World Publishing Company, 1967.*
- Hitchcock, Mary E. Two Women in the Klondike; the Story of a Journey to the Gold-Fields of Alaska. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899.
- Keithahn, Edward L. Eskimo Adventure. Seattle: Superior Publishing Co., 1963.
- Kent, Rockwell. Wilderness: A Journal of Quiet Adventure in Alaska. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1920.
- Leising, William A. Arctic Wings. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959. Echo Books edition. Garden City, N.Y.: Echo Books, 1965.
- Lindberg, Anne Morrow. North to the Orient. Harbrace Paperback Library. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963.
- McKeown, Martha. Trail Led North. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1948.
- Martin, Martha. O Rugged Land of Gold. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1953.
- Moody, Joseph P. Arctic Doctor. With W. de Groot van Embden. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955. Collier Books edition. New York: Collier Books, 1962.
- Morenus, Richard. Alaska Sourdough, the Story of Slim Williams. Chicago: Rand McNally & Co., 1956.
- Morgan, Murray. One Man's Gold Rush. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967.

- Muir, John. Travels in Alaska. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1915.
- Murie, Margaret. Two in the Far North. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.
- Nelson, Klondy. Daughter of the Gold Rush. With Corey Ford. New York: Random House, 1955.
- Olson, Sigurd. Runes of the North. Alfred A. Knopf, 1963.
- Short, Wayne. The Cheechakos. New York: Random House, 1964.
- Stefansson, Vilhjalmur. Unsolved Mysteries of the Arctic. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938. Collier Books edition. New York: Collier Books, 1962.
- Stoddard, Gordon. Go North Young Man. Portland: Binfords & Mort, 1957.
- Tregzger, Hardy. My Fifty Years of Hunting, Fishing, Prospecting, Guiding and Trapping in Alaska. New York: Exposition Press, Inc., 1963.
- Weed, Alberta L. Grandma Goes to the Arctic. Told by Lola Kirkland. Philadelphia: Dorrance, 1961.
- Wickersham, James. Old Yukon: Tales--Trails--and Trials. Washington, D.C.: Washington Law Book Co., 1938.*
- Willard, Caroline McCoy (White). Life in Alaska; Letters of Mrs. Eugene S. Willard. Edited by Eva McClintock. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1884.
- Young, Samuel Hall. Alaska Days with John Muir. New York: Revel, 1915.

American Cultural and
Literary Studies--Works Cited

- Billington, Ray Allen. America's Frontier Heritage. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.
- _____. The Far Western Frontier, 1830-1860. New American Nation Series. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. Harper & Row, Publishers, 1956. Notes refer to Harper Torchbook edition. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962.
- Boatright, Mody C. "The Myth of Frontier Individualism." Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier. Edited by Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968.

- Bogue, Allan G. "Social Theory and the Pioneer." Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier. Edited by Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968.
- Caughey, John Walton. Gold Is the Cornerstone. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948.
- Commager, Henry Steele. The American Mind: An Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950.
- Cowie, Alexander. The Rise of the American Novel. New York: American Book Company, 1948.
- Cunliffe, Marcus. The Literature of the United States. Rev. ed. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1961.
- Curti, Merle. The Growth of American Thought. 3rd ed. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964.
- DeMenil, Alexander Nicolas. The Literature of the Louisiana Territory. St. Louis: The St. Louis New Company, 1904.
- DeVoto, Bernard. The Course of Empire. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1952.
- Dobie, J. Frank. Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest. Rev. Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1952.
- Duffey, Bernard. The Chicago Renaissance in American Letters: A Critical History. E. Lansing: The Michigan State College Press, 1954.
- Fishwick, Marshall. The Hero, American Style. New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1969.
- Fiske, Horace S. Provincial Types in American Fiction. Chautauqua, N.Y.: The Chautauqua Press, 1903.
- Galinsky, Hans, et. al. The Frontier in American History and Literature: Essays and Interpretations. Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, [1960?].
- Hazard, Lucy Lockwood. The Frontier in American Literature. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., Inc., 1927. Notes refer to American Classics Series edition, 1961.
- Hofstadter, Richard and Lipset, Seymour Martin, ed. Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968.

- Hubbard, Keith. "The Klondike in Canadian Literature." Unpublished thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1968.
- Hubbell, Jay B. "The Frontier." Reinterpretation of American Literature: Some Contributions Toward the Understanding of Its Historical Development. Edited by Norman Foerster. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928.
- Jensen, Merrill, ed. Regionalism in America. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951.
- Kaplan, Lawrence S. "The Frontier and the American Character." The Frontier in American History and Literature: Essays and Interpretations. By Hans Galinsky, et. al. Frankfurt am Main: Moritz Diesterweg, [1960?].
- Keyes, Nelson Beecher. The American Frontier: Our Unique Heritage. Garden City, N.Y.: Hanover House, 1954.
- Klinck, Carl, et. al. The Literary History of Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967.
- McClintock, James I. "Jack London's Short Stories." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1968.
- Mikesell, Marvin W. "Comparative Studies in Frontier History." Turner and the Sociology of the Frontier. Edited by Richard Hofstadter and Seymour Martin Lipset. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1968.
- Moore, Arthur Keister. The Frontier Mind: A Cultural Analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman. N.p.: University of Kentucky Press, 1957.
- Nye, Russel Blaine. The Cultural Life of the New Nation 1776-1830. New American Nation Series. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. Harper & Row, Publishers, 1960. Harper Torchbooks. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1963.
- Pattee, Fred Lewis. "The Prophet of the Last Frontier." Sidelights on American Literature. New York: The Century Co., 1922.
- Paul, Rodman W. California Gold: The Beginning of Mining in the Far West. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947.
- Paxon, Frederic L. History of the American Frontier 1763-1893. Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1924.

- Quinn, Arthur Hobson. American Fiction: An Historical and Critical Survey. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936.
- Rusk, Ralph Leslie. The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier. 4 vols. New York: Columbia University Press, 1926.
- Shumaker, Arthur W. A History of Indiana Literature, With Emphasis on the Authors of Imaginative Works Who Commenced Writing Prior to World War II. N.p.: Indiana Historical Society, 1962.
- Simon, Harold P. The Closed Frontier: Studies in American Literary Tragedy. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970.
- Smith, Henry Nash. "Western Chroniclers and Literary Pioneers." Vol. II. Literary History of the United States. By Robert E. Spiller, et. al. New York, 1948.
- _____. Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950. Notes refer to the Vintage edition. New York: Random House, 1957.
- Spencer, Benjamin T. "Regionalism in American Literature." Regionalism in America. Edited by Merrill Jensen. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1951.
- Thompson, Sith. "The Indian Heritage." Vol. II. Literary History of the United States. By Robert E. Spiller, et. al. New York, 1948.
- Turner, Frederick Jackson. The Frontier in American History. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947.
- Wagenknecht, Edward. Cavalcade of the American Novel, from the Birth of the Nation to the Middle of the Twentieth Century. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952.
- Walser, Richard. Literary North Carolina: A Brief Historical Survey. Raleigh, N.C.: State Department of Archives and History, 1970.
- Warren, Robert Penn. "Some Don'ts for Literary Regionalists." American Review, VIII (December, 1936), 142-150.



