Alaska History

The National Survey of Historic sites and Buildings
The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Theme XXI

Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1910

Special Study

ALASKA HISTORY

1741 — 1910

1961

United States Department of the Interior
Stewart L. Udall, Secretary

National Park Service
Conrad L. Wirth, Director
FOREWORD

This study represents the work of the National Park Service field staff assigned to The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. In the process of evaluating the sites treated in the several themes, the Consulting Committee for the Survey and the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments have screened the findings of the field staff. The Advisory Board considered that some sites recommended by the field staff for classification did not meet the standards of the Survey's criteria.

The sites and buildings associated with this study, "Alaska History," recommended for classification as possessing exceptional value by the Advisory Board are as follows:

1. Erskine House
2. Old Sitka
3. St. Michael's Cathedral
4. Russian Mission
5. American Flag Raising Site
6. Fur Seal Rookeries
7. Skagway and White Pass

The Advisory Board did not recommend classification of the following sites proposed by the field staff of the Survey:

1. Chilkoot Pass
2. Buldakoff Dwelling
3. Russian Residence
4. Russian-American Company Warehouse
5. Church Warden's House
6. Hubley House
7. Lowe House
The sites listed below were recommended for further study to determine whether they merit classification as possessing exceptional value:

1. Kenai (Redoubt St. Nicholas)
2. Sheldon Jackson Junior College
3. Point Barrow
4. Metlakatla
5. Ketchikan

When the studies are published for wider distribution they will reflect these changes.

Conrad L. Wirth
Director
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Summary of the Theme - Part I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I  The Discovery of Alaska, 1724-1742</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II The Russian Period, 1743-1867</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III The Purchase of Alaska, 1845-1867</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV Political and Military Developments, 1867-1910</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V  Economic Developments, 1867-1910</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI Arts and Sciences, 1784-1910</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII Social and Humanitarian Movement, 1794-1910</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII Conclusion</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey of Sites and Buildings - Part II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Discussion</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sites of Exceptional Value</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodiak (St. Paul's Harbor)</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Erskine House, Kodiak</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Love House, Kodiak</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Hubley House, Kodiak</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Old Sitka (Redoubt St. Michael)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitka (New Archangel)</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. St. Michael's Cathedral, Sitka</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Russian Mission, Sitka</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Church Wardens's House, Sitka</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Russian American Company Warehouse, Sitka</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Russian Residence (Tilson Building, Sitka)</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Buldakovff Dwelling, Sitka</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. American Flag Raising Site, Sitka</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Fur Seal Rookeries, St. Paul Island, Pribilof group</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Chilkoot Pass - Dyea area</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Skagway - Whaite Pass area</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas in the National Park System Related to Theme (Sitka N.M.)</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Other Sites Evaluated**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Unalaska</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Three Saints Bay Settlement, Kodiak Island</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Russian-American Settlements, Pribilof Islands</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kenai (Redoubt St. Nicholas)</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Seward (Resurrection Bay)</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>St. Michael (Redoubt Mikhailovsk)</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Wrangell (Redoubt St. Dionysius)</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nulato</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Unalakleet</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Fort Yukon</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sitka, Territorial Capital, 1867-1906</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Sheldon Jackson Junior College, Sitka</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Juneau</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Douglas Island</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Barrow</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Metlakatla</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Nome</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Fairbanks</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Cordova</td>
<td>215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Valdez</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Ketchikan</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix I, Criteria for Classification**

**Appendix II, Notes on 9 Historic Sites Not Visited**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Port Graham (Fort Alexandrovsk)</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kasilof (Fort George)</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Muchek, Hinchinbrook Island (Redoubt Constantine)</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Yakutat Bay (Glory of Russia)</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nushagak (Redoubt Alexandrovsk)</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Kolmakof Redoubt</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Circle</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Eagle City</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Attu</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anchorage</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Historic Sites in Alaska</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- b -
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustrations following page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cover, New Archangel (Sitka), 1805</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Sitka, c.1882 ........................................ 47
2. Fort Wrangel, 1889 ...................................... 61
3. St. Paul, Pribilof Islands, 1890's ...................... 73
4. St. George, Pribilof Islands, 1890's ...................... 73
5. Juneau, 1889 ............................................. 81
6. Douglas Island, 1913 .................................... 81
7. Dyea City, 1898 .......................................... 86
8. Chilkoot Pass, 1898 ...................................... 86
9. Rocking gold at Nome, 1899 ............................... 87
10. Ketchikan, 1900 ........................................ 96
11. Valdez, 1901 ........................................... 98
12. New Metlakatla, c.1890 ................................. 126
13. Unalaska, c.1894 ....................................... 130
14. Erskine House, Kodiak .................................. 156
15. Lowe House, Kodiak ..................................... 157
16. Old Sitka Site .......................................... 160
17. St. Michael Cathedral, Sitka ............................ 162
18. Russian Mission, Sitka ................................ 164
19. Church Warden's House, Sitka .......................... 164
20. Russian American Co. Warehouse, Sitka ............... 164
21. Russian Residence (Tilson Bldg.), Sitka .............. 165
22. Buldakoff Dwelling (Bahrt House), Sitka .............. 165
23. American Flag Raising Site, Sitka ...................... 166
24. Fur Seal Rookery, St. Paul Island ...................... 170
25. Killing ground, St. Paul Island ......................... 171
26. Dyea Flats .............................................. 173
27. Skagway .................................................. 177
28. Broadway Street, Skagway ............................... 177
29. White Pass and Yukon Route R.R. Depot, Skagway .... 177
30. Unalaska .................................................. 181
31. Treadwell Stamp Mill, Douglas Island ................. 206
32. Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Co. Bldg., Barrow 207
33. Log Cabin of Erik Limblom, Nome ....................... 212
34. Capt. Barnette's Log Cabin, Fairbanks ............... 214
35. Riverboat S.S. Nenana, Fairbanks ..................... 214
36. Cordova .................................................. 216

- e -
PREFACE

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings is a resumption of the Historic Sites Survey begun in 1937, under the authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935. During World War II, and the emergency following, it was necessary to suspend these studies. The Survey has now been resumed as part of the National Park Service Mission 66 Program.

The purpose of the Survey, as outlined in the Historic Sites Act, is to "make a survey of historic and archeologic sites, buildings, and objects for the purpose of determining which possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States." In carrying out this basic directive, each site and building considered in the Survey is evaluated in terms of the Criteria for Classification, which are listed in the appendix of this report.

When completed, the Survey will make recommendations to the Director of the National Park Service and the Secretary of the Interior as to the sites of "exceptional value." This will assist the National Park Service in preparing the National Recreation Plan, including sites which may be administered by the National Park Service to fill in gaps in the historical and archeological representation within the National Park System. It will also recommend and encourage programs of historical and archeological preservation being carried out by state and local agencies.
The historical background narrative of this report was prepared for the National Park Service, under contract, by Dr. Benjamin F. Gilbert of San Jose State College, California. The material on individual sites was written by Historian Charles W. Snell, Region Four, San Francisco and is based on a 34-day 13,000 mile tour of Alaska, made in June-July, 1961. Data on three sites, however, namely—St. Michael, Nulato, and Unalakeet, have been drawn entirely from A. Arthur Woodward, "A Preliminary Survey of Alaska's Archeology, Ethnology, and History," (Typescript, Region Four, San Francisco, Jan. 1952). Dr. Woodward visited these areas for the National Park Service in the summer of 1951.

After completion, the study was presented to the Consulting Committee for the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The Committee consists of Dr. Waldo G. Leland, Director of the American Council of Learned Societies; Dr. S. K. Stevens, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Dr. Louis B. Wright, Folger-Shakespearean Library; Mr. Earl H. Reed, American Institute of Architects; Dr. Richard H. Howland, Head Curator, Civil History, Smithsonian Institution; Mr. Eric Gugler, American Scenic and Historical Preservation Society; Dr. J. O. Brew, Committee for the Recovery of Archeological Remains; Mr. Frederick Johnson, Robert S. Peabody Foundation for American Archeology; and Mr. Robert Garvey, Jr., Executive Director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
The over-all Survey, as well as the theme study which follows, is under the general direction of John O. Littleton, Chief, National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings, who works under the general supervision of Herbert E. Kahler, Chief Historian, Branch of History, and Daniel B. Beard, Chief, Division of Interpretation, of the National Park Service.

Conrad L. Wirth
Director
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of the National Survey profits from the experience and knowledge of a considerable number of persons and organizations. Assistance from the following people in Alaska is gratefully acknowledged: Mr. George A. Hall, Historian, Sitka National Monument; Mr. E. L. Keithahn, Librarian and Curator, Alaska Historical Library and Museum, Juneau; Mr. A. Earl Plourde, State Forester, Division of Lands, State of Alaska, Anchorage; Mr. Roman Malach, Principal, Aurora School, Anchorage; Dr. Bob Johnson, Dr. A. Holmes Johnson, and Mr. William Lamme, of Kodiak and Aleutian Islands Historical Society, Kodiak; Mr. William Ferro and Mr. Robert Feero, Skagway; Mr. John S. LeFevre and Mrs. Lena E. Jansen of Cordova; Mr. Henry Trusty, Kenai; Mr. C. E. Orlander and Mr. Neville F. Hodson, of Seward; Reverend Walter W. Hannum, Fort Yukon; Mr. Herbert Bastian, Mrs. Louise Hollister, and Mr. Robert Brower, Barrow; Mr. Charles Martin, Mr. Charles Jones, and Mr. Willie Brown, of Nome; and Mr. E. E. Hortman of Unalaska.

The cover was prepared by the Western Museum Laboratory, National Park Service, San Francisco, and the map by the Division of Recreation Resource Planning, Region Four Office, San Francisco.
Geographic features. Geography has been a significant determinant in Alaska's history. The former isolation of the area hampered its development, and until recent times it was almost entirely accessible only by sea. Alaska comprises an area of about 586,000 square miles with a coast line of 34,000 miles. There are three physiographic regions: the Pacific Mountain, the Central Plateau, and the Arctic Slope. Alaska is usually divided into six geographical regions: (1) Southeastern Alaska or the Panhandle, (2) Southcentral Alaska, (3) Southwestern Alaska, (4) Interior Alaska, (5) Seward Peninsula, and (6) the Arctic Slope.

Southeastern Alaska constitutes the narrow strip of mainland and the Alexander Archipelago. It is an area of high mountains and narrow waterways. This region was the most accessible by ship through the Inside Passage, and its mild climate attracted settlement and industry.

The Southcentral region comprises the Prince William Sound and Cook Inlet areas of the southern coast and extends inland. Southwestern Alaska includes the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutians, and Bristol Bay. The Interior is a land of large rivers and wide valleys. In this low country flow the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. The Seward Peninsula has long and cold winters. Mining has attracted whites to this low area drained primarily by the Fish and Kaviruk rivers. The region has a large Eskimo population which has sustained itself largely by reindeer. The Arctic Slope is a barren and treeless region. The area is sparsely populated, and the main villages have been on the coast.
Alaska is a land of geographic diversity and varied climate and terrain. The mountains are extensions of the ranges originating to the south. In the glacial ages the Pacific Mountains and some of the Arctic Mountains were covered with glaciers. There are three adjacent bodies of water—the Pacific, Bering and Arctic. The Pacific Mountains have some of the highest peaks in the world such as Mt. McKinley, Mt. Wrangell and Mt. St. Elias.

The Panhandle has heavy rain, but a moderate climate. The Southcentral coastal region in comparison to the Southeast has colder weather and less rain. The Aleutian Islands usually have foggy and cloudy weather, but the temperature is moderate. In the Bering Sea coastal region the summers are short and cool. The interior plateau has cold and dry winters, but short and warm summers. However, on the Arctic Slope climate is less extreme than in the Interior.

In today's air age Alaska is no longer isolated. Its neighbors are Canada, Russia, Norway, Iceland, and Greenland. The vast country is neither a frozen waste nor a majestic wonderland, but rather a land of contrasts. Its many resources of furs, minerals, forests and fish have been and will continue to be important in Alaska's history.¹

The native peoples. The natives of Alaska have been divided ethnologically into four groups—the Aleut, the Eskimo or Innuit, the Tlingit-Haida Indian, and the Athapascan Indian. The Aleuts inhabited

the Aleutian Islands and the western region of the Alaska Peninsula; the Eskimos occupied the coastal area from Bristol Bay to Point Demarcation on the Arctic Ocean; the Tlingit-Haida Indians lived along the southeastern coast; and the Athapascan Indians lived in the interior.  

All of the natives relied upon fishing or hunting for their economy. The Eskimo hunted whale, seal, walrus, and fish and for transportation utilized his kayak. On land he used the dog and sled for hunting. The Aleuts were skilled mariners in their baidars and baidarkas. They sought the sea otter, seal, sea lion and fish. Coastal Indians relied upon fishing, and the Indians of the interior relied upon both fishing and hunting.

In the first volume of The Native Races, entitled "Wild Tribes," Hubert H. Bancroft classified the natives dwelling north of the fifty-fifth parallel as hyperboreans. The Eskimos were described as having fair complexion, medium stature, an egg-shaped face, small oblique eyes, and coarse black hair. They were robust and active. For dress they used skins of animals and birds. Seal and whale intestines were utilized in making waterproof clothing.

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2 Hulley, op. cit., p. 14; Dall, op cit., p. 373 mentioned that in 1869 he proposed the term, Orarian, in distinguishing the Inuit, Aleut, and Asiatic Eskimo from the "Indians." The 1880 U.S. Census referred to four groups then classified as the Eskimo (or Inuit), the Aleut (Oonangan), the Thlinket, and the Athabaskan (or Tinneh), see Ivan Petroff, Alaska: Its Population, Industries, and Resources, p. 123, in Tenth Census (Washington, D.C., 1884), VIII.


The usual winter dwelling (yourt) was semi-subterranean, and within the excavation the Eskimo built a frame, either of wood or whalebone. Wood, seal, or whale oil were used as fuel. The snow house or igloo was an emergency dwelling devised during the seal-hunting season. In summer a tent constructed of poles and skins served as a dwelling.⁵

In some respects the Aleuts were similar to the Eskimos, yet they differed. They lived in large underground houses before the coming of the Russians. Migration and intermarriage have virtually made them a distinct race.⁶ By 1867, the Aleuts had largely adopted a civilized way of life.⁷

The Tlingits of southeastern Alaska were at one time warlike. They were fine canoe builders and gained their sustenance from the sea. They were akin to the Haidas, Nootkas, Tsimshians, and other peoples of the Northwest. The Haidas occupied Prince of Wales and Dall Island in Alaska.⁸

The Athapascans of the interior lived by fishing and hunting. Large numbers relied on salmon, but a few of this family who resided in areas beyond the salmon depended on land game.⁹

Native arts and crafts. Prior to the arrival of the white man, the Aleuts were skilled at basketry.¹⁰ The Eskimos were talented in carving tools, utensils and ornaments. In ancient times they

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⁵ Ibid., pp. 50-51.
⁷ Hulley, op.cit., p. 17.
⁸ Ibid., pp. 22-25; Clark, op.cit., p. 25.
⁹ Hulley, op.cit., p. 28.
¹⁰ Ibid., p. 17.
practiced clay pottery and carved artistically in ivory. They
developed elaborate folk tales, but never devised a written
language. The Tlinglit Indians were able carbers of totem poles
and were noted for weaving baskets and blankets. They made necklaces, bracelets, and rings from stone and copper. Moreover, they
demonstrated ability in painting by ornamenting the fronts of their
houses with meaningful symbols.  

The natives of Alaska should not be classified as North American Indians, for with minor exceptions they are ethnologically
different. The Alaskan natives have never lived on reservations and there has been considerable intermixture with the whites.

Russian expansion to the Pacific. The Russians began their
penetration into Siberia in the latter part of the sixteenth century.
In 1587, the Cossacks founded their fort or ostrog, which later
became Tobolsk, on the Irtysh River where it is joined by the Tobol.
From 1607 to 1629, Tobolsk was the single center of administration.
Then Tomsk evolved into a second center and both cities administered
smaller cities governed by woewods who were responsible to superiors
at either Tobolsk or Tomsk. The woewod of Tobolsk was the primary
Siberian official until 1708, when Peter the Great reorganized
Siberia.

From 1630 to 1650, Russian made great strides in expansion.
Her hunters and Cossacks, attracted by the fur trade, moved

\[\text{\textsuperscript{11}}\text{H. Dewey Anderson and Walter C. Bells, Alaska Natives. A Survey of Their Sociological and Educational Status (Stanford University, 1935), pp. 73-76.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\text{Clark, op.cit., pp. 25-26; Bancroft, Native Races, I, p. 107.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{13}}\text{J. A. hellerthal, Alaskan Melodrama (New York, 1936), pp. 55-56; Colby, op.cit., p. 45.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{14}}\text{Frank A. Golder, Russian Expansion on the Pacific, 1641-1850 (Cleveland, 1914), pp. 18-19.}\]
eastwardly in quest of new rivers and peoples until they reached the Pacific. In 1628, a party of ten Russians under Vassili Bugor reached the Lena River. Along the river they collected tribute in furs from the natives. Four years later Beketof founded a fort which developed into the city of Yakutsk, the capital of eastern Siberia and jumping-off place for expeditions to the Arctic and Pacific. In 1638, the Russians penetrated the more distant rivers of the Yana, Indigirka, Kolima, and Anadir in eastern Siberia. By the following year they established the post of Okhotsok on the Pacific.

On July 15, 1643, Wasili Poyarkof left Yakutsk and reached the mouth of the Amur River during the winter. His expeditions made known the resources of the Amur and its tributaries. However, cruel treatment accorded the inhabitants by the Russians caused them to remain loyal to China. In 1649-50, Yarka Pavlof Khabarof lead an expedition to the Amur, reporting to the woewod of Yakulsk that if 6,000 men were made available, he could conquer the Amur and assure Yakutsk an adequate supply of grain. After the Russians and Chinese clashed, the Manchus checked Muscovite expansion and by the Treaty of Nerchinsk negotiated in 1689 the Russians were excluded from the Amur Valley until mid-nineteenth century.

\[\text{15 Ibid., p. 67.}\]
\[\text{16 Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Alaska (San Francisco, 1886), pp. 18-20.}\]
\[\text{17 Golder, op. cit., pp. 36-40.}\]
\[\text{18 Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 17-18.}\]
It was fifty years after the Russians acquired the Anadir country to the north and Ouda and Okhotsk regions to the south that they mustered sufficient strength to attempt the occupation of the Kamchatka Peninsula. By 1710 the area was conquered and in 1715, the Russians opened communication by sea from Okhotsk.

Until about 1650, cartographers described Asia as separated from America by a strait, generally called Anian. Then a new body of land appeared as Terra de Jeso. In fact the North Pacific was a geographical inaccuracy, and it was not known whether Asia and America were connected or separated by a narrow strait or by an island. Hence, Peter the Great decided to solve the problem and to claim new lands. He selected Vitus Bering, a Dane serving in the imperial navy, to command an expedition. On December 23, 1724, the Czar drafted instructions directing the construction in Kamchatka or elsewhere of one or two boats. Bering was ordered to sail along the shore running to the north and to determine where it connected with America.

Peter the Great died on January 28, 1725, but Catherine I continued her husband's plan and Bering departed on February 5. He arrived at Okhotsk in October, 1726. Supplies and equipment were transported across Siberia. Bering built the Fortune and repaired an older vessel, the Lodiya. After reaching the Kamchatka Peninsula, the St. Gabriel was built and the first Bering expedition departed on July 14, 1726, in this ocean-going vessel. Bering sailed

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19 Golder, op. cit., p. 97.
20 Hulley, op. cit., p. 37.
to the north and on August 8, discovered St. Lawrence Island. The expedition then passed unknowingly through Bering Strait in thick weather, not observing the American coast. On August 15, the ship reached 67°13' north latitude. Since land did not extend further north, Bering decided to return to Kamchatka before winter.  

Upon his return to St. Petersburg, Bering was not highly praised, and some persons asserted that he had only found the northern limits of Kamchatka. Nonetheless, elaborate plans were approved for a second expedition. In June, 1741, the St. Peter and the St. Paul were launched at Okhotsk, and it was planned to sail from the new port on the Pacific at Avatcha Bay which Bering named Petropavlovsk. 

In his original plan Bering intended to depart from Kamchatka early in May, and after discovering America he intended to spend the winter there, returning to Asia the next year. However, the two vessels set sail on June 5, 1741, from Petropavlovsk, the St. Peter being commanded by Bering and the St. Paul by Alexei Chirikof. Sixteen days later the ships drifted apart never to meet again. On July 15, the St. Paul's crew sighted land. However, after failing to make a landing and since the water supply was low, Chirikof decided to return to Kamchatka. On September 9, the St. Paul anchored in the bay of one of the Aleutian Islands and the crew saw people, but the wind forced them to sail away. Finally the ship returned to Avatcha Bay on October 10. 

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23 Colden, op. cit., p. 149.
24 Ibid., pp. 165-81.
25 Ibid., pp. 182-89.
Bering and his men aboard the St. Peter sighted Mt. St. Elias on July 16, 1741. Sixteen of the crew sailed around an island, probably Kayak Island. Some men went ashore for water and Georg Wilhelm Steller, the naturalist, made scientific observations for a short period. However, because of a shortage of provisions Bering decided to sail for his home port. Scurvy soon began to decimate the crew. At the Shumagin Islands, off the southeast coast of the Alaska Peninsula, they went ashore again for water, and Steller had another brief opportunity for his investigations. Then the vessel sailed westwardly to an island where on December 8, Bering died on the place named after him. Eventually the survivors reached Avatcha Bay in the summer of 1742.  

The survivors returned to Petropavlovsk with valuable furs. In fact, sea otter flesh had given them food, and about 900 furs were obtained. The sea otter had been known in eastern Siberia where a few had been captured along the Kamchatka coast and among the Kurile Islands to the south. The possibility of a new source of sea otter skins was to motivate further voyages into Alaska waters.  

On the basis of his nine months' observations on Bering Island Steller described the fur seal, sea otter, sea lion, and sea cow in his monumental study, De Bestiis Marinis. Steller had even proposed domestication of the sea otter in Russia.  

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26 Ibid., pp. 191-220; Tompkins, op. cit., pp. 40-43; for details concerning Bering's expeditions see F. A. Goldner, Bering's Voyages, An Account of the Efforts of the Russians to Determine the Relation of Asia and America (New York, 1922) and Peter Lauridsen, Vitus Bering: The Discoverer of Bering Strait (Chicago, 1889).  
CHAPTER II. THE RUSSIAN PERIOD, 1743-1867

Swarming of the Promyshleniki. Despite the tragic fate of Bering and the sufferings of his expedition and that of Chirikof, fearless and ruthless fur hunters immediately launched commercial expeditions in search of the sea otter. This phase of Russian expansion has appropriately been referred to as the "swarming of the promyshleniki." These traders constructed numerous small sewn vessels called shitiki in which they sailed chiefly by dead reckoning to the islands lying between Kamchatka and America.  

In 1743, Yemel'yan Basov of Tobolsk formed a partnership with the Moscow merchant, Andrei Serebrennikof, and in a small shitik, the Kapiton, he sailed to Bering Island. Two years later, Basov, in partnership with an Irkutsk merchant, again sailed to Bering Island and to Copper Island. He reportedly collected 1,600 sea otters, 2,000 fur seals, and 2,000 blue foxes. The success of his first voyage motivated other merchants to outfit an expedition. Thus Yakov Chruproev and Mikhail Nevodchikov sailed in the Evdokia in 1745, to Attu and Agattu in the Aleutians where they committed the first violence against the natives.  

2 William H. Dall, Alaska and Its Resources (Boston, 1870), p. 301.  
As additional expeditions sailed east the promshlenniki began to enslave the natives and to require compulsory hunting. Twenty years after Bering's discovery the Russians had reached about two-thirds of the Aleutian Islands. However, between 1742 and 1764, official Russian interest in exploration had declined partly as a result of the expense of the second Bering expedition and because of pressing diplomatic and military problems.

In 1747, Empress Elizabeth appointed Mikhail Nevodchikof as a master in the imperial navy to supervise the collection of tribute in furs from the natives on the islands between Asia and America. Although tribute was the main concern, at times the government granted a short-term monopoly of the fur resources of an island or group of islands. Yet because of European wars the government had no effective control of Siberia and beyond.

After Catherine the Great became empress in 1762, the government resumed interest in exploration. In 1764, Lieutenant Synd was ordered on a voyage of discovery from Okhotsk towards the Bering Strait. His first ship became unseaworthy, but he sailed again in 1765, possibly touching the American mainland before his return three years later.

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4 Harold McCracken, Hunters of the Stormy Sea (London, 1957), pp. 36-40
9 Tompkins and Moorhead, op. cit., p. 66
In 1768, a second expedition was dispatched to complete Bering's work. On July 23, Captain Peter K. Krenitsyn, commanding the St. Catherine, and Lieutenant Michael Levasheff, commanding the St. Paul, sailed from the mouth of the Kamchatka River. The St. Paul wintered at Unalaska while the St. Catherine wintered at Unimak Island. The next year the vessels returned to Kamchatka. Actually the expedition made few achievements except for obtaining data concerning the natives.  

Empress Catherine encouraged merchants to explore and trade, granting them rewards in turn for the best furs. From 1770 to 1790 the fur trade flourished in the Aleutians. Expeditions became better prepared as many new merchants participated in the profitable trade. Some were Greek merchants and sailors induced into Russian service by Catherine's pro-Hellenism.  

Indeed, the individualistic promyshlenniki had subjugated the Aleuts by 1770. At first the imperial government collected a tribute or yassak from the natives, and usually a Cossack was assigned to each ship to collect it. Frequently, the promyshlenniki would take hostages at a village, requiring the natives to trap furs while the Russians lived with their wives and daughters. The promyshlenniki were certainly ruthless and assumed an attitude that "God is high above, and the Czar is far away!" On occasion the Aleuts rebelled as had been the case in 1763, when they destroyed four Russian ships at Unalaska.

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11 Ibid., pp. 159-68; James R. Masterson and Helen Brower, Bering's Successors, 1745-1780 (Seattle, 1948), pp. 53-54.
12 Tompkins, Alaska, pp. 53-54.
13 Hulley, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
15 McCracken, op. cit., p. 31
In the late seventies large merchant princes began dominating this fur trade. Among these were Grigorii Ivanovich Shelikhov, Potap Zaikov, Ivan Golikov, and Grigorii and Peter Panov, to mention a few. In 1783, Shelikhov founded the Shelikov-Goikov Company which sent two vessels to Kodiak Island where the first Russian post in America was established at Three Saints Bay in 1784. The colonists explored Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, and the western side of Kodiak Island, establishing trading stations at Cook Inlet, Afognak, Karluk, and elsewhere. After founding the colony Shelikhov proceeded to St. Petersburg and gained exclusive trading privileges in the area occupied. Indeed, Shelikhov was the father of Russian colonization in America, for he evolved his plans as early as 1776.

The year 1786 was significant in the development of Alaska for, as the fur wealth of the Aleutians depleted, a successful search was made for the Amik Islands of Aleut tradition which were believed to be an opulent source of fur seals. On June 12, the navigator, Gerassim Pribilof, discovered the Seal Islands, landing at St. George, named after his ship. On June 29, 1787, his hunters discovered the other main island naming it St. Peter and St. Paul, which was soon contracted to St. Paul. The Pribilof Islands literally swarmed with seals and other fur-bearing life.

17 Tompkins, Alaska, p. 56.
The coming of rival nations. Rumors of the rich pelt supply in the Pacific Northwest filtered out of China to Europe through the media of Portuguese, Dutch, and British merchants. On October 7, 1761, Marqués de Almodóvar, Spain's ambassador to St. Petersburg, reported to his government that although the Russians had only sighted the coasts of America, they were in a position to possess them. As additional information regarding Russian exploration was acquired, Spain in 1774, ordered her first expedition into the North Pacific. Hence Juan Pérez sailed in the Santiago from San Blas. He only reached 55° north latitude and did not learn of any Russian settlements. A second Spanish expedition penetrated into Alaskan waters under the command of Bruno Heceta in the same vessel. He was accompanied by Juan Francisco de la Bodega, commanding the Sonora. The Santiago reached 47° north latitude while Bodega sailed as far north as about 58°, in 1775.

The first English explorer to brave the North Pacific was Captain James Cook, commanding the Discovery and the Resolution, who sought the northeast passage from the Pacific to the Atlantic on his last of three noted voyages. Cook departed from England in 1776, and after discovering the Hawaiian Islands, he entered Nootka Sound. Then the great navigator proceeded north and in 1778, in latitude 57° he sighted and named Mount Edgecumbe. He landed at Kayuk Island, discovered Prince William Sound, and explored Cook

21 Tompkins and Moorhead, op. cit., p. 233.
Inlet. Also he explored in the Arctic and in Norton Sound. At
Unalaska Cook encountered the Russians and exchanged geographical
knowledge with Gerasim Ismailov. After a visit of three weeks,
Cook headed for Hawaii where he was killed by the natives. 23

After Cook's tragic death, command of the expedition relegated
to Charles Clerke. In a second effort to discover a northeast passage
at the Englishmen stopped Petropavlovsk, ascertaining the real value of
the sea otter pelts in their possession. 24 Then they sailed to the
north through the Bering Strait again. However, the Arctic ice
blocked their passage and they returned to Petropavlovsk. Then
they sailed for Canton where their Alaskan furs were sold prior to
the return home. The Cook voyage improved cartography of the north­
western parts of Alaska and of the Siberian coast. The expedition
gave many place names to the northwest coast and stirred interest
in the maritime fur trade. 25

In 1779, the Spaniards again sent two vessels into Alaska
waters. Then in 1786, the French exploring expedition commanded
by Jean Francois de Galaup La Pérouse anchored at Lituya Bay. During
the same year two ships of the British East India Company arrived at
Cook Inlet. At Port Graham they traded and surveyed the harbor. 26

23 Tompkins, Alaska, pp. 59-66; V. L. Denton, The Far West
Coast (Toronto, 1924), pp. 123-39.
24 Miller, op. cit., p. 398.
Also in 1786, several other English ships arrived such as the Sea Otter, commanded by Captain William Tipping and the Nootka, commanded by Captain John Meares.27

In 1788, several crafty Boston merchants financed the dispatch of the first American vessels to the Northwest in quest of the sea otter. Captain Robert Gray in the Lady Washington and Captain John Kendrick in the Columbia wintered at Nootka Sound in 1788-89. Then they traded in the vicinity of Queen Charlotte Islands. Gray and Kendrick were the American pioneers in the Northwest Pacific and presaged the famous Boston-Canton trade.28

The clash of the nations in the North Pacific led to the Nootka Sound controversy which brought Spain and England on the verge of war. Fearing the establishment of a Russian post at Nootka the Spaniards erected a fort there in 1789, which provoked a dispute with the British. By terms of the Nootka Sound Convention of 1790 Spain surrendered the fort to Captain George Vancouver, who took possession in 1792. The incident evidenced Spain's decline, and henceforth only Russia, England, and the United States remained to contend for the Northwest.29


28 Ibid., p. 33; for details see Samuel E. Morison, The Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (Boston, 1941), pp. 41-78.

29 For details see Tompkins, Alaska, pp. 71-81, and Denton, op. cit., pp. 169-277.
Formation of the Russian-American Company and the Beginnings of Baranov's administration. In 1790, Grigori Shelikhov hired Alexander Baranov, who had been trading on the Anadir River, to be manager of his colony. Baranov sailed from Okhotsk on August 30. While procuring water at Unalaska the vessel was wrecked, forcing the Russians to spend a difficult winter there. Eventually on July 8, 1791, Baranov and his party reached the village of Three Saints Bay on Kodiak Island.30

Shelikhov had ambitions to establish a monopoly emulating the British East India Company. Meanwhile, Baranov combatted rival trading companies such as those belonging to Orehof, Panof, and Kisselof. The Lebedev-Lastochkin Company controlled the Pribilof Islands and most of the Cook Inlet vicinity. Moreover, the English, French, Spaniards, and Americans were competitors in the Prince William Sound region. Actually virtual warfare existed between Lebedev-Lastochkin and the Shelikhov companies.31 In 1794, the latter sent two ships transporting agriculturalists, craftsmen, and priests to Kodiak. Two years later the colony of Yakutat was settled near Cape St. Elias.32

In 1795, Shelikhov died and his partner and successor, Ivan L. Golikov, achieved an initial merger of the Siberian merchants


32 Bancroft, op. cit., p. 352, 356.
at Irkutsk. Events moved quickly, and with the blessings of Emperor Paul the Russian-American Company was organized in 1799. It was granted a monopoly of trading and mining from latitude 55° to the Bering Strait and beyond and also among the Aleutians, Kuriles, and islands in the Northeastern sea. Now the day of free competition was over and Russia was bent on a more ambitious expansion.\(^{33}\)

With the outbreak of the French Revolution the number of French and English vessels in the Northwest diminished. Hence the "Boston men" became more active in carrying English goods to trade for furs which they shipped to Canton to exchange for tea. About 1800, Baranov decided to establish his chief factory to the south to circumvent American penetration in the Alexander Archipelago region, where the waters abounded with the coveted sea otter.\(^{34}\)

In April, 1799, Baranov assembled 550 bidarkas and with two ships he sailed for Sitka Sound. On July 7, the Russians anchored in the bay approximately six miles north of the present city of Sitka. Here they erected a fortification.\(^{35}\) On April 20, 1800, Baranov returned to Kodiak, leaving Vasilii Medvednikov in charge of the post which he had named New Archangel. One Sunday in June, 1802, the Kolosh or native Tlingits sacked the redoubt,

\(^{33}\) Tompkins, Alaska, pp. 97-99; for details about the formation of the company see Grekov, op. cit., pp. 22-49.

\(^{34}\) Tompkins, Alaska, p. 103.

setting the buildings afire and annihilating most of the defenders. Captured women and children were held as slaves, and only a few Russians and Aleuts were rescued by English and American sailors in the vicinity. 36

The recapture of Sitka. To add to the disaster a group of Russian and Aleut hunters were attacked by the Kolosh in Sea Otter Bay on June 20. By now the total number of men lost reached over two hundred. Surely Baranov was discouraged, but later in the year a ship arrived with provisions. Thus in 1803, he began preparations to recapture Sitka. By the summer of the next year Baranov had mustered 300 bidarkas and four small vessels and 800 Aleuts and 120 Russians for retaliatory expedition. Fortunately for Baranov, at this time the Russian-American Company had ordered two ships to their American possessions while circumnavigating the globe. These were the Nadezhda, commanded by Captain I. F. Krusenstern, and the Neva, commanded by Captain Yuri F. Lisyansky, sailing from Kronstadt on the first Russian voyages around the world. 37 In October, 1804, Baranov with the assistance of the Neva's guns defeated the Kolosh and recaptured Sitka. Then he constructed a new town site south of the former Russian fort. 38

36 Tompkins, Alaska, p. 113; Andrews, Story of Sitka, pp. 20-21.


38 For details see Bancroft, op. cit., pp. 421-42; the operations of the Neva are described in Sergeyev, pp. 48-60.
Rezanov's visit and Russian interests in California. In 1803, Joseph O'Cain, an American trader, arrived at Kodiak and persuaded Baranov to supply him with Aleut labor and bidarkas to hunt sea otters along the California coast. Hence the American-Russian contract system operated from 1803 to 1812, and from 1809 to 1823, the Russians engaged in independent otter hunting expeditions in California waters. 39

Count Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov, Chamberlain of the Emperor and large shareholder in the Russian American Company, evolved a grandiose design to enhance Russia's territory. On April 18, 1805, after the failure of his diplomatic mission to open Japan, he sailed from Nagasaki on the Nadezhda. At Petropavlovsk Rezanov boarded the Maria, bound for Kodiak. The company had instructed him to inspect the American colonies. Dr. Georg-Heinrich von Langsdorff, the naturalist, accompanied Rezanov, for he was anxious to study the flora and fauna of Russian America. 40 After making visitations to the Pribilof Islands and Unalaska, Rezanov reached St. Paul harbor at Kodiak Island in mid-August. This was not the original Three Saints settlement, but St. Paul at this time was the largest colony and supply base despite the removal of the center of government to Sitka. By now Rezanov was sickened with the poverty and the decadent buildings he had observed everywhere

39 Adele Ogden, The California Sea Otter Trade (Berkeley, 1941), pp. 45-65.

in the colonies. At once he wrote to Count Nikolai Rumiantsov, Chancellor of the Empire and Minister of Commerce, that the company could not survive on the fur trade per se, but should trade with other countries. Moreover, he related that tradesmen and mechanics must be trained in company schools and that the sick and aged should be assisted.

Near the end of August, Rezanov arrived at Sitka. Again he found virtual poverty, but had praise for Baranov. At meetings with him Rezanov recommended improvements, urging the training of mechanics and tradesmen, recruitment of natives for the garrison, purchase of foreign ships, and overseas trading. In October, Baranov purchased an American ship, the Juno, and its provisions in order that the settlement might survive the winter. In February, 1806, Rezanov proceeded to California in the Juno, hoping to procure foodstuffs.

At San Francisco Rezanov by his shrewd diplomacy and courtship with Concepción Arguello, the commandante's young daughter, was able to obtain provisions for the colonies. On June 9, 1806, Rezanov returned to Sitka. In a letter written eight days later to the Minister of Commerce he recommended expansion to San Francisco. Then on June 20, he wrote instructions to Baranov and in August, he sailed across the Pacific. He apparently intended to return to California, but died at Krasnoyarsk, Siberia, enroute home to seek

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the Emperor's permission for his marriage.\(^{44}\)

Actually Rezanov was not the first Russian to covet California. As early as the 1790’s, Shelikhov had envisaged expansion to California. In 1808, Baranov ordered Ivan A. Kuskov in the vessel Kodiak to select a site for a colony. However, this expedition developed into an otter hunting trip instead. After a second hunting expedition in 1811, Kuskov on his third expedition established Fort Ross, a few miles north of the Slavianka or Russian River, as an agricultural and sea otter hunting base. The Russians also established Bodega port and a few ranches. At times they maintained otter hunting posts on the Farallon Islands and on the Santa Barbara Channel Islands.\(^{45}\)

During the Russian occupation of California territory several of their warships visited San Francisco on expeditions circumnavigating the globe. On October 2, 1816, the Rurik, commanded by Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue, anchored in the bay.\(^{46}\) In the winter of 1823-24, Lieutenant Dimitry I. Zavalishin visited aboard the Kreysor. Since Fort Ross was unable to supply sufficient food for Alaska because of its salty soil and fogs, he endeavored to negotiate with Luis Arguello, the Mexican governor, for the cession of northern California to the Russian-American Company. Upon his return to St. Petersburg the following November, he favored the

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\(^{44}\)Wiley, op. cit., pp. 130-31; Grekov, op. cit., pp. 120-21.

\(^{45}\)For details see E. O. Essig, Adle Ogden, and Clarence J. Du Four, The Russians in California (San Francisco, 1933) and Grekov, op. cit., pp. 118-132; also see Mildred B. Hoover, The Farallon Islands (Stanford University Press, 1934), pp. 6-8.

\(^{46}\)Hubert H. Bancroft, History of California (San Francisco, 1886), II, pp. 278-81; also see August C. Mahr, The Visit of the "Rurik" to San Francisco in 1816 (Stanford University Press, 1932).
outright annexation of California.\textsuperscript{47}

In 1832, another annexation scheme was envisioned by Baron Ferdinand von Wrangel, chief manager of the company, when he appeared in California. Mexico considered the plan, but Wrangel failed to obtain the consent of his government.\textsuperscript{48} In 1839, the Russians finally decided to abandon Fort Ross because of continuous conflict with Mexico, the decline of the fur trade, and the failure of Fort Ross as an agricultural colony. The fort was sold to John A. Sutter in 1841, and the twenty-nine year period of Russian occupation terminated.\textsuperscript{49}

**Russian interests in Hawaii.** In 1804, the Russian-American Company first reconnoitered Hawaii when the Neva and the Nadezhda visited the islands.\textsuperscript{50} Four years later Baranov ordered Captain Leontii A. Hagemeister to sail in the Neva to negotiate with Kamehameha in order to obtain territory and to erect a fort, but his mission failed.\textsuperscript{51}

Since the United States and Spain were not formidable powers, and as England was preoccupied with France, Russia initiated these efforts at territorial aggrandizement. Upon the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars Baranov renewed his attempt. In 1815, he dispatched Dr. Yegor Scheffer on a secret mission aboard the American vessel Isabella which arrived at Oahu in December. Posing as a naturalist interested in research, Scheffer gained the favor of Kamehameha by his services as a physician and was granted a plantation. In March, 1816, two


\textsuperscript{50}Sergeyev, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 18-21

\textsuperscript{51}Rulley, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 143-44
Russian ships, *Kodiak* and *Otkrytie*, arrived ostensibly to trade, but in reality to assist Scheffer.\(^52\)

The Russians now began constructing a fort at Honolulu. However, John Young, Kamehameha's adviser, forced Scheffer and his cohorts off the island. The Muscovites sailed to Kauai where Kaumualii, a rival of Kamehameha, accepted Russian protection and granted the Russian-American Company exclusive rights to export sandalwood, to erect factories, and to establish plantations. Moreover, the company was granted half of the island of Oahu and access to four harbors on condition it would furnish an armed vessel and 500 men to restore the island.\(^53\)

While Scheffer was still powerful on Kauai, the other main islands were visited in 1816 by Lieutenant Otto von Kotzebue, commanding the *Rurik*. This naval officer informed Kamehameha that Scheffer's mission was not sanctioned by the emperor. Finally in 1817, the Russians were expelled by the combined pressure of the English, Americans, and natives.\(^54\) Although Baranov considered Scheffer's mission a success, the imperial government viewed it less favorably. The possibility of conflict with either the United States or England apparently ended his designs.\(^55\)

**Baranov's last days.** In 1817, the Russian-American Company outfitted an expedition of two vessels, *Kutuzov* and *Suvorov*, commanded

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by Leontii Kagemeister. He was to inspect the company's posts and operations and to replace Baranov. Kagemeister arrived at the chief factor's headquarters in November, but waited until January 11, 1818, before informing Baranov, who finally departed toward the year's end.56

Russian-American Company, from 1821 to 1867. In 1819, the first charter of the company expired. For twenty years it profited from its numerous settlements from the Bering Sea to California. On September 13, 1821, a second twenty-year charter was granted, giving the company jurisdiction over an area stretching from the northern cape of Vancouver Island to Bering Strait and beyond, to the islands along the coast, and extending over to the eastern Siberian coast.57

Actually the company was in the process of evolving into a state agency. In 1811, it came under control of the ministry of the interior and in 1819, was transferred to the ministry of justice. As the staff increased most members came from various naval departments. After Baranov's removal, administration was entirely supervised by the state.58

In 1821, the imperial government issued a ukase excluding foreigners from approaching within 100 Italian miles of the company's domain. This area extended from the Bering Strait to 51° north latitude along the American coast and from the Bering Strait to 45° 50' north.

57Bancroft, History of Alaska, pp. 530-32.
Russia's purpose was to forestall American and British ships from trading in the North Pacific. Both the United States and England protested. Then on April 5, 1824, a treaty was negotiated between the United States and Russia permitting the ships of the two nations to fish and to trade with the natives along the coasts. Moreover, the southern boundary of the Russian possessions was established at 54° 40' north latitude. The next year in a treaty with Great Britain the Russians agreed to a boundary line between their American possessions and Canada and granted the British the same trading privileges accorded to the Americans. The Russian-American company objected to the treaties, for they actually granted the Americans and the British privileges within their sphere.

During the period of the second charter the company built several new ships at Sitka. Also the company explored to the northward and toward the interior of Alaska. From 1830 to 1835, Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell became chief manager. He restricted the killing of seals on the Pribilof Islands and established new posts in the north such as Kolmakof and Michaelovsk (St. Michael).

In 1834, the trade agreement with the United States expired, and the Russian-American Company's major rival became the Hudson's Bay Company. To circumvent the establishment of a British post on the Stikine River, Fort Wrangell was founded in 1833 at the river's

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60 Andrews, Story of Alaska, pp. 98-99; for details concerning the adjustment of territorial claims see Tompkins, Alaska, pp. 134-137.
mouth on Wrangell Island. Then the next year the Russians erected
redoubt St. Dionysius near the northern end of the island. 62

In February, 1839, George Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company
and Baron Wrangell made an agreement which provided for the exclusive
lease of the mainland of Russian America from Portland Canal to Cape
Spencer to the British company for an annual rent of 2,000 land-otter
skins. Redoubt St. Dionysius was transferred to the British. Also
the Hudson's Bay Company agreed to sell food products to the Russians
each year from the Columbia River farms. This latter provision was
one reason for the Russian withdrawal from Fort Ross. The agreement
continued during the Crimean War and endured until 1867. 63

During the administration of Adolph K. Etolin from 1840 to
1845, Russian America prospered. Relations with the natives improved.
Etolin started an annual fur fair at Sitka. Steamships were constructed
at the Sitka shipyards. Also trade was extended into the interior
valleys of Alaska. 64

The third charter of the company was officially renewed on
October 10, 1844, retroactive to the second charter's expiration date.
The new charter consummated the conversion of the company into a state
agency. Hence employees became government servants and wore uniforms
while the company unfurled its own flag. Personal and property rights
were more clearly defined and respected. 65

63 Donald C. Davidson, "Relations of the Hudson's Bay Company
with the Russian American Company on the Northwest Coast, 1829-1867;"
British Columbia Historical Quarterly, V (Jan., 1941), pp. 46-51.
Under the third charter six men served as chief manager or governor after Etohin's retirement. The most noted was probably Captain Michael Tebenkof who charted and surveyed Alaskan waters.

After the company refused a fourth charter in 1862, it operated on a temporary basis under the governorship of Prince Dmitri Maksoutoff. 66

In the early fifties coal was mined at Port Graham on Cook Inlet. Some was exported to San Francisco at a loss, but the mine did supply fuel for Sitka and for the company's steamers. 67 After the California gold discovery, the company unloaded shopworn goods for a few years in the San Francisco market. Also ice was shipped to San Francisco. 68 Despite the decline in the fur catch the official balance sheet of the Russian-American Company for the period 1850 to 1859 indicated that the brisk tea trade with China saved the company from its loss in the fur trade. 69

The Crimean War was a significant factor in pointing out to the Russians that her American possessions were becoming a nuisance. Furthermore, Russian soon became interested in expansion elsewhere and began to consider disposing of her American possessions. Actually the fur trade was declining, whaling was pursued by the Americans, and the fisheries were not developed. Also the United States and Great Britain blocked any further Russian exploitation of new lands in the Western Hemisphere to the south or east. The stage was set for the transfer of the colonies to another power.

67 Andrews, p. 112; Hulley, p. 175.
69 Ibid., p. 246; it is interesting to note that these statistics of revenue and expenditure as appearing in the 1890 census vary considerably from figures given in the Daily Alta California, Sept. 2, 1867, p. 1; however, both sets of figures indicate a large profit from the tea trade.
III. THE PURCHASE OF ALASKA, 1845-1867

Early United States interests in Russian America and the Crimean War. The purchase of Alaska by the United States was first suggested during Van Buren's administration according to the Civil War general and politician, Nathaniel P. Banks. On March 3, 1845, Senator Robert J. Walker proposed to President-elect James Polk that Russia might be persuaded to cede the territory. However, the suggestion was not seriously considered until the next decade. In 1853, Count Muraviev-Amurskii, Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, set out to establish Russian commercial hegemony in the Far East. Hence he desired to withdraw Russian interests from America and to concentrate forces in eastern Asia. In a report to the Czar, made in March, he asserted that the United States would eventually dominate all of North America. Furthermore, he was anxious to foster United States friendship as a counter balance to the British menace in China.

Upon the outbreak of the Crimean War such a Russian strategy appeared more logical. Senator William M. Gwin of California, an exponent of manifest destiny, favored acquisition of Alaska. In his memoirs Gwin stated that Edward de Stoeckl, Russian Ambassador to the United States, asked him during the war to serve as his intermediary in opening negotiations for the sale. Stoeckl allegedly suggested a price of $5,000,000 and President Franklin Pierce expressed agreement, but the opposition of his Secretary of State, William L. Marcy, 


supposedly terminated these premature negotiations.\(^3\)

The Crimean War broke out between Russian and Turkey in October, 1853. From the beginning it was apparent that England and France would probably intervene. The Russian-American Company was unprepared to repel any military attack.\(^4\) Therefore, the company with the approval of the imperial government arranged a neutrality pact with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1854. The British government agreed to the pact, but reserved the right to seize all ships and to blockade Russian ports. Although these reservations were unimportant, the Russian-American Company arranged to have its ships put under neutral registry and endeavored to bolster its California trade.\(^5\)

Meanwhile, prior to making the neutrality pact Peter S. Kostromitinov, the Russian-American Company's agent and Vice-Consul at San Francisco, organized in 1853, the American-Russian Company in that city. The firm was presumably formed to import ice, but actually to supply Alaska with food in the event of a blockade.\(^6\) To forestall a possible British seizure of the Russian possessions Kostromitinov devised a fictitious sale of the property and franchises of the Russian-American Company for $7,000,000 to the American-Russian Company as

\(^3\) Ibid., pp. 31-32
represented by Lucien Herman, the vice-president of the San Francisco firm. In Washington, D. C. Baron de Stoeckl consulted Secretary of State William L. Marcy and Senator Gwin, but they discouraged the sale, believing that England would see through the ruse.\(^7\)

Kostromitinov and Stoeckl also evolved an impractical scheme to make San Francisco a base for Russian privateers.\(^8\) However, once the neutrality agreement became known further efforts to consummate the fake transfer or sale of the territory ended. The British evidently agreed to neutrality for fear that the Russian possessions might otherwise be sold to the United States.\(^9\) Still rumors circulated in 1854 that Russia was proposing a sale. For example, the Baltimore American related that Russia would probably sell to the United States because of inability to forestall a seizure of her possessions by the British.\(^10\)

During the course of the Crimean War Russia realized the necessity for her retreat from America and after the war the effort was revived. The Grand Duke Constantine, the Czar's brother, believed that Russia could not defend her American colonies in the event of a war with a naval power. Since the United States pursued a policy of manifest destiny, he surmised that sooner or later she would favor annexation. Hence Constantine preferred a sale to a later seizure by force.\(^11\)

\(^8\) Grekov, pp. 238-39.
\(^11\) Mazour, op. cit., p. 314.
In 1857, Stoeckl urged the sale, warning that the wave of American settlers into California and Oregon would eventually lead to occupation of Russian America. Moreover, he realized that American citizens sought trading privileges in the Russian possessions and he even became concerned about rumors of a possible Mormon invasion of Russian America. In 1859, Senator Gwin proposed a $5,000,000 purchase price to Stoeckl and related that President James Buchanan seemed to favor a purchase. Stoeckl replied that he would confer with his government, but he requested Gwin to keep the matter a secret. In a conversation with Stoeckl, Gwin asserted that the Russians were too distant from their American colonies to exploit them whereas the Americans were nearer at hand. Prince Gorchakov, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, believed that the proposed sum was too small. However, he suggested that Stoeckl continue his negotiations with Gwin and John Appleton, the Assistant Secretary of State, and to seek a higher price. Then Gwin informed Stoeckl that only Pacific coast Congressmen would favor an increase, and he further related that financial conditions in 1860 would not permit a continuation of negotiations until after the inauguration of Lincoln.

Prince Gorchakov sent a commission to America in 1861, to investigate and it favored the sale of Alaska to the United States.

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12 Golder, op. cit., pp. 413-44; Thomas, op. cit., pp. 143-44.
However, the outbreak of the American Civil War delayed further action. Yet just prior to the war, Gwin in the Senate predicted that the United States would acquire Alaska in the near future. As an expansionist Senator Gwin believed that Alaska would be an excellent naval base and a source of wealth with its fisheries, fur trade, and minerals.\(^\text{16}\)

*The American Civil War.* After Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, there existed among her official circles two different schools of thought regarding future Russian military strategy. One group wanted to avenge the defeat at Sevastopol by strengthening Russia's position in the Near East. The other school, which was of lesser significance, concentrated on the Far East and the Pacific, dreaming of colonial expansion in that direction. The latter group looked to the United States as a model for territorial and economic development and also considered the United States as a possible political deterrent to Great Britain's mastery of the seas.\(^\text{17}\)

The leader of the Pacific Ocean school was a naval officer, Alexander A. Popov, who had been in the Pacific and to San Francisco in 1859.\(^\text{18}\) About this time Popov expressed his views that the Amur River would serve as an excellent base for Russian warships in the event of war. Even prior to the outbreak of the Civil War in the United States, Popov conceived a plan to use American ports and Pacific islands


as supply bases. Compared to British and French sea power in the Far East, that of Russia was relatively weak. Also the British with better communications would be the first to learn about the start of any European war. Hence Popov realized the need for port facilities at a distance from British and French bases so he turned his eyes towards the Pacific coast of the United States.  

In September, 1862, two Russian warships, the Abrek and Kalevala, arrived at San Francisco. Their stay was brief, and on October 1, the Abrek sailed for Sitka accompanied by the Russian merchantship, Kamchatka. In the next few days the Kalevala, Admiral Popov's flag ship, sailed for Japan.

When the Polish Rebellion crisis arose in 1863, and as the possibility of a renewal of war with England and France seemed imminent, Admiral Popov accompanied a larger squadron to San Francisco in the fall of 1863. At the Mare Island Navy Yard the Russian warships were repaired and overhauled. During the same period another Russian squadron visited New York harbor. In both San Francisco and New York the Russian naval officers were treated as friends and allies. However, it should be pointed out that the appearance of the squadrons on both coasts was not a planned operation. In actuality Popov did not know about the location of the other squadron until he reached San Francisco. Furthermore, Popov had violated instructions in coming to San Francisco. Nonetheless, a diplomatic friendliness existed between the United States and Russia. The latter in 1862 had refused to mediate in the Civil War, and the United States refused to intervene in the Polish crisis after rebellion broke out in January, 1863.

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As a result many contemporaries as well as later writers believed that the Russian squadrons might have assisted the United States in the event of European interference in the Civil War. Others spoke about an alliance and "sealed orders" or stated that Americans did not realize the true purposes of the Russians. However, despite the pro-Russian sympathy of the Northern and San Francisco newspapers, the press was well aware of the self-interest motives of Russia in stationing her warships at safe harbors preparatory to possible harassing of her potential enemies.

Some of the Russian warships remained in San Francisco until August, 1864. The people of that city loudly acclaimed the Russians despite the passing of the danger of British and French intervention in the Civil War. Perhaps the local press purposely exaggerated the implications of the Russian visitors by lauding them as friends, for the French were still occupying Mexico while British-built raiders were flying the Confederate flag upon the high seas. Moreover, San Francisco harbor was virtually defenseless.20

In 1865, Americans along the Pacific coast became alarmed by the depredations of the C.S.S. Shenandoah in the North Pacific, Bering Sea, and Arctic Ocean. On June 14, the Confederate raider set her course for the Bering Strait. A few days later she passed through the Aleutian Islands, entering the Bering Sea. The Shenandoah destroyed numerous American whalers in these northern waters, for her officers did not realize that the war had actually ended. On July 5, the steamer passed through Amukta Pass of the Aleutian chain and left the

Bering Sea. Captain James Waddell contemplated an attack on San Francisco, but he ascertained definitely about the war's end on August 2, and stopped his military action. Meanwhile, financial circles in San Francisco were distressed by the fact that the government has no warships in port to pursue the raider. As a result underwriters increased war risks between San Francisco and northern points.\(^{21}\)

There is some evidence that the depredations of the C.S.S. Shenandoah and the weakness of American sea power in the North Pacific were considered in the purchase of Alaska. Secretary of State William H. Seward favored securing naval outposts, and during the debate in the House of Representatives concerning the purchase Congressman William Higby of California stated:\(^{22}\)

> "We want no shulking place on that coast for piratical craft, such as we had a few years ago, when the Shenandoah sought harbor off Victoria."

Other reasons for the Russian withdrawal. As already indicated Russian imperialism in the Far East and her inability to defend her overseas possessions were factors in the decision to withdraw from America. Another basic factor was that Russia had no real need for additional territory. Russia had not possessed Alaska by design, but more by fate. Moreover, the possessions had caused diplomatic controversies,

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The financial decline of the Russian-American Company was another explanation. In 1857, the company's stock was valued at 500 rubles a share, and by 1866 it dropped to 75 rubles a share. The company was virtually bankrupt, and only if government subsidies continued could the monopoly survive. Paradoxically, another motive for withdrawal was the discovery of mineral wealth in the 1850's and 1860's. The imperial government was aware of the existence of gold, copper, and coal and feared an invasion by prospectors.

Collins Overland Telegraph Project. A plan to connect Eurasia and America with a telegraph line was promoted by an advocate of American expansion, Perry McDonough Collins. As George Kennan wrote in his Tent Life in Siberia:

"It proposed to unite the telegraphic systems of America and Russia by a line through British Columbia, Russian America, and North-eastern Siberia, meeting the Russian lines at the mouth of the Amoor River on the Asiatic coast, and forming one continuous girdle of wire nearly round the globe."

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24 Ibid., pp. 245-49; the general assumption that Russia was ignorant of the mineral resources is wrong; see Frank A. Golder, "Mining in Alaska Before 1867," Washington Historical Quarterly, VII (July, 1916), pp. 233-38.


As a resident of California, Collins first became interested in the possibilities of trade expansion in Northern Asia. At Washington, D.C., after meetings with President Franklin Pierce, Secretary of State William L. Marcy, and Edward de Stoeckl, Collins was appointed "Commercial Agent of the United States for the Amoor River" on March 21, 1856. 

Collins first went to St. Petersburg and then journeyed across Siberia, arriving at the mouth of the Amur River. He developed grandiose plans for opening the heart of Siberia to world commerce. He conceived a plan for an Amur railroad into Siberia and in a letter of March 9, 1857, to the Governor of Eastern Siberia he stated:

"With steam upon the Amoor, and this railroad constructed, aside from commercial views, the road would be highly valuable to Russia in the development and protection of her possessions on the Pacific coast, both in Asia and America."

This scheme did not materialize, but when he returned to Washington, D.C. in 1858, Collins proposed the intercontinental telegraph. Hiram Sibley, President of the Western Union Telegraph Company, became interested. Then in October, 1861, the Western Union transcontinental line across the United States was completed. Meanwhile, Collins sought construction rights in Russia. On May 23, 1863, Russia finally authorized construction of a line through Siberia. Collins reached an agreement in London for building the portion of the line

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30Ibid., p. 384.

31Vevier, op. cit., pp. 242-44.
through British Columbia. Finally, on March 16, 1864, the Western Union Telegraph Company obtained Collins' rights, but he was appointed manager of the Russian-American Telegraph.\(^{32}\)

The governments of the United States, Russia, and Great Britain now cooperated in the project. In 1864, Western Union started preparations for a survey of Russian America and the Yukon River under the leadership of Colonel Charles L. Buckley as Engineer in Chief.\(^{33}\) Although the Collins telegraph project was abandoned in 1867, after the successful laying of the Atlantic cable, the Western Union expedition had expended $3,000,000. Its explorers examined 6,000 miles of land on both sides of the Pacific from the Fraser River to Bering Strait and thence southwards to the Amur River.\(^{34}\) The data and testimony of the explorers and scientists furnished to the State Department and to Congress were invaluable in facilitating the purchase of Alaska.\(^{35}\) Henry M. Bannister, a member of the expedition, stated that despite its failure:

"...its greatest result was the annexation of Alaska."\(^{36}\)

**Economic interests of Americans in Alaska.** Certain United States citizens, particularly residents of the Pacific coast, had economic interests in Russian America. In 1851, a group of San Francisco merchants and Nikolai Y. Rosenberg, chief manager of the Russian-American

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\(^{34}\)Frederick Whymper, Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska (London, 1868), pp. 68-69.

\(^{35}\)Vevier, op. cit., pp. 250-53.

Company, made a contract for shipping ice to San Francisco. Two years later the American Russian Commercial Company was incorporated to import ice into California and to engage in general trade. Among a few connected with the company were Charles Minturn, Charles J. Brenham, Edmund Randolph, and Lucien Herman. As related previously this was the company involved in the fictitious sale of Alaska in 1854.37

In 1858, Joseph Lane McDonald, who had been a fisherman on the Atlantic coast, arrived in California. The next year he organized a company in San Francisco to exploit the fisheries in Alaska. In an effort to influence the chief manager of the Russian-American Company he even made the Russian Consul a member of his firm. However, McDonald was not able to obtain a fishing franchise. Later he moved to Washington Territory, and he persuaded the Legislative Assembly to submit a memorial to President Andrew Johnson in January, 1866, requesting him to obtain rights and privileges from Russia to send fishing vessels to Alaska and also to deploy warships from the Pacific Squadron to survey fishing banks.38

This petition later was to serve Seward's purposes as an argument in favor of the purchase. Meanwhile, several San Francisco firms engaged extensively during the summer in catching and curing cod in waters off the coast of Sitka and in the Aleutians.39

38Farrar, Annexation of Russian America, pp. 31-33; for the wording of the petition see L. D. Kitchener, Flag Over the North (Seattle, 1954), pp. 29-30.
39Victoria Colonist, April 3, 1867, p. 2.
In 1865, Louis Goldstone, a United States citizen residing in Victoria, ascertained that the Hudson's Bay Company lease to the mainland of southeastern Alaska would expire within two years. Soon he organized the California Fur Company with a capital stock of $5,000,000 and John F. Miller, Collector of the Port of San Francisco, became president. Cornelius Cole handled the legal matters of the firm and tried to obtain the lease.\footnote{Farrar, Annexation of Russian America, pp. 28-30.} Cole solicited the aid of Baron Stoeckl and of Cassius M. Clay, the United States Minister to Russia. Stoeckl had no authority to act, and Clay replied that the Hudson's Bay Company was endeavoring to renew its lease.\footnote{Thomas, op. cit., p. 149; according to Grekov, op. cit., pp. 249-50, Stoeckl in 1859, favored leasing of the territory to California residents.} Subsequently, Seward's negotiations for an outright sale stopped Cole's efforts.\footnote{Memoirs of Cornelius Cole (New York, 1908), pp. 281-85; according to Cole, Goldstone was interested in obtaining sealing privileges on the Pribilof Islands and he did not refer to the Hudson's Bay Company.}

American residents on the Pacific coast were interested in the halibut, salmon, and cod fisheries and in the furs of Alaska. For that reason the West was more interested in Alaska. However, mention should be made of New England whalers in Alaskan waters. The Kodiak grounds or Northwest Coast Right Whaling grounds were first noticed by Captain Burzillar Folger, a Nantucket whaler, when he cruised to these grounds in 1835, aboard the Ganges. The main whaling grounds in the Pacific north of fifty degrees were discovered by Americans between 1845 and 1848. In 1846, 292 American whalers sailed north of 50°, and Russia
protested the coming of the Americans.\textsuperscript{43}

The Civil War and the cruise of the C.S.S. Shenandoah had disrupted American whaling operations as related before. It is doubtful if whaling created much or any interest in the acquisition of Alaska. However, it is interesting to note that Frederick Whymper, the artist of the overland telegraph expedition, asserted that the purchase was an "act of justice" to Russian because for twenty years the American whalers in the Bering Sea and Arctic had traded along the coasts, reducing the profits of the Russian-American Company.\textsuperscript{44}

**Negotiation and ratification of the purchase treaty.** On December 28, 1866, the Emperor Alexander II decided to sell after meeting in conference with his brother, Grand Duke Constantin, Prince Gorchakov, minister of foreign affairs, Vice Admiral Krabbe, minister of marine, Michel de Reutern, minister of finance, and Baron Stoeckl.\textsuperscript{45} On February 15, 1867, Stoeckl arrived in New York, and at an early meeting Secretary Seward asked the Russian ambassador if his government would grant Americans fishing rights in Alaskan waters. Stoeckl replied that this request could not be granted. Then Seward offered to buy the territory. Both agreed that a transfer would be mutually advantageous. However, it was decided that Seward should first consult President Johnson. Hence on March 15, Seward brought the draft of a treaty to a cabinet meeting where all members agreed to make the acquisition. Seward and Stoeckl had some difficulty in determining a purchase price,


\textsuperscript{44}Whymper, op. cit., p. 245.

but soon agreed on the sum of $7,200,000. On the night of March 29, Stoeckl appeared at Seward's home with authorization to sell. At 4:00 A.M. the next morning the treaty was signed. 46

The Senate reviewed the matter in secret session. As ratification at first seemed impossible Senator Charles Sumner asked Stoeckl to withdraw the treaty. However, Seward launched a propaganda campaign, and his greatest victory was the conversion of Sumner, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. In a three-hour oration Sumner presented five main reasons in favor of ratification. 47 He stressed the value of the natural resources of the region and indicated the economic advantages that would accrue to the Pacific coast. He urged the extension of dominion and of republican institutions to remove "...one more monarch from this continent." Also Sumner pointed out that England should not acquire the territory. Moreover, he alluded to the amity of Russia and referred to the treaty as "a sign of friendship." And he traced the long period of cordial relations between the two governments and mentioned such recent occurrences as the inter-oceanic telegraph, the visit of the Russian squadrons in 1863, and the Fox mission to Russia in 1866. 48

On April 9, the Senate ratified the treaty by a vote of 37 to 2. On May 15, Seward received word of official Russian approval. However, passage of the appropriation for the purchase money met delay in

46 Thomas, op. cit., p. 151; Virginia H. Reid, The Purchase of Alaska (Long Beach, 1939), pp. 3-4.
47 Reid, op. cit., pp. 11-16.
48 For the full text of the speech see Archie W. Shiels, Seward's Icebox (Bellingham, 1933), pp. 185-297.
the House of Representatives. Many Congressmen had felt slighted in not being consulted beforehand. Also the House was involved with the impeachment problem. In addition, the so-called Perkins claim against Russia created considerable opposition. Nathaniel P. Banks, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, led the forces favoring annexation while Congressman Cadwallader C. Washburn led the opposition. About nine months after the formal transfer the House finally appropriated the money on July 14, 1867, by a vote of 113 to 43.49

Public opinion concerning the purchase. When the purchase was first proposed, the American people appeared surprised, for there had been no public desire for territory. At first some newspapers opposed the purchase, but later changed their views.50 As a result of Seward’s secrecy only a few Americans knew about the intended purchase. Several leading journals such as the New York Tribune, Philadelphia Inquirer, and Cincinnati Daily Gazette opposed Seward’s expansionism. However, many noted newspapers like the New York Times, Sacramento Union, and St. Louis Times favored the treaty.51 In general the newspapers did not oppose the treaty, but many were indifferent or undecided. The Pacific coast region favored the purchase for commercial advantages which were sought. At first the Daily Alta California of San Francisco had opposed the purchase in an editorial, but quickly altered its views after ascertaining the sentiment of local merchants. The American

49 Thomas, op. cit., pp. 154-56; for some of the arguments between Banks and Washburn see Morgan B. Sherwood, "George Davidson and the Acquisition of Alaska," Pacific Historical Review, XXVIII, (May, 1959), pp. 150-54.

50 Reid, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

51 Donald M. Dozer, "Anti-Expansionism during the Johnson Administration," Pacific Historical Review, XII (Sept., 1943), pp. 253-75.
people generally favored the purchase, believing in the economic value of Alaska, and they did not wish to offend Russia.\(^{52}\)

More than anyone else Secretary William H. Seward was responsible for the treaty. By his clever campaign he probably influenced public opinion. Through the newspapers he emphasized the importance of Alaska, pointed out the danger of another nation obtaining it, and stressed Russian friendship. Thus he overcame the tendency of Congress to oppose any measure of the Johnson administration.

The official Russian newspaper, *Le Nord*, commented that the two nations would mutually benefit by the transfer. It related that the American possessions were virtually unproductive to Russia because of their distance from the center of the empire and that they would be easily stimulated by "Yankee expansion." The journal also expected that commerce would develop between the Asiatic and American sides of the Pacific which would bring prosperity to eastern Siberia and the Amur basin.\(^{53}\)

The Russians within Alaska were opposed to the sale, for they would have to leave or be ruled by another power. Most Russians departed while only a few remained to become United States citizens. The neighboring people of British Columbia fully appreciated the value of Alaska. On May 16, 1867, in an editorial about "The Russian Purchase" the *Victoria Colonist* stated:\(^{54}\)


\(^{53}\)Reid, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

\(^{54}\) *Victoria Colonist*, May 16, 1867, p. 2.
"Here in Vancouver Island, within a few degrees of the recently acquired tract, we are in a position to state that it is a valuable acquisition, and that its cession to the United States is likely to inflict a serious blow to British interests in the Pacific, if it does not exercise an unfavorable influence upon the whole of British North America."

The formal transfer. In September, 1867, United States troops attached to Company F of the Ninth Infantry and Company H of the Second Artillery, under the command of Colonel Jefferson C. Davis, sailed out the Golden Gate from San Francisco aboard the John L. Stevens. The War Department and the State Department appointed General Lovell H. Rousseau as commissioner to accept the formal transfer. Upon his arrival in San Francisco, General Henry W. Halleck already had completed preparations for the military possession, and Rousseau boarded the warship, U.S.S. Ossipee. When the vessel stood into Sitka harbor on the morning of October 18, the U.S.S. Jamestown and U.S.S. Resaca were at anchor.

The United States troops were still aboard the John L. Stevens, waiting for General Rousseau and the Russian commissioner, Captain Alexei Pestchovrotov of the Imperial Navy, to designate a landing place. It was eventually decided to have the transfer ceremonies occur at 3:30 P.M. that afternoon. An American flag forwarded by the State Department was entrusted to a guard of honor of twenty soldiers.

The afternoon was partly cloudy but pleasant. At precisely 3:00 P.M. the Russian troops formed on the parapet in front of the


Governor's mansion. At the same moment the American troops embarked in launches with the honor guard taking the lead. When the soldiers landed, Colonel Davis and the honor guard proceeded to the Governor's mansion where the guard took position on the left in front of the flagstaff. As the American soldiers filed past and took their position on the left of the Russians the latter presented arms which salute was returned.

The battalion of United States troops were commanded by Brevet Major C. O. Wood of the Ninth Infantry and the honor guard by Lieutenant J. E. Eastman of the Second Artillery. The Russian soldiers were dressed in dark uniforms trimmed with red and wore flat glazed caps while the American soldiers appeared in usual full dress. At the scheduled time a large group, including Americans, Russians, Creoles, and natives, assembled to witness the ceremonies. Precisely at 3:30 P.M. the Russian forts and vessels fired salutes in honor of the lowering of the Russian ensign. In lowering the flag was torn from the halyards and became caught on a crosstree. After several attempts to loosen it, a Russian sailor was ascended in a boatswain chair. He threw the flag beneath himself, but the wind blew it onto the bayonets of the Russian soldiers.

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57Daily Alta California, Nov. 19, 1867, p. 2.
58Victoria Colonist, Nov. 13, 1867, p. 3.
General view of Sitka, Alaska, C. 1883

Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria, B. C.
About five minutes later the Stars and Stripes were raised into position by George L. Rousseau, a son of the General and a member of his staff. At the same moment the Ossipee and Resaca fired salutes which were answered by the Russian battery on the wharf firing alternatively. As the Russian flag was lowered Captain Pestchouroff informed General Rousseau that he was transferring and delivering the territory of Russian America to the United States. In response as the United States ensign ascended General Rousseau received and accepted the territory. During the ceremony Princess Maksucutoff wept audibly as the Russian flag went down and cheers were spontaneously given for the United States flag by the American citizens present. By 4:00 P.M. about a dozen American flags floated over the town, and the United States had officially occupied its first noncontiguous territory.

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59 Victoria Colonist, Nov. 13, 1867, p. 3.
Military rule. In his fourth annual message to Congress delivered on December 9, 1868, President Andrew Johnson asserted:¹ "The acquisition of Alaska was made with a view of extending national jurisdiction and republican principles in the American hemisphere." This lofty statement was surely true as far as removing one additional monarchy was concerned, but the application of the ideals were slow in materializing in the eyes of Alaskans. From 1867 to 1884, Alaska was a mere geographical expression of the United States. By the organic act of 1884, Alaska was designed as a "civil and judicial district." Eventually in 1906, the Supreme Court in Rasmussen vs. the United States decided Alaska was incorporated as part of the United States. By an act of May 7, 1906, Congress declared that the people of the territory should have a delegate, but in the same law stated that the delegate should be a resident of the "district." Not until the organic act of August 24, 1912, did Congress constitute Alaska as a territory. Hence her people suffered from what they considered political disabilities caused by the reluctance of Congress to provide an adequate system of law and administration.²

In 1867, the State Department was not prepared for the new experiment of administering noncontiguous possessions. The isolated

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¹James D. Richardson, ed., Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897 (Washington, D.C., 1899), VI, p. 638.

position, the climate, and the insufficient white population presented
new problems which Congress did not attempt to solve. Thus Alaska at
first was administered primarily by executive orders and was placed
under military control until 1877.3

The Customs Act of July 27, 1863, extended United States
laws concerning customs and commerce and navigation to Alaska which
made the area a customs collection district with a collector residing
at Sitka. The measure prohibited the sale, importation, and use of
firearms and distilled liquors, and provided that offenders could be
prosecuted in any United States District Court of California, Oregon,
or the Territory of Washington. Also the law gave the Secretary of
Treasury jurisdiction over fur-bearing animals until Congress should
device other controls. The leasing bill of 1870 gave the Alaska Com-
mmercial Company jurisdiction over the Pribilof Islands.4

After the change of flags at Sitka, Seward and the War
Department sent General Jefferson C. Davis to Alaska with troops to
establish military occupation until the next winter, when Congress was
expected to organize a civil government. Now American soldiers were
quartered in the barracks formerly occupied by the Siberian Battalion.
For about a year Sitka enjoyed commercial prosperity and a real estate
boom. However, the people were informed that their claims to the
townsite were illegal. Then the War Department ordered the dismissal

of civilians in military pay. The customs collector received instructions to treat Alaska as Indian country. These conditions caused people to begin to leave Sitka in 1868. Many of the Russians returned to their homeland while others went to California or other localities in Alaska.\(^5\)

According to frontier precedent the Americans at Sitka organized a provincial government with General Davis's consent. It had a mayor, common council, and court. In 1869, the people of Alaska first urged home rule, but Congress ignored the plea viewing Alaska as a poor bargain.\(^6\) By 1873, the illegal civil government at Sitka ceased to exist.\(^7\) Actually General Davis did not believe that the civil officers of a territorial government were required. In his official report of September 22, 1868, General Henry W. Halleck, commanding the Division of the Pacific, stated:\(^8\)

"The machinery of an ordinary Territorial Government for less than two thousand people, scattered over such a vast area, could involve an unnecessary expense."

**Rule of a customs collector and of the Navy.** The army occupation of Alaska continued for ten years. The Nez Perce War of 1877 in Idaho

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\(^6\) Nichols, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-46.

\(^7\) Hulley, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

caused the troops to be withdrawn and the customs collector, Mottram D. Ball, became the only ruler for two years. The presence of the soldiers at Sitka had protected the residents from the hostility of the Tlingits. Now the natives began rioting in the streets and started looting storehouses. The residents became fearful that the city might be sacked so they petitioned the national government for protection. Since their appeal went unheeded, they next petitioned the British in Victoria to send relief. At San Francisco the Daily Alta California in an editorial expressed their regret for the "shameful neglect" of the government which forced the Sitkans to appeal to the British. The newspaper complained that the two Pacific squadrons had sailed to South America so their officers could enjoy themselves in the "saloons of Valparaiso." And the Alta related that: "...we look now to the British Navy for protection which our own has failed to render." Fortunately, on the same day information on conditions at Sitka were telegraphed to Washington, D. C. where prompt measures were taken. The revenue cutter, Wolcott, was ordered to proceed from Port Townsend to Sitka. Also the H. M. S. Osprey, commanded by Captain A. Holmes A'Court, sailed from Victoria on the eighteenth. The British war steamer arrived at Sitka on March 1, and trained her guns on the nearby native

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9Nichols, op. cit., p. 59.

10C. L. Andrews, Story of Sitka, pp. 82-84.

11Daily Alta California, Feb. 18, 1879, p. 2.

village, called Ranche, thereby averting a sacking of the city.\(^{13}\)
The Wolcott arrived the next day, but the natives were only fearful
of the British warship.\(^{14}\)

Finally the Osprey was relieved on April 3, by the U. S. S.
Alaska from Mare Island Navy Yard. On the same day Collector Mottram D.
Ball wrote to Allen Francis, United States Consul at Victoria, that
the natives only jeered at the Wolcott while a group of residents wrote
to President Rutherford B. Hayes asserting that if the Alaska left the
harbor, the Indians would sack the city.\(^{15}\)

Eventually a period of naval rule began in Alaska when the
U. S. S. Jamestown stood into Sitka on June 14, 1879. Captain Lester
A. Beardslee, the warship's commanding officer, and Collector Ball now
shared power. For five years one slow naval vessel enforced law and
guarded Alaskan waters.\(^{16}\) On July 9, Captain Beardslee convened a
meeting of Sitka citizens in a second effort to establish a local
government. Besides electing three councilmen the residents made
Collector Ball their chief magistrate, but the government only lasted
ten weeks.\(^{17}\)

\(^{13}\)Andrews, Story of Sitka, p. 84.
\(^{14}\)Daily Alta California, March 17, 1879, p. 1.
\(^{15}\)Ibid., March 18, 1879, p. 1, April 10, 1879, p. 1.
\(^{16}\)Andrews, Story of Sitka, p. 84, Nichols, op. cit., pp. 60-61.
\(^{17}\)Nichols, op. cit., p. 61.
As the first of four naval officers, who were actually the de facto rulers of Alaska, Captain Beardslee was a benevolent administrator. At least he improved sanitary conditions at Sitka, established a native police, and required the attendance of native children at school. In September, 1860, Commander Henry Glass replaced Beardslee on the Jamestown. The last two naval officers exercising control in Alaska were Commander Edward P. Lull, commanding the U. S. S. Wachusett, and Lieutenant Commander Henry E. Nichols, commanding the U. S. S. Pinta. Naval authority lasted until September 15, 1884.

Meanwhile, after a preliminary meeting of the miners of the Harrisburg district demanding political recognition, the first non-partisan convention was held at Harrisburg in August, 1881, with five delegates from Sitka, Wrangell, and Harrisburg appearing. The delegates adopted a memorial to Congress requesting a civil government, and provided for the election of a delegate to present the memorial. On September 5, Collector Ball won the election and he appeared at the 47th Congress. The House Committee on Elections decided the people of an unorganized territory had no inherent rights and Ball was not accorded a legal status. However, he did appear before committees and won sympathy for his cause.

The Organic Act of 1884. By provisions of the Organic Act of

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18 Andrews, Story of Sitka, pp. 84-85.
20 Nichols, op. cit., pp. 66-68.
May 17, 1884, Alaska became a civil and judicial district with the temporary seat of government at Sitka. A governor, attorney, judge, marshall, and commissioners were to be appointed by the President for four year terms. The general laws of Oregon presently in force were made applicable to the district. The governor had enforcement powers and was made exofficio commander-in-chief of the militia. He could grant reprieves subject to the President's decisions. He was required to make an annual report to the President concerning his official acts and the economic and political conditions of the district. Alaska also became a land district, but only the mining laws were extended while the general land laws were not in force. The Secretary of Interior was given the power to establish schools and the act prohibited liquor except for medicinal, mechanical, and scientific purposes. In brief Alaska was not an organized territory. She had no counties, no legislature, no delegate to Congress, and no regular taxation system.21

On September 15, 1884, Lieutenant Commander Henry E. Nichols of the U. S. S. Pinta formally relinquished to the first governor, John H. Kinkead, all civil authority previously exercised by the United States Navy. Six weeks later Governor Kinkead in his report to President Chester A. Arthur related that successful administration of civil government in the district would require federal aid. He urged increased mail facilities, an increase in the number of local magistrates, 

21 Ibid., pp. 72-82; for complete text of the Organic Act see pp. 411-17.
a revenue cutter to suppress illicit traffic, effective control of the liquor traffic, improved education, and a joint Anglo-American survey of the boundary line from Portland Canal to Mt. St. Elias. Moreover, he recommended the taxing of saloon-keepers, merchants, and traders engaged in the liquor traffic. 22

The second governor of Alaska, Alfred P. Swineford, served from 1885 to 1889. His four annual reports were critical of the inability of Congress to provide an adequate civil government. Even in his first report he gave convincing arguments in favor of a territorial delegate and he advocated a legislature or at least a legislative council. 23 In his second report Swineford related that the senior naval officer in the district did not assist or cooperate with the civil government. 24 In his other two annual reports the Governor protested the impossibility of obtaining fee simple or timber land titles and complained about certain practices of the Alaska Commercial Company. Also he referred to the civil government as little "...better than a burlesque both in form and substance." 25

22 Report of Governor, Oct. 1, 1884, in Report of Secretary of the Interior, 1884 (Washington, D. C., 1884), since the annual report of the governor appears in the corresponding report of the Secretary of Interior, hereinafter the full citation is not given, II, pp. 637-43.


Despite his courageous stand in favoring self-government, Swineford's words had little influence. His successor, Lyman E. Knapp, tended to favor a plan to make the governor a delegate. He recognized the necessity for elections in the municipalities rather than in the territory as a whole and thus recommended a code commission.26

During the tenure of Governor James Sheakley (1893-97) the complaints of the executive temporarily ended. However, he recommended that Congress should immediately provide for the incorporation of municipalities and related that Juneau, a mining town of 2,000 population, was without any organized government.27 By this time the number of communities had increased to about three hundred and the governors had been forced to adopt some illegal policies. For example, they had assumed the right to appoint deputy commissioners to handle legal matters in isolated areas.28

The evolution of home rule. From the start the people of southeastern Alaska expressed their discontent with the Organic Act of 1884. The whites resented being classified with Indians as far as liquor was concerned. Hence they ignored liquor prohibition except regarding its sale to natives. They demanded separate schools for whites. In general the

26 Report of the Governor of Alaska For the Fiscal Year 1889 (Washington, D. C., 1889), p. 29. A separate pamphlet rather than the Report of Secretary of Interior was used for this year.


28 Nichols, op. cit., pp. 97-98.
prospectors opposed the political alliance between government officials and the missionaries. As Juneau gained a greater population there developed an opposition to Sitka as the seat of Government.29

Alaska gained her first official political recognition by the seating of two delegates in the Democratic National Convention of 1888. As population concentrated in the Panhandle as a result of mining and the salmon industry a Non-Partisan Convention was convened at Juneau on October 8, 1890, with forty delegates representing nineteen precincts. The convention adopted a memorial and elected James Carroll as a "delegate" to Congress. This unofficial delegate received attention from Congress, but the only measure actually passed was one opening six new ports of entry.30

By 1893, Congress began to consider the issue of a delegate. However, it was not until the Klondike rush that Congress became seriously concerned with Alaska. From 1898 to 1900, Congress supplemented the Organic Act with three significant laws. In 1898, a transportation and homestead act started a number of railroad schemes, but in reality barred the average man from homesteading. In 1899, a criminal code provided for the levying of direct taxes from which the revenue produced would enforce the new criminal code. The civil code of 1900 gave Alaska a legal system with courts located at Sitka, Nome, and Eagle City.31

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29 Ibid., pp. 102-12.
30 Ibid., pp. 126-33.
31 Ibid., pp. 136-62, 180
Meanwhile, a third non-partisan convention met at Juneau beginning on June 9, 1899. It sent John G. Price as delegate to Washington, D. C., but Congress refused to pass a delegate bill. An incorporation law for municipalities was enacted and Congress extended the coal land laws to Alaska, but defeated its purpose by not appropriating funds for a survey.32

After 1900, increasing debate occurred over the home rule issue. A Territorial Club movement in 1902 strengthened the demand for a delegate, but a fourth non-partisan convention meeting at Juneau in the same year failed because of factional disputes. Still Congress became more aware of Alaska and enacted several measures affecting the district in 1903, but her people remained disappointed without a delegate.33

In 1904, some residents of Valdez and of Skagway considered separating from the United States in the event Congress failed to provide a legislature and a delegate. At Valdez a mass meeting even demanded annexation to Canada. In 1905, the Supreme Court decided Alaska was a "territory," but still she was unlike other territories having delegates and local legislatures.34

Upon President Theodore Roosevelt's recommendation, Congress finally gave Alaska one elected delegate in May, 1906. The Republicans

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32 Ibid., pp. 173-82.
33 Ibid., pp. 204-40.
34 Ibid., pp. 246-51.
and Democrats of southeastern Alaska nominated candidates, but in opposition the miners of the Tanana region and of the Seward Peninsula elected Frank Waskey and Thomas Cale for the short and long terms respectively. In the fifty-seventh Congress a clash developed between Governor Wilford B. Hoggatt and Delegate Thomas Cale over the mining laws. Also Hoggatt, who represented the large mining interests of the Panhandle, opposed territorial government which Cale supported. In 1907, when Cale introduced bills for territorial government, they met opposition in the Committee on Territories. The next year in the first anti-Guggenheim campaign James Wickersham was elected delegate. Wickersham had a disadvantage in that his political enemies had tremendous power. On May 20, 1909, Walter E. Clark of Connecticut, a journalist, was appointed as governor. Wickersham objected on the grounds that Clark was not an Alaskan and would perpetuate the Hoggatt-Guggenheim control.

At Seattle, in 1909, President William H. Taft stated that Alaska's population was too sparse, mobile, and sectional to justify a territorial legislature. Wickersham, believing that the President had been misled by selfish interests, defeated Taft's plan in 1910 to govern Alaska by means of a commission in the same manner as the Philippines. In his second annual message of December 6, 1910, Taft opined

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35 Hulley, op. cit., pp. 293-94.
that Alaska was not ready for popular government. However, two years later Congress finally granted home rule, preparing the way for eventual statehood in 1959.

Military history, 1867-1910. From 1867 to 1877, military rule prevailed in Alaska. The army, navy, and coast guard each played a significant role in this era. At the time of the transfer army posts were established at Sitka, Kodiak, Kenai, Tongass, Wrangell, and Koutznoo. Also small detachments were stationed on the Pribilof Islands. In 1868, the military force consisted of five companies of artillery and one of infantry under the immediate command of General Jefferson C. Davis at Sitka. The Department of Alaska was a part of the Military Division of the Pacific with headquarters at the Presidio of San Francisco in the command of General Henry W. Halleck. On July 29, Halleck and his staff sailed from San Francisco on the steamer, Pacific, with supplies for his troops in Alaska. Their first stop was made at Fort Tongass, located on a small island in one of the Prince of Wales Island group. Here fifty men attached to Company E of the Second Artillery were garrisoned. On August 15, General Halleck inspected Fort Wrangell and three days later he reached Sitka.38

On June 1, 1869, General George H. Thomas took command of the Division of the Pacific and during the next month he inspected

37 Ibid., pp. 329-65.
the garrisons in Alaska.\textsuperscript{39} The following year the soldiers were withdrawn except the garrison at Sitka.\textsuperscript{40} In 1875, General Oliver O. Howard, commanding the Division, inspected the troops and garrison at Sitka and in the town he requested the citizens to express their complaints.\textsuperscript{41} In his report to the Secretary of War, General Howard recommended civil government by making Alaska a county of Washington Territory.\textsuperscript{42}

As mentioned previously army occupation ended in 1877, and after an interregnum, a period of virtual naval rule lasted from 1879 to 1884. Beardslee and Glass were the commanding officers of the U. S. S. Jamestown and Lull of the U. S. S. Wachusett and Nichols of the U. S. S. Pinta. These commanding officers and their ships were the mainstay of United States authority in Alaska at that time. After the passage of the Organic Act in 1884, naval and coast guard vessels remained in Alaskan waters to assist in law enforcement. As evidence Governor Lyman E. Knapp reported on October 1, 1892, that five naval ships--the Yorktown, Mohican, Adams, Ranger, and Pinta--had cruised in the district during the past year.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{40}Greely, op. cit., p. 34.
\textsuperscript{41}Daily Alta California, Aug. 9, 1875, p. 1.
\textsuperscript{42}Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Alaska (San Francisco, 1886), p. 626.
\textsuperscript{43}Report of Governor, Oct. 1, 1892, III, pp. 485-86; for an interesting description of the duties performed by the U. S. S. Pinta see Robert E. Coontz, From the Mississippi to the Sea (Philadelphia, 1930), pp. 117-34.
Meanwhile, as the Navy and Coast Guard became concerned with the problem of pelagic sealing, President Benjamin Harrison on June 21, 1890, set aside Japonsky Island, opposite Sitka, for naval and military purposes. By 1898, the Navy had two buildings for ammunition storage and Congress had appropriated $5,000 to erect a new wharf on the island. Governor John G. Brady recommended making Japonsky Island a stronger naval base. Also he related that the completion of the trans-Siberian Railroad to Vladivostok and our increased trade with Japan had proved the importance of Alaska to the Navy. After commenting upon a recent 18,000 mile cruise of the U. S. S. Wheeling in Alaskan service, Governor Brady stated:  "This stretch of coast, so promising in its resources, should not be deprived of the service of a war vessel. A gunboat is a good sort of a knock-down argument when it comes to the final settlement of a question."

The Coast Guard vessels first served in Alaskan waters when the revenue cutter, U. S. S. Shubrick commanded by Captain Charles M. Scammon, had been the flagship of six vessels which aided the Western Union Telegraph Expedition. After the purchase of Alaska, the revenue cutter, Lincoln, commanded by Captain W. A. Howard was assigned to duty in Alaska. His instructions were to determine channels of commerce, the probable haunts of smugglers, and locations for customs houses. Also he was to reconnoiter the

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coast in order to select sites for lighthouses and coaling stations and to locate fishing banks. Furthermore, Howard was instructed to take on board the United States Coast Survey party headed by George Davidson. On July 21, 1867, the Lincoln sailed from San Francisco, reaching Sitka on August 12, prior to the arrival of the other American officials. On August 22, the vessel proceeded to Unalaska. Besides collecting scientific data, the party found Unalaska to be an excellent coaling station and they located extensive fishing banks. In November, the Lincoln returned to San Francisco.46

After 1879, the Coast Guard exercised military authority in western Alaska while the Navy patrolled the Panhandle. Hence the Aleutian chain was under surveillance of the Coast Guard whose duties included administering justice, delivering mail, recording village censuses, rendering medical aid to natives, making observations, and aiding scientists. In 1880, the Coast Guard began duty in the Arctic and for six years the revenue cutter, Corwin, made cruises north of the Bering Strait. In 1886, the U. S. S. Bear was transferred from the Navy to the Coast Guard after the vessel had participated in the rescue of Lieutenant Adolphus W. Greely and his army explorers who had been stranded on Ellesmere Island. The Bear replaced the Corwin on Arctic service and it brought the first reindeer

to Alaska from Siberia. In the summer of 1898, the revenue cutter rescued the whalers stranded in the ice near Point Barrow. Then during the gold rush in 1899 and 1900, the Bear maintained order at Nome until the arrival of army and civil authorities. The vessel performed many heroic duties in the Arctic until 1926.  

In the eighties the United States Army returned to Alaska, when the Signal Corps established twenty-nine stations. Another army detachment came to Alaska during the Klondike stampede in 1897. The military district of Lynn Canal was organized under Colonel T. H. Anderson with the 14th Infantry and the district at St. Michael was occupied by the 8th Infantry. At Nome Lieutenant Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr. and his men assisted in the adjustment of disputes until civil authority was introduced.

In his report of 1899, Governor John G. Brady related that troops were stationed at Fort Wrangell, Skagway, Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, Cape Nome, St. Michael, Fort Gibbon, Rampart, Circle City, and Fort Egbert. In addition soldiers on the Yukon under command of Colonel P. Henry Ray were opening a road from Valdez to Eagle City. Brady further reported that the Alaska National Guard had just been organized with Colonel F. D. Kelsey as adjutant-general. The companies

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organized at Skagway, Juneau, and Douglas constituted the first successful attempt to establish a militia.\textsuperscript{49}

In 1909, one regiment of infantry and one company of the Signal Corps were stationed in Alaska. The infantry occupied Fort Davis at Nome, Fort Egbert at Eagle, Fort Gibbon at Tanana, Fort Liscum near Valdez, Fort St. Michael, and Fort William H. Seward at Haines. The Signal Corps operated the many telegraph stations throughout Alaska.\textsuperscript{50}

The United States Army made contributions to Alaska in the fields of exploration, science, history, transportation and communication, and military government. Such career soldiers as P. Henry Ray, W. P. Richardson, Henry T. Allen, Oliver O. Howard, Adolphus W. Greely, and William Mitchell were a few of the noted army pioneers in the territory.\textsuperscript{51}

\textbf{Diplomatic controversies.} The United States became involved in two major diplomatic controversies after acquiring Alaska--pelagic sealing and the Canadian boundary dispute. Soon after obtaining its lease, the Alaska Commercial Company urged the Treasury Department to

\textsuperscript{49} Report of Governor, 1899, \textit{Misc. Rpts.}, Ft. II, pp. 43-44.

\textsuperscript{50} Greely, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.

dispatch a revenue cutter to prevent the capturing of fur seals on their annual migration to the Pribilof Islands. Rumors had circulated in San Francisco that raiding expeditions were being outfitted in Australia and in Hawaii to intercept the seals. In a letter of April 19, 1872, Secretary of Treasury George S. Boutwell wrote to the company stating as follows: 52 "...I do not see that the United States would have the jurisdiction or power to drive off parties going up there for that purpose unless they made such attempt within a marine league of the shore." Moreover, he related that it was not expedient to assign a revenue cutter at that time, but he requested further facts concerning the problem. 53

An increase in the value of furs in the eighties encouraged the practice of pelagic sealing. The chief offenders were Canadians who disregarded the age and sex of the seals. The United States contended that the decline of the Pribilof herd resulted from the killing of females in the pelagic catch. However, the Canadians asserted that they had the right to engage in pelagic sealing and that the land killing of the Americans caused the decline. 54

In 1886, the United States acted upon precedent of the ukase of 1821, prohibiting foreign vessels to approach within 100 Italian


miles, and seized a number of Canadian schooners.\textsuperscript{55} As the early pelagic sealers, both Canadian and American, made their captures outside the three-mile limit, the United States finally assumed this extreme position that since the seals had their breedings on United States territory, they were American property.\textsuperscript{56} The Canadians objected to the contention that the Bering Sea was a \textit{mare clausum} and despite protests of the British Ambassador, Congress in 1889, authorized the President to seize sealers in the Bering Sea.\textsuperscript{57}

An exchange of diplomatic arguments occurred between Secretary of State James G. Blaine and Lord Salisbury, the British Foreign Secretary, as rumors of possible war between the two nations circulated. Nonetheless, in 1891 and 1892, England and the United States adhered to a \textit{modus vivendi} in which warships of both powers patrolled against illegal pelagic sealing in the Bering Sea.\textsuperscript{58} From May to October of 1892, a formidable United States naval squadron, commanded by Robley D. Evans and consisting of the \textit{Yorktown}, \textit{Mohican}, \textit{Adams}, \textit{Ranger} and \textit{Rush}, policed the North Pacific and Bering Sea and performed the most significant naval operation of the United States since the Civil War.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{55} Rhoda, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 229.
\textsuperscript{57} Thomas A. Bailey, \textit{A Diplomatic History of the American People} (New York, 1946), p. 447.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., p. 448; \textit{Report of Governor}, Oct. 1, 1892, III, p. 486.
\textsuperscript{59} Robley D. Evans, \textit{A Sailor’s Log} (New York, 1907), pp. 306-61, describes in detail the operations against the poachers.
In 1893, the Paris Tribunal of Arbitration decided upon regulations unfavorable to the United States claims. Pelagic sealing continued in a modified form in that a closed season of three months prohibited the practice. Also American and Canadian pelagic sealers were prohibited from approaching within sixty miles of the Pribilof Islands and a ban was placed upon the use of firearms. However, these rules proved ineffectual, for the female seals usually ranged 120 to 180 miles from the breeding grounds. Also the closed season came at the wrong time of the year and the spear became more deadly than firearms. In 1897, the United States prohibited its own vessels from engaging in pelagic sealing which gave the Canadians a virtual monopoly of the practice. After 1900, Japanese pelagic sealers appeared off the Pribilof Islands, operating just outside the three-mile limit. By 1910, the Canadian pelagic sealing fleet was reduced to six ships. Finally by terms of the North Pacific Sealing Convention of 1911, the United States, Great Britain, Japan, and Russia prohibited pelagic sealing. This decision was a momentous victory for both the principles of international arbitration and conservation.60

The second major diplomatic dispute with Great Britain related to the boundary between Canada and Alaska as defined in the treaty between Great Britain and Russia in 1825, which defined it as ten marine leagues from the coast. The boundary had not been surveyed, but at first no serious dispute arose. President Ulysses S. Grant,

in his annual message of December 2, 1872, pointed out the necessity of determining the boundary. However, no action was taken because of the high cost of a survey.61

On October 1, 1884, Governor John H. Kinkead recommended a joint survey by Great Britain and the United States of the boundary line from Portland Canal to Mt. St. Elias. He considered the issue of importance since several highways into the interior of British Columbia originated within the limits of Alaska. After the discovery of rich placer on the headwaters of several of the rivers, Kinkead believed that the boundary line should be defined to prevent future controversy.62

The boundary question created minor incidents and arguments and caused considerable excitement at a meeting of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce in 1895.63 However, the issue was not of vital concern until the Klondike discovery in 1896. Since the treaty of 1825, it had been understood that Russia had an unbroken strip of land along the main continent, giving her control of all the sounds, channels, and inland seas of the broken coast.64 In 1867, when the American flag was raised over the Lynn Canal area, no nation disputed

63 Victoria Colonist, April 3, 1895, p. 3.
the sovereignty of the United States, but with the gold discovery the
Canadians viewed the treaty of 1825 differently. Now the Canadians
sought a deep-water route through the Panhandle to the gold fields
and asserted that the boundary did not follow the coastal sinuosities,
but passed through the more important inlets in such a manner as to
locate their heads in Canadian territory. The Canadian claim would
have located Haines, Dyea, and Skagway in Canada. Also it would have
cut off the Panhandle from western Alaska.

In 1899, a modus vivendi line was agreed to by the two
nations. Then on January 24, 1903, the United States and Great Brit­
tain consented to submit the issue to a commission of three Americans
and three Britons. Fortunately, the American claim that the boundary
followed the heads of the bays and inlets was upheld, when Lord
Alverstone, Lord Chief Justice of England, sided with the three
American members of the tribunal. Hence an acute tension arising

65 Ella M. Neuber, The Alaska Boundary (Unpublished M.A. thesis,
University of Washington, 1934), p. 22

66 Thomas A. Bailey, "Theodore Roosevelt and the Alaska Boundary

67 Gruening, op. cit., p. 118.
from the Klondike discoveries ended. Canadians felt that they had been sacrificed on the altar of Anglo-American friendship, but in actuality Canada was fairly treated.

Seals, furs, and sea otters. Hayward M. Hutchinson, Baltimore merchant, accompanied his personal friend, General Lovell H. Rousseau, to San Francisco, when the latter was enroute to Alaska to accept the formal transfer. At San Francisco, Hutchinson encountered the wealthy merchant, Louis Sloss. In Portland the two merchants conversed with Leopold Boscowitz and all three continued north to Victoria. Here with Captain William Kohl, a trader, they organized the firm of Hutchinson, Kohl & Company with the intent of buying out the Russian-American Company. On October 11, they were able to purchase from Prince Dmitri Maksoutoff the warehouses and supplies and the ships and stations of the defunct company.¹

In 1868, several American adventurers landed on St. George Island and St. Paul Island which constitute the Pribilof Islands or so-called Seal Islands. Several competing groups of merchants collected seal skins that year. During the next season seals were taken only for the subsistence of the natives under the direction of the Treasury Department.²

Hayward M. Hutchinson and Captain Ebenezar Morgan, who represented New London capitalists, were instrumental in making the seal rookeries a government reservation. Meanwhile, the Alaska Commercial Company was organized at San Francisco on January 31, 1868, by

¹L.D. Kitchener, Flag Over The North (Seattle, 1954), pp. 30-32.
St. George in the Pribilof Islands, C. 1890

Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria, B. C.
Hutchinson, Sloss, Kohl, John F. Miller, and others. Then on July 1, 1870, Congress enacted a measure to prevent the extermination of fur bearing animals in Alaska. After a bitter struggle, the Alaska Commercial Company was awarded a twenty year lease to collect fur seals from the islands.\(^3\)

In accordance with the terms of the lease the company was to pay an annual $55,000 rental to the United States and a tax of $2.62\(\frac{1}{2}\) for each seal skin and a tax of 55¢ per gallon of seal oil. In addition the company was to furnish the inhabitants with dried salmon, firewood, salt, and barrels, and to maintain schools. The lease provided for the taking of 75,000 seals on St. Paul and 25,000 seals on St. George. Firearms were not to be used in killing the seals and female seals and those less than one year old were not to be killed. The season was restricted to the months from June to October inclusive.\(^4\)

Frequent charges were made that the Alaska Commercial Company functioned as a gigantic monopoly and that federal revenue officers drove out other merchants who tried to trade in the new territory. Hence certain San Francisco merchants prepared a memorial to Congress on January 28, 1869, opposing the efforts of Senator

\(^3\)Elliot, op.cit., p. 248; Samuel P. Johnston, ed., Alaska Commercial Company, 1863-1940 (San Francisco, 1940), pp. 5-7.

\(^4\)Copy of Lease from the United States to the Alaska Commercial Company (Washington, D.C., 1870), pp. 3-5; the indenture was made on August 3, 1870, between William A. Richardson, Acting Secretary of Treasury, and John F. Miller, President and agent of the company. For details about the Pribilof Islands see Henry W. Elliott, Report of the Sea Islands in Tenth Census (Washington, D.C., 1884), Vol. VIII.
Cornelius Cole to preserve the fur-bearing animals. Among the signers were John Parrott, Peck and Company, Pioneer American Fur Company, Charles Hare, and other merchants. On May 3, 1869, certain San Francisco businessmen formed the Alaska Traders' Protective Association with C. J. Jansen as president. The organization charged that the commerce of Alaska was being monopolized by one firm.

According to Henry W. Elliott it was a group of "freebooters" who shouted "monopoly." He praised the work of the Alaska Commercial Company and defended the "leasing principle" adopted by Congress.

From the time of the transfer of Alaska until the spring of 1869, 274,052 fur seals were taken by all vessels trading at the Pribilof Islands. Indeed, the fur seals were a great source of commercial wealth. In 1870, Charles M. Scammon estimated that 4,000,000 seals visited St. Paul Island and that 2,000,000 seals visited St. George Island each season.

In 1871, Hutchinson, Kohl & Company opened negotiations in St. Petersburg for the lease of Russia's remaining fur seal territory,

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6The Alaska Traders' Protective Association (San Francisco, 1869), pp. 2-5, in Pamphlets on Alaska (Univ. of Calif. Library).


the Komandorskie Islands. A contract was signed and the firm changed its name to Hutchinson, Kohl, Philippeus and Company, for in accordance with the agreement one Russian had to be a member of the firm. The Alaska Commercial Company became the sole agent of this new firm and the lease was in effect until 1891.\footnote{Johnston, op.cit., p. 16; Leonhard Stejneger, The Russian Fur-Seal Islands (Washington, D.C., 1896), p. 91; in 1891, Russia gave a new lease to the Russian Seal Skin Co., see Kitchener, op.cit., p. 41.}

In 1875, the Anti-monopoly Association of the Pacific Coast accused the Alaska Commercial Company of having reduced the natives of the Pribilof Islands to a condition of serfdom.\footnote{History of the Wrongs of Alaska, pp. 2, 26-32.} However, John E. Miller, President of the Alaska Commercial Company, denied this accusation.\footnote{Miller to J.S. Moore, Agent U.S. Treasury Dept., July 15, 1875, Bering Sea Tribunal of Arbitration Proceedings, (41st Cong., 3d Sess., House of Rep. EX. Doc. No. 108), I, p. 201.}

In addition to sealing, the company engaged in collecting sea otters and land furs and in merchandising and shipping. Land furs such as ermine, muskrat, mink, beaver, fox, and bear were obtained in the Aleutian Islands, Seward Peninsula, Yukon Valley, Kuskoqium Valley, and in areas around Bristol Bay, Kodiak, and Cook Inlet. Also in the 1880's the company opened six salmon canneries.\footnote{Johnston, op.cit., pp. 35-36; Kitchener, op.cit., p. 42.}

In his report of October 1, 1888, Governor Alfred P. Swineford charged that the Creoles and natives were serfs of the powerful company
"In most places they are subjected to the double robbery of being compelled to part with their furs at less than half their value, and, in return, are charged two or three prices for the goods they can only buy at the company's stores, for the simple reason that there are no others."

Governor Swineford also had criticized the Alaska Commercial Company in his earlier annual report of 1887. An investigation by the Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries of the House of Representatives in 1888, vindicated the company. Nonetheless, in 1890, the sealing lease was granted to the North American Commercial Company of San Francisco and later of Seattle. This firm was supported by Rothschild interests. On March 12, the Alaska Commercial Company sold its property on the Pribilof Islands to the new company. During its twenty-year lease the earlier company had shipped 1,849,157 seal skins.

The lease given to the North American Commercial Company provided for an annual rent of $60,000 and a tax on each skin of $9.621/2. By 1900, the Pribilof seal herd declined to 395,000 from a figure of several millions in 1867. Indiscriminate pelagic sealing had caused the decrease. In 1910, the Bureau of Fisheries assumed management of the Pribilof reserve and the leasing system was abandoned.

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17Kitchener, op. cit., pp. 81-82.
In the early American period of Alaska history the fur trade was the most vital economic factor in the territory's development. During the eighties more furs were produced than in any previous decade. By 1890, approximately twenty companies were engaged in this trade. In 1889 and 1890, the number of furs obtained from Alaska, exclusive of fur seal skins from the Pribilof Islands, numbered 216,285 and were valued at $1,500,653.50. However, in 1900, Governor John G. Brady stated that the fur trade was doomed to extinction. Statistics on the sea otter trade reveal that the average take from 1842 to 1862 was 964 skins. In the eighties the average rose to 4,784, but by 1910, only twenty-nine sea otter skins were taken in Alaskan waters. The decrease was quickened by the indiscriminate white hunters who married native women in order to circumvent the governmental regulation that only natives could hunt otter.

Russian mining activities. When the Russian American Company was organized in 1799, its managers insisted on an exclusive right to mineral resources in America. The Russians were well aware of the mineral wealth of Alaska, but mining was not more developed because of a preoccupation with the fur trade. Prior to the purchase, the Russians had discovered gold, copper, and coal. In 1849, the


23Gruening, op.cit., pp. 72-73.
company sent Peter Doroshin, a geognost, to Alaska. At Cook Inlet he discovered a few colors. The next year and in 1851, he prospected on the Kenai Peninsula and found gold, but not in paying quantities. In 1852, he explored for coal and urged the company to develop the coal beds at Port Graham. From 1857 to 1860, the company produced about 920 tons of coal each year for the San Francisco market, but a fire in 1860 destroyed the plant and machinery.24

**Early mineral discoveries in the American period.** Probably the first Americans to pan a small amount of gold in Alaska were two of the Western Union explorers, William H. Ennis and Otto von Bendeleben, who did so on the Seward Peninsula in 1865.25 Senator Charles Sumner in his speech on the cession of Russian America alluded to its mineral resources.26 A correspondent for the *Daily Alta California* newspaper of San Francisco, while in Alaska in 1868, reported that valuable mines would probably be discovered once explorations were made.27

In 1871, an American soldier, Edward Doyle, panned some gold near the town of Sitka. The next year another soldier, Nicholas Haley, prospected in the nearby mountains. Near the head of Silver Bay, a few miles from Sitka, he discovered gold. Several years later, largely through Haley's efforts, a company was organized

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26 Archie Shiels, *Seward's Icebox* (Bellingham, 1933), pp. 262-68.
at Portland, Oregon, to develop his claim, and in 1879, a ten-stamp steam and water port mill was constructed. The mine and mill were operated only a few months, for expenses were not met. In 1883, the claim was relocated as the Cash Mine. In 1886, the Lake Mountain Mining Company of Madison, Wisconsin, was organized to develop the Lucky Chance Mine in the same district. These efforts to operate mines at Silver Bay were not a financial success and the ledges were soon abandoned.  

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In 1861, gold was first discovered on the Stikine River. 29 Further discoveries were made in the Cassiar area. Fort Wrangell, on the coast opposite the gold fields, developed into a boom town.

John Muir, the naturalist, while serving as a special correspondent for the San Francisco Bulletin in 1879, described the active commercial activity at Wrangell. 30

John Muir's Report. On December 23, 1879, John Muir made a noteworthy report on the Alaskan gold fields. He related that most of the gold was still in the ground, except for a few thousand ounces collected from the more accessible veins and gravel beds of the islands and in the mountains along the coast. Muir made the


following prophetic statement:31

"Probably not one vein or place in a thousand has yet been touched by the prospector's pick, while the interior region is still a virgin wilderness—all its mineral wealth about as darkly hidden as when it was covered by the ice-mantle of the glacial period. But light sooner or later is sure to come. Thousands of sturdy miners, graduating from the ledges and gulches of California and Nevada, will push their way over the whole territory and make it tell its wealth."

Juneau and Douglas Island. On the basis of Muir's report and to ascertain the value of ores brought to Sitka by Indians, George E. Pilz, a pioneer of Alaskan mining, sent out prospectors to various parts of southeastern Alaska. In April, 1880, he grubstaked Richard T. Harris and Joseph Juneau to prospect the mainland for gold and silver. After searching in several localities, they went to Gastineau Channel on August 17, where they washed out a large amount of gold in a stream, naming it Gold Creek. This discovery started the rush to the Silver Bow Basin. On December 2, Pilz staked off the town site of Auk, now Juneau. Four days later a mining district was formed. However, Harris later asserted that he first staked off the town in November, 1880, naming it Harrisburg, after the capital of Pennsylvania.32

Considerable controversy developed in the district over mining claims. In May, 1882, because of a confusion over names, a miners' meeting voted to rename the town, Juneau, and the district,

31Ibid., Jan. 10, 1880, p. 4.

Juneau, Alaska, 1889

Courtesy Provincial Archives, Victoria, B. C.
Harris. In the early eighties many miners flocked from British Columbia and Arizona, and by 1883, Juneau was a striving town.33

Meanwhile, on May 1, 1881, Pierre J. Errussard located the Paris claim, a large quartz ledge on Douglas Island. Subsequently, John Treadwell examined the claim and had a ton of its ore sampled in San Francisco. After a satisfactory test, he bought the claim for $400. He thoroughly prospected by tunnel and shaft. In 1882, he erected a five-stamp mill and organized the Alaska Mill and Mining Company in San Francisco. Shortly the company built a twelve-stamp mill. Then next year it added chlorination works and erected a wharf. In 1890, the Alaska Treadwell Gold Mining Company assumed operation of the Paris mine. From 1882 to May 15, 1891, this mine had a total yield valued at $3,109,164.77.34

In his report of October 1, 1886, Governor Alfred P. Swineford stated that the great mine and mill on Douglas Island was the only practical effort made to develop the gold-bearing ledges in southeastern Alaska. Moreover, he said, "...Alaska is the coming great gold and silver mining field of the world..." and predicated that the next twenty years would refute the mistaken theory that the territory was a "frigid waste."35

Mining in the Interior of Alaska and the Klondike. In the eighties and early nineties other gold mines of small importance

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33 Ibid., pp. 60-69
existed elsewhere along the coast of southeastern Alaska. In 1872, the first pioneers began penetrating the upper Yukon. The most famous were Arthur Harper, Leroy N. McQuesten, and Alfred H. Mayo. Harper prospected the Yukon, White, Stewart, and Fortymile rivers, but in 1875, he stopped his search. Three years later, George Holt crossed Chilkoot Pass into the Yukon region, reporting the existence of coarse gold. His prospecting efforts were shortly duplicated by Edward Bean and others.37

In 1885, Lieutenant Henry T. Allen of the Second Cavalry and two enlisted men explored the vast area drained by the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk rivers. Allen reported that during the past few years a number of miners had searched for gold on the upper Yukon and its tributaries, referring to their success as only partial. Allen also noted the indications of coal-beds on the northern bank of the Koyukuk River. The explorer concluded that there might be great mineral wealth in the interior, but stated that many years would be required to locate the valuable veins. However, he warned those contemplating migration to Alaska to be suspicious of exaggerations about its mineral wealth appearing in current magazine articles.38

Despite Allen's caution rumors of new wealth spread. Actually there were a number of smaller gold rushes into the Yukon Valley

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36See Winslow, op.cit., p. 14 for the locations.


prior to the great Klondike rush and several mining camps were established before the founding of Dawson City. By 1886, about 200 miners had traversed Chilkoot Pass and they eventually reached an area 300 miles down the Yukon at the mouth of the Stewart River where they gathered $100,000 in placer gold in a year.\textsuperscript{39}

In the winter of 1886, prospectors found coarse gold in the Fortymile River. Suddenly a stampede to the river and its tributaries occurred. Most of the workings were located in United States territory, but the town of Fortymile in Canada became an American camp. In 1892, gold was discovered on Birch Creek, a tributary of the Yukon. Leroy McQuesten built and ruled the town of Circle City, about ninety miles above Fort Yukon. In 1896, gold production reached over $1,000,000, but before the end of winter Circle City became a ghost town.\textsuperscript{40}

The famous Klondike discovery has been credited to both Robert Henderson, a Canadian, and George Washington Carmack, an American.\textsuperscript{41} On August 17, 1896, Carmack and two Indians, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charley, staked claims on Rabbit Creek, later renamed

\textsuperscript{39}Pierre Berton, Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush (Toronto, 1958), p. 15.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., pp. 23-38.

\textsuperscript{41}Ibid., p. 40, refers to them as the co-discoverers; concerning the controversy see T.A. Rickard, The Romance of Mining (Toronto, 1947), pp. 309-10.
Bonanza Creek. Carmack headed for Fortymile to record his claim and informed others on the way. This discovery started the great stampede. By the end of the month all of the creek had been staked. Joseph Ladue staked out the town of Dawson City. By April 1897, 1,500 people were in Dawson.  

On July 14, 1897, the steamer, *Excelsior*, entered San Francisco harbor with miners from the Yukon with $500,000 in gold. Three days later the steamer, *Portland*, stood into Seattle with over a ton of gold. This city had been hard hit by the Panic of 1893. Then suddenly Seattle became a jumping-off place for the new rush and its depression ended.

The stampeders traveled three main routes to the Klondike. The all-Canadian route was an eastern approach from Edmonton, but it was arduous to travel. The most direct route was over the passes from the coast into the upper Yukon Valley. The Chilkoot Pass from Dyea was the older and better trail while White Pass from Skagway was the newer, but more treacherous one. A third route was by sea to the mouth of the Yukon at St. Michael and thence by river into the interior.

By August 1897, some 3000 people were already crowded into the tent towns of Dyea and Skagway at the bases of the passes.

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42 Berton, *op.cit.*, pp. 40-54, 90.
43 Rickard, *op.cit.*, p. 301.
45 Rickard, *op.cit.*, pp. 311-12.
and more were enroute. Skagway in particular became an American bridge into Canadian territory. Over 5,000 persons tried to cross White Pass in the fall of 1897 and only a few succeeded to navigate the Yukon River before the freeze. This trail had many obstacles and because of its impassability Skagway developed into a real American town with 5,000 population by midwinter.\footnote{Berton, op.cit., pp. 123-58.}

At first Chilkoot Pass was the route of the majority. Even during the season of 1896, 1,040 persons traveled over it to the mines.\footnote{Report of Governor, Oct. 1, 1896, III, p. 199.} During the winter of 1897, the stampeders went through the two gaps. By spring the shores of the mountain lakes feeding the Yukon's headwaters were filled with people. Samuel B. Steele, Superintendent of the Northwest Mounted Police, convoyed over 7,000 boats through 500 miles of water. By the summer of 1898, Dawson had a population of about 18,000, and in addition some 5,000 miners were on the creeks.\footnote{Berton, op.cit., pp. 268-300.}

Large-scale production of gold began in 1898, and the Klondike discovery attracted world-wide attention. Thousands headed for this northern El Dorado and numerous guide books were published.\footnote{For example, see Eliza R. Scidmore, Appleton's Guide-Book to Alaska and the Northwest Coast (New York, 1893).} Many of the Pacific coast cities organized bureaus to attract people to the Klondike. About 200,000 people probably tried to reach the Klondike
The Chilkoot Pass, 1898 (looking from Scales south toward Dyea.)

Courtesy California State Library
and it is estimated that about one-fourth of these succeeded. In 1898, transportation from Dyea and Skagway was improved and work began on the construction of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad. At the turn of the century, mining machinery was imported by the large companies and the day of the average prospector was soon over. In 1900, the Klondike district produced $22,270,000 in gold, but the big rush had ended. The real fortune-makers were in a minority, for most prospectors had failed. Some remained in the Klondike, but others moved on to new gold fields.\textsuperscript{50}

The primary significance of the Klondike rush was that it advertised Alaska and led to significant gold discoveries within United States territory. Moreover, it caused the true discovery of Alaska. It not only attracted capital investment in Alaska, but made the American people aware of the territory and its problems.

\textbf{Nome and the Seward Peninsula.} In 1897, an expedition was outfitted in San Francisco to prospect in the Golofnin Bay region. It consisted of Daniel B. Libby and three others. Libby had been with the telegraph expedition in 1866, and had prospects on the Niukluk River at that early date.\textsuperscript{51} In March 1898, the Libby party discovered gold on Melsing Creek. They organized the El Dorado Mining District, and in the summer Council City was established on Niukluk River as the first mining camp in the Seward Peninsula.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{50}Clarence C. Hulley, \textit{Alaska} (Portland, Ore., 1958), pp. 259-60.
\textsuperscript{51}E.S. Harrison, \textit{Nome and Seward Peninsula} (Seattle, 1905), p. 47.
\textsuperscript{52}Hulley, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 262; Tompkins, \textit{Alaska}, p. 245.
"Rocking" gold on the beach at Nome, Alaska

U. S. Signal Corps Photo, National Archives
The discovery of gold in Anvil Creek in September 1898, by three Scandinavians led to the organization of the Cape Nome Mining District. By January of the next year, about 500 men reached Cape Nome and built the nucleus of a camp. During the summer of 1899, over $2,000,000 in gold was produced by about 800 prospectors. Unfortunately, Nome experienced a turbulent controversy over its mining claims. Yet mining activity spread from the Nome beaches to the entire Seward Peninsula as men with technical experience arrived and as equipment and transportation were provided. From 1900 to 1905, the annual gold production totaled over $4,000,000 and in five years Nome rose from a barren strip of beach to a city of 25,000 with schools, theaters, banks, and paved streets.

Fairbanks. The town of Fairbanks was established as a trading post in 1901. The next year it became a mining camp as the result of a discovery made by Felix Pedro on a nearby creek. In the winter there was a stampede from Dawson. By March, 1903, between 1,000 and 1,800 men were at the new Tanana strike and many more were enroute from Nome and Yukon camps. The gold output in the summer of 1903 amounted only

53 Harrison, op. cit., p. 47; Hulley, op. cit., p. 263.
55 For the details see James Wickersham, Old Yukon—Tales—Trials—and Trials (Washington, D.C., 1938), pp. 337-78.
57 Descriptive of Fairbanks (Fairbanks, 1916), pp. 6-8.
58 San Francisco Chronicle, March 2, 1903, p. 3.
to $40,000, but in 1905, it soared to $6,000,000. Fairbanks was now a thriving town of 2,000 whose residents were intent on rivaling Dawson. Actually both Nome and Dawson were reduced in population by the Fairbanks rush.

**Lesser mineral resources.** Through their trade with the natives the Russians were aware of the existence of copper in the Copper River basin, but they never opened the area. In 1885, Lieutenant Henry T. Allen in his expedition to the region revealed the existence of this metal. In 1900, Stephen Birch, a mining engineer, purchased several holdings in the Copper River area. Eventually the Kennecott Copper Company was organized by Simon Guggenheim and J. P. Morgan, and the building of a railroad from Cordova to the Chitina and Copper River Valleys was started in 1908. Shortly thereafter large-scale production began.

In the Russian period a coal mine was opened at Coal Harbor on Cook Inlet, but it only yielded enough coal for the Russian-American Company's steamships. However, some efforts were made to sell the coal in San Francisco, but dealers there refused to buy it because of its inferior nature. On December 26, 1889, the Alaska Coal Company

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59 Descriptive of Fairbanks, pp. 6-8.
62 Hulley, op. cit., p. 262.
63 Ibid., pp. 296-97.
was incorporated at San Francisco for the purpose of developing the coal fields at the entrance to Cook Inlet, but the only known evidence of its existence was the publication of a brochure in 1891.66

In 1902, the geological survey began a systematic study of Alaskan coal fields starting in the Yukon region. This investigation was followed by similar studies of other fields in Controller Bay, Matanuska, Cape Lisburne, the Kenai Peninsula, and elsewhere.67 In 1910, Alfred H. Brooks, in charge of the Division of Alaskan Mineral Resources of the United States Geological Survey, reported that there were two known areas of high-grade coal. These were the Bering River field in the Controller Bay region and the Matanuska field north of Cook Inlet. He noted that the value of the fuels probably exceeded that of the gold deposits, but stated that before they could be mined, railroads would have to be constructed. Moreover, he indicated that development of the inland copper district would also have to await railroad transportation.68

The coal lands of Alaska were withdrawn from entry by President Theodore Roosevelt in November, 1906, upon the advice of Gifford Pinchot, the head of the Forestry Bureau. This action was interpreted in several ways. Some believed that the intention was to prevent monopoly; others viewed the step as a means to protect the Pennsylvania coal companies, and another belief was that the President wanted a coal reserve for the

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66 The Coal Fields of the Alaska Coal Company (San Francisco, 1891, pp. 1-15 in Pamphlets on Alaska (Univ. of Calif. Library), Vol. I; it is interesting to note that James Wickersham, A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature (Cordova, 1927), p. 112, item no. 1557, lists a prospectus of the Alaska Coal Co. published at San Francisco in 1871.


navy. However, regulations of April 12, 1907, did permit entries in limited quantities. 69

The mining industry in 1910. In 1910, notable progress was made in the gold and copper lode-mining industries of Alaska while placer mining production declined. All industries dependent upon the opening of the coal fields were in a stagnant position. Inadequate mineral-land laws applicable to placer claims still hampered the mining industry. Other metals and minerals produced in Alaska in 1909-10 included silver, marble, gypsum, tin, mineral water, and lead. 70

According to the 1910 census, 8,025 persons were engaged in the mining industries of Alaska. The capital invested amounted to $47,749,164, and the value of the mining production was $16,933,427. 71

Agriculture and forestry. Prior to 1910, agricultural pursuits in Alaska were confined to small areas and were largely experimental. In addition to adverse climatic and geographic conditions and the lack of transportation, another obstacle was the difficulty of obtaining land titles. 72

In the early American period only a small number of vegetable gardens were cultivated in a few localities, and the few stock-raising efforts were not successful. The first Governor of Alaska, John H. Kinkead, remarked that vegetables of nearly every variety were grown, and he asserted that with proper cultivation sufficient supply could be raised to meet all local demands. Moreover, he urged the development of cattle


raising in the vicinity of Cook Inlet, Kodiak, and adjacent islands. He also suggested that timber tracts and agricultural areas should be made subject to legal titles. His successor, Governor Alfred P. Swineford, noted in 1887, that despite its immense forests, only five or six sawmills were in Alaska, and these supplied about half of the lumber for the home market. The 1890 census indicated that the largest sawmill in Alaska was one of the few industries at Fort Wrangell. Miner W. Bruce, the census employee, stated: "It is a model of architectural design, and its large buildings shelter improved machinery."

On June 30, 1898, Congress appropriated $5,000 for an investigation of the agricultural resources and capabilities of Alaska and for the purpose of establishing experimental stations. After making their study the agricultural agents pointed out the economic hindrances such as lack of means for acquiring title to land, the high cost of clearing and draining land, and the more attractive labor market in the fishing industry. Nonetheless, they suggested the establishment of experimental stations.

74 Ibid., Oct. 1, 1887, I, p. 708.
75 Report on Population and Resources of Alaska at Eleventh Census, p. 21; for a description of the timber resources of southeastern Alaska see Miner W. Bruce, Alaska, Its History and Resources (Seattle, 1895), pp. 36-37.
As a result of the investigation four agricultural experiment stations were established under the charge of Dr. C. C. Georgeson. These were located at Sitka, Kenai, Copper Center, and at Rampart on the Yukon River. Georgeson was highly optimistic about the agricultural possibilities of the territory, but he felt that the homestead act, which only permitted title to 80 acres in Alaska, was too small. Instead, he advocated homesteads of 320 acres and asserted that Alaska could support a population of at least 3,000,000.77

As a result of the experimental stations, agriculture was encouraged. In 1910, it was estimated that 30,000 square miles of Alaska was suited to agriculture.78 However, only twelve farms of a total acreage of 159 existed in 1900. Ten years later there were 222 farms with an acreage of 42,544. The average acreage per farm had increased from 13.3 in 1900, to 191.6 in 1910. The farm property in 1910 was valued at $1,468,402. No figure for the value of farm property in 1900 was available, since the farmers had no titles to their land at that time. According to the census statistics the decade otherwise indicated a marked development.79 Still in 1910, few people made a livelihood by farming. The homestead law of 1903 applicable to Alaska made no adequate provision for surveys. Yet Governor Walter E. Clark


prophesied that a large agricultural development would evolve, but he qualified his contention by stating that only thrifty and hardy persons would become successful farmers.  

**Whaling.** Russian-American Company officials resented penetration of their waters by American whalers, and on occasion urged the imperial government to dispatch cruisers to make the Bering Sea a mare clausum. However, the cost would have been prohibitive. Moreover, the Russians failed in their own efforts at whaling. Hence the whaling grounds of the North Pacific remained open to all nations, but the Americans had a virtual monopoly of this industry even before the purchase of Alaska.  

From 1835 to the early nineties the Pacific whaling grounds north of 50° latitude were the richest in the world and produced 60% of the oil obtained by the American whalers. The main localities were discovered by Americans between 1845 and 1848. At the height of the industry's prosperity in 1846, 292 vessels sailed north of 50°. The Confederate raider, Shenandoah, depredated the American whalers in Alaskan waters in 1865. Six years later another great disaster occurred when thirty-four vessels were crushed by ice near Point Belcher on the Arctic coast.

At first the whalers were outfitted primarily in New Bedford and Nantucket, but after 1830, San Francisco became the major whaling port. From three vessels in 1880, the San Francisco whaling fleet grew rapidly to thirty-three vessels in 1893. In 1883, refineries for the

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manufacture of whale and sperm oils were established in the San Francisco area. In the same year the Pacific Steam Whaling Company and the Arctic Oil Works were incorporated in San Francisco by Captain Charles Goodall and by George C. Perkins, former Governor of California.

Many disasters from ice floes hampered the industry during its declining years as the number of whales diminished and as petroleum products replaced whale oil. The first decade of the twentieth century witnessed little activity among the whaling interests along the San Francisco embarcadero and the fall in the price of sperm oil in 1911, brought a major disaster.

Meanwhile, the industry had a slight revival, when the Tyee Company, owned largely by San Francisco and Seattle capital, engaged in whaling in the waters of Chatham Straits, Frederick Sound, and Stephen Pass. At Tyee, on the lower end of Admiralty Island in southeastern Alaska, the company had the only whaling station and reduction plant in the United States along the Pacific coast. During the summer of 1908, 200 whales were captured by this company's vessels.

Fisheries. The transfer of Alaska stimulated the cod fisheries. In 1867, three vessels sailed from San Francisco, and the next year the number increased to fourteen. In 1876, the first shore station was established

86 Hare, op.cit., pp. 102-05.
at Pirate Cove in the Shumagin Island group. By 1907, there were about nineteen shore stations. Meanwhile, the Bureau of Fisheries began to locate and survey the fishing grounds. As superior banks were discovered, the size of the fish became larger.\(^8\)

The first effort at canning salmon was made in 1878, by the Cutting Packing Company of San Francisco, when it established a cannery at Old Sitka. Shortly afterward, Sisson, Wallace and Company of San Francisco erected a cannery at Klawak on the western coast of Prince of Wales Island. For four years the total pack of these two firms did not exceed 17,000 cases per year because of the Columbia River competition. From 1882 to 1884, four additional canneries were opened, and by 1889, the total pack increased to 696,732 cases representing a value of \$2,786,929.\(^9\)

In 1898, about fifty-five canneries were situated in Alaska. Salmon canning evolved into a major industry operated by such companies as Alaska Packer's Association, Northwest Fisheries, and Libby, McNeill and Libby.\(^1\) With the decline of fur seal in the Alaskan economy, the salmon industry became second only to gold by 1908. Statistics for

\(^8\)Greely, Handbook of Alaska, pp. 134-35.


\(^1\)Hulley, op. cit., p. 218.

\(^2\)A. W. Greely, "The Economic Evolution of Alaska," National Geographic Magazine, XX (July, 1909), pp. 588-89; for statistics concerning the salmon and cod fisheries from 1868 to 1908, see Greely, Handbook of Alaska, p. 269
1906 recorded 3,405 fishermen, 6,868 cannery employees, and 474 transporters engaged in the salmon industry. Next to salmon and cod, the halibut and herring were the more important Alaskan commercial fisheries.

Transportation and communication. The early political and economic growth of Alaska was hampered by the lack of proper means of transportation and communication. The various governors in their reports continually recommended assistance in this regard. Governor Lyman E. Knapp made a special effort in his report of 1889 to President Benjamin Harrison to point out the inadequacy of mail facilities.

In 1868, the first mail contract for a service from Puget Sound to Sitka and intervening points was awarded to Benjamin Holladay, who in partnership with P. B. Cornwall, operated the old steamer, California. For many years this small vessel was the only one transporting freight and passengers to and from southeastern Alaska. Eventually the mail contract was given to the San Francisco firm of Goodall, Nelson and Perkins, which was renamed the Pacific Coast Steamship Company in 1876. The contract provided for a monthly service. By 1890, the company operated two vessels during the winter from San Francisco, Portland, and Puget Sound points to Alaska, but in the summer the service became weekly because of the flourishing tourist trade from May to September.

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96 Census of 1890, VIII, p. 258; Benjamin C. Wright, San Francisco's Ocean Trade (San Francisco, 1911), p. 123.
In 1890, over 5,000 tourists visited southeastern Alaska. The average price of an excursion ticket was $100, and the tourists spent considerable money for curios. Hence the tourist industry, which had started in 1884, was becoming quite significant at this early date. 97

Besides the company's steamers the only regular public transportation consisted of a small steam tug carrying mail from Fort Wrangell to Shakan and Klawak and in a limited way the Alaska Commercial Company's steamers, plying between San Francisco and St. Michael. 98 In 1890, access to central and western Alaska was available only by private lines, the primary one being the Alaska Commercial in connection with its many stations. Transportation to the interior via the Yukon River was made by stern-wheeler steamers, plying between St. Michael and the trading and mining camps along the river as far as Fort Independence and Fort Selkirk. 99

Until 1906, extended travel in Alaska was almost entirely dependent upon transportation in the summer on the Yukon and Tanana Rivers. In 1905, a board of road commissioners began constructing a system of roads. Shortly, Valdez was linked with Fairbanks, which became the center of the Alaskan road system. The road commission constructed country roads, winter sled roads, and trails. As a result of its projects freight rates were reduced, mail service improved, and travel increased. 100

97 Census of 1890, VIII, pp. 250-51.
100 Greely, Handbook of Alaska, pp. 20-31
Hobart Ave., Valdez, Alaska, 1901

U. S. Signal Corps Photo, National Archives
At the time of the gold rush in 1898, Congress enacted legislation granting railroads a right of way. The first corporation, the White Pass and Yukon Railroad, constructed a narrow gauge for 20 miles from Skagway to the Canadian boundary where it extended another 90 miles to Whitehorse at the head of navigation on the Yukon River.\footnote{101} By 1909, there were only about 333 miles of completed railroads in all of Alaska divided among ten corporations.\footnote{102}

Prior to 1901, the only communication with Alaska from the outside world was by steamer. For military and commercial reasons telegraphic communication became a necessity. Under the leadership of General Adolphus W. Greely, the Signal Corps began construction of the land lines in 1901. Telegraph lines were constructed to connect all the main cities of the Yukon Valley, Bering Straits region, and southeastern Alaska. Also submarine cables were laid linking Seattle to Sitka, and Sitka to Juneau and to Valdez.\footnote{103} Over 3,000 miles of cables were laid by Colonel James Allen and Major Edgar Russel. Captains William Mitchell, G. C. Burnell, and George S. Gibbs were responsible for the difficult land exploration and construction.\footnote{104} Indeed, the Signal Corps of the United States Army performed a herculean task in the field of communication as well as a great service to the people of Alaska. At least one barrier to the territory's isolation had been removed.

\footnote{101}{Ibid., p. 31; Jeannette P. Nichols, \textit{Alaska} (Cleveland, 1924), pp. 158-59.}

\footnote{102}{Greely, \textit{Handbook of Alaska}, pp. 31-33; also see Alfred H. Brooks, who advocated a trunk line from the Pacific seaboard to inland points, in his article, "Railway Routes in Alaska," \textit{National Geographic Magazine}, XVIII (March, 1907), pp. 165-90.}

\footnote{103}{John F. Tinsley, "Under the Sea to Alaska," \textit{Sunset}, XVI (March, 1906), pp. 454-58.}

\footnote{104}{William Mitchell, "Building the Alaskan Telegraph System," \textit{National Geographic Magazine}, XV (Sept., 1904), pp. 357-61.}
VI. ARTS AND SCIENCES, 1784-1910

Russian Period: Education and Cultural Developments. In the Russian era schools were established by trading companies and by the Greek Orthodox Church, but persistent efforts were not made to educate the native peoples. Grigorii Ivanovich Shel'dkof, organizer of the first colony in Russian America, founded the first formal school in 1784 at Three Saints Bay.¹ He baptized over forty natives and instructed pupils in the Russian language, arithmetic, and Christianity.²

Evidently this initial attempt was not too successful, for on June 19, 1796, a second school was opened at Three Saints Bay by Father Juvenal. Eleven boys and a few adult males attended. Other pupils were enrolled, but the school only operated until the next month when the boys were entrusted to Father German, who had commenced a girls' school at Pavlovsk.³

In 1805, Nikolai Rezanov founded a school for boys at St. Paul. Then a girls' school was opened with sixteen Creole pupils in charge of Mrs. Ivan Banner. However, both schools declined after Rezanov's departure, and they were eventually closed.⁴ Also Rezanov brought a library to Kodiak, which Baranov later moved to Sitka.⁵

³Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Alaska (San Francisco, 1886), pp. 365-74.
⁴Ibid., p. 706; Rezanov also endeavored to establish a library; see Hector Chevigny, Lost Empire (New York, 1939), p. 135.
Several years later a school was established at Sitka by Alexander Baranov. The institution functioned precariously until a naval officer became the director and improved its operation. In 1833 further improvements were implemented when Adolph K. Etolin, a later chief manager of the Russian-American Company, took charge. In 1841 an ecclesiastical school was established at Sitka and within four years it was elevated to the status of a seminary where the subjects of study were Russian, English, religion, mathematics, navigation, history, and bookkeeping. Despite its varied curricula, this school as well as the others were not considered efficient.

The scholarly Russian priest, Ivan Veniaminov, arrived at Unalaska on July 29, 1824. He instructed the natives in carpentry, bricklaying, and masonry. For ten years he lived among the Aleuts. His parish included the Aleutian Islands and extended to the Pribilof Islands. The priest traveled by sea in a baidarka and at time on land either on foot or with dog teams. After he mastered the Aleut language, he translated the sacred books into the native tongue. He invented an Aleut alphabet and them compiled a grammar of the Aleutian-Fox language. Moreover, he became interested in the population, climate, and products of the Unalaska region and wrote several scientific studies.

In 1834 Veniaminov was assigned to Sitka where he studies the Tlingit language and taught manual arts to the children of the area.

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Six years later he was appointed Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kuriles, and the Aleutian Islands. As a result education and religion in this new diocese were expanded. At the same time schools having small attendance existed at Kodiak, Alma Island, the Nushagak and Kvikhpak missions, and Bering Island.

Meanwhile, in 1858, the seminary at Sitka was transferred to the Asiatic mainland, but two years later a general colonial school was opened with an enrollment of twelve students. Undoubtedly the best of the Russian schools were those at Sitka and Unalaska. The schools of the Russian-American Company trained many clerks, bookkeepers, engravers, shipbuilders, and navigators. Kadin, who prepared the maps for Tebienkov's atlas of Alaska, and Terentiev, who engraved them on copper-plate, were educated in the Sitka Schools.

At the time of the transfer of Alaska the Russian schools in Sitka were closed. In 1880 only two Russian schools existed in the territory. About four years later the Russian church revived its educational program. In his report for 1887, Governor Alfred P. Swineford indicated that the Russian imperial government made an annual appropriation of $40,000 to support the Greek Orthodox Church and $20,000 to support schools and for other expenses. Moreover, there existed seventeen Russian schools with eleven clerical and six secular teachers.

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8 Shiels, op. cit., pp. 267-69.
9 Bancroft, op. cit., pp. 708-09.
10 Henderson, op. cit., p. 50.
11 Lavrischeff, op. cit., p. 36.
13 Ibid., p. 59
14 Ibid., op. cit., p. 54
Gradually the Russian church reduced the number of schools, and the last one closed in 1916.\textsuperscript{16} Russian church education lasted 130 years in Alaska. While it emphasized religious instruction the schools of the Russian-American Company, which closed in 1867, had emphasized vocational training. The Russian school books were printed at St. Petersburg and offered instruction in both religion and in the primary branches of learning. Libraries of the fur company existed at Sitka and Kodiak.\textsuperscript{17}

Besides education and religion there were but few other cultural activities during the Russian period. Father Veniaminov and several others wrote in the fields of botany, ethnology, geology, and meteorology. Fragmentary ethnological data from Russian America were collected by Russian and German writers. Lieutenant Zagoskin of the imperial navy made the first study of the tribes of Norton Sound and of the lower Yukon region. Lieutenant Wehrman, another naval officer, compiled in 1857, the first map indicating the distribution of native tribes.\textsuperscript{18} Mikhail D. Tebienkov, a navigator and surveyor, made a series of charts and maps which were eventually published in 1852 as an Atlas of the North West Shores of America.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{American Period: Education.} In 1868 the city council of Sitka purchased a school building and in the following year school trustees were appointed. No evidence exists as to the exact opening date, but in October, 1869, the council set the teacher's salary at $75.00 per month. On December 28, the council approved the appointment of Addie Mercer as teacher for a

\textsuperscript{16}Henderson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{17}James Wickersham, \textit{A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature} (Fairbanks, 1927), p. 14.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., pp. 13-14.
four-month period beginning January 1, 1870. This first American school in Alaska probably closed about 1873, when the city government was dissolved.

Meanwhile, in 1869, Vincent Coyler, United States Special Indian Commissioner, visited Alaska. He recommended an appropriation of $100,000 for schools, industrial training, and medical aid for the natives. A bill was enacted appropriating such a sum for schools among the Indians, but since the natives of Alaska were not considered as Indians none of the funds were applied to Alaska. In 1872 the Board of Indian Commissioners and the Secretary of Interior recommended legislation to establish schools in Alaska, but it failed of enactment.

The first lease of 1870 for the Pribilof Islands provided for the maintenance of a school on each island which should be open for at least eight months a year. The natives were reluctant to have their children learn English, for they feared that it might subvert the Russian Orthodox faith. Nonetheless, a school was established on St. Paul in November 1870 for twenty-nine pupils ranging in age from 5 to 17 years. The company also opened a school on St. George for twenty-five students.

With the demise of the ephemeral Sitka school, already mentioned, the educational institutions on the Seal Islands were the only American

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22 Ibid., pp. 62-63.
schools in Alaska. Factors causing the United States to neglect educational needs in Alaska were the distance between Sitka and Washington, D.C., the lack of unanimity concerning the value of Alaska, and the nation's involvement with problems of Reconstruction. Hence in 1877 the father of American education in Alaska, Sheldon Jackson, disconcertedly related about the natives as follows: 24

"Russian gave them government, schools, and the Greek religion, but when the country passed from their possession they withdrew their rulers, priests, and teachers, while the United States did not send any others to take their places. Alaska, today, has neither courts, rulers, ministers, nor teachers. The only thing the United States have done for them has been to introduce whiskey."

Fortunately, Rev. Sheldon Jackson, a pioneer Presbyterian missionary in Alaska, took steps to remedy this neglect. On August 10, 1877, he and Mrs. Amanda R. McFarland arrived at Fort Wrangell and began missionary efforts in Alaska. Mrs. McFarland became teacher of the first school in this location. By September 10, she had an average of thirty pupils. 25 In April, 1878, the Presbyterian Church with the aid of Rev. John Brady opened a mission and school at Sitka. After a precarious beginning, it assumed a permanency by 1880. For a time it was known as the Sheldon Jackson Institute, but in 1884 was renamed Sitka Industrial and Training School. 26

Meanwhile, other Presbyterian schools had been established at Haines, Willard, Boyd, and Jackson. 27 By the end of 1884 the church had

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24 As quoted in Bancroft, op.cit., pp. 709-10.
27 Henderson, op.cit., p. 79.
seventeen teachers and over 500 pupils. This beginning was primarily a result of Sheldon Jackson’s zealous work.

On May 17, 1884, the act providing a civil government for Alaska was approved. Section 13 of the measure required the Secretary of Interior to make provision for the education of children of school age, without regard to race, and appropriated $25,000 for that purpose. An act of July 4, 1884, made a further appropriation of $15,000 for the education of Indian children of both sexes at industrial schools.

The first governor of Alaska, John H. Kinkead, in his annual report of October 1, 1884, praised the efforts of the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions to christianise, enlighten, and educate the natives. However, he related: "At present the District is literally without schools for the education of white children."

Early the following year Sheldon Jackson was appointed "General Agent for Education in Alaska" by the Secretary of Interior and the Commissioner of Education. The selection of a Presbyterian created fear among the whites that their children would be neglected while the native children would be favored. Likewise Russian Catholics believed that education might deviate from the orthodox faith. Hence in 1885, a Sitka grand jury charged that Jackson was not administering the schools properly and demanded his dismissal. Conflict between Jackson and other officials, including the second

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28 Iazzell, op. cit., p. 69.


Governor, Alfred P. Swineford, led to the arrest of Jackson in 1886 on ridiculous charges that were soon dismissed.\textsuperscript{32}

Despite the animosity existing between Jackson and Swineford, the latter in his report of 1885 indicated that during the summer Jackson had placed competent teachers in charge of schools at Juneau, Sitka, Wrangell, Jackson, Boyd, Haines, and Unalaska. In addition a group of teachers were sent to the Kuskokwim River, 150 miles above its mouth on the Bering Sea. The Governor further revealed that schools were authorized at Killsnoo, Belkovsky, St. Michael, Fort Yukon, and elsewhere, but these were not established for lack of funds.\textsuperscript{33}

Jackson had a tremendous educational mission to perform in a vast area with inadequate funds. About 6,000 children of school age were in Alaska. In 1885, the Bureau of Education assumed control of the Presbyterian schools in southeastern Alaska, except for the Industrial School at Sitka. Other Protestant churches were persuaded by Jackson to establish missions and schools. In 1885, the Moravian Church established a mission at Bethel on the Kuskokwim River. The next year a school was started, and in December, 1887, a second school was founded at Carmel on the Nushagak River.\textsuperscript{34}

In July, 1886, upon Jackson's recommendation, the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church contracted with the Bureau of Education to establish a school at Anvik on the lower Yukon River. From 1890 to 1910, this church

\textsuperscript{32}\textcite{Jeannette Nichols, Alaska (Cleveland, 1924), p. 103; Lazell, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 75.}

\textsuperscript{33}\textcite{Report of Governor of Alaska, Oct. 1, 1885, II, p. 912.}

\textsuperscript{34}\textcite{Henderson, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 79-81.}
established eight other schools. Most of these were in the Yukon River Valley, except for schools at Ketchikan and at Point Hope in the Arctic region.35

The Roman Catholic Church founded its first school, St. Ann's, at Juneau in 1866. The Catholic missionaries worked chiefly in the lower Yukon River and in the delta areas of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers. The largest school was an industrial school at Holy Cross established in 1891. Catholic schools also existed at Cape Vancouver, Nulato, and elsewhere.36

The Free Mission Society of Sweden established schools at Unalaklik on Norton Sound and at Yakutat in southeastern Alaska. A third school was founded at Golovin in the Norton Sound region in 1893. In addition to the various denominations already mentioned, the Baptist Church founded an orphanage and school at Wood Island in the nineties, the Methodist Episcopal Church operated a school at Unalaska from 1889 to 1893, and the Friend’s Mission had a school at Douglas for a brief period.37 In 1894, there were twenty-four mission and seventeen government schools in Alaska. Until this date the federal government had subsidized the denominational schools.38

In his first report as general agent of education Jackson related that the objectives of the Alaskan school system were to

36Henderson, op.cit., p. 85; for details see Sister Mary Joseph Calasancius, The Voice of Alaska (Lachine, Quebec, 1935).
37Henderson, op.cit., p. 87.
teach reading, writing, and arithmetic, to teach how to utilize the
resources of the land to earn a better living, and to influence the
natives to relinquish their old ways and to adopt American methods. 39

In the summer of 1886, Jackson chartered a schooner, and with three
teachers made a journey of 104 days. He started schools at Kodiak,
Afognak, and Unga. At Unalaska he reported that there was a school
operated by the Russian Church. Jackson in his report of May 2, 1887,
stated as follows: 40

"American citizens who have never heard a prayer for the President of the United States, or of the Fourth of July, or the name of the capital of the nation are taught to pray for the Emperor of Russian, celebrate his birthday, and commemorate the victories of ancient Greece."

Despite the delay by Congress in providing adequately for
education and the small annual appropriation, Jackson endeavored to
make the school system widespread. To succeed in this goal he made
contracts with the various mission boards to establish schools.

Jackson's reports for 1893 and 1894 recorded a school population
estimated at 8,000 to 10,000, of which 1,438 were enrolled in the
twenty-four schools then functioning. Of these, fifteen were
government schools and nine were contract schools. After the con­
tract system ended, the mission boards continued to operate the
schools at their own expense. At the end of the century with the
appropriation of increased funds many of the mission schools were

39 Henderson, op.cit., p. 112.

40 Sheldon Jackson to N.H.R. Dawson, U.S. Commissioner of
Education, May 2, 1887, Report of Secretary of Interior (Washington,
D.C., 1887), II, p. 1215.
taken over by the Bureau of Education. 41

The maintenance of separate schools for natives and whites was inaugurated where the white population was sufficient to warrant such segregation. Previous to the school year 1900-01, there were six schools operated exclusively for white children. 42 After the federal government withdrew its support of the mission schools in 1894, the Bureau of Education maintained schools for children of all races and in all types of communities until 1900. However, the gold rushes of the nineties prevented the Bureau from providing necessary schools because of the limited appropriations. Then in 1900, Congress authorized communities to incorporate and maintain municipal governments, including schools. Once the Bureau was relieved of that burden, it extended educational service to neglected areas. As white population continued to increase, communities too small to incorporate demanded autonomy in maintaining their schools. The Nelson Act of 1905 permitted the establishment of school districts outside incorporated towns and arranged for their support from the "Alaska Fund." The Governor became ex-officio superintendent of public instruction. White children and children of mixed blood leading a civilized life were allowed to attend such schools. Under the new system the Bureau of Education now maintained schools for the native races. 43

41 Henderson, op. cit., pp. 120-27.
42 Ibid., pp. 127-28.
Since 1905, Alaska has had a dual system of education. Until 1931, the Bureau of Education was responsible for education and social welfare of the native races. It extended its services to more remote sections and started new enterprises as appropriations increased.\(^44\)

By 1910, there were 77 government schools for natives having an enrollment of 3,962 pupils.\(^45\) Prior to that year education in Alaska was only concerned with the elementary level. A high school was organized at Fairbanks in 1909, but the first students did not graduate until 1913.\(^46\) With regards to higher education it should be related that the territorial college, later to become the University of Alaska, was provided for in 1917. Moreover, the Sitka Industrial Training School was a forerunner of the present day Sheldon Jackson Junior College.\(^47\)

**Journalism.** Apparently the first newspaper in Alaska, the *Esquimaux*, was written in manuscript form at Port Clarence on the Bering Sea in 1866. The journal was issued by a member of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition. The file of the newspaper was taken to San Francisco and printed either in 1867 or 1868.\(^48\)

On March 1, 1868, another newspaper appeared in San Francisco entitled the *Alaska Herald*. At first it was published by Agapius Honcharenko, a runaway monk of the Greek Church, who had never been

\(^{44}\) Henderson, op. cit., p. 456.

\(^{45}\) Smith, op. cit., p. 49.


\(^{47}\) Lazell, op. cit., p. 210

in Alaska. However, he imagined that he was a champion of the former
Russian possessions. He endeavored to spread discontent among the
Russian-speaking citizens of the United States. The journal appeared
with two columns, one in English and the other in Russian. In 1872,
A. A. Stickney became editor and publication continued until March 20,
1876.49

On May 1, 1868, Thomas J. Murphy and William S. Dodge began
publication of the Alaska Times at Sitka. Shortly, Murphy became sole
editor of this pioneer weekly journal. In 1870, he moved to Seattle
and printed two additional numbers before suspending publication. On
September 19, 1868, Barney O. Regan published the first issue of the
Sitka Times. However, it has been a matter of dispute whether the
Alaska Times or the Sitka Times appeared first despite the obvious
earlier date of the former.50

In 1888, the Alaska Mining Record began publication at Juneau.51
Four years later, Rev. Jules L. Prevost of the Episcopalian Church
established St. James Mission at the junction of the Tanana and Yukon
Rivers. He began printing the Yukon Press in January, 1894, as the
first newspaper in the interior of Alaska.52 On October 31, 1897, the
Aurora Borealis was first issued at St. Michael. This journal was
mimeographed and sold for one dollar a copy. It ceased publication
after its fourth issue in 1898. Another short-lived newspaper was the
Rampart Forum mimeographed at Rampart City. It had advertisements and

49 Ivan Petroff, Alaska, Tenth Census, VIII, p. 120; Wickersham,
Bibliography of Alaskan Literature, p. 251.
50 See Wickersham, op. cit., pp. 253-54.
51 Nichols, op. cit., p. 425.
52 Stuck, op. cit., p. 63.
covered local news, being published by Sam Hubbard, Jr. 53

As mining developed newspapers such as the Douglas Island News, Juneau City Mining Record, Fairbanks Miner, and Nome Nugget were established. In addition a few magazines were published. The Eskimo Bulletin was the pioneer journal of northwestern Alaska, being printed annually by a mission school at Cape Prince of Wales from 1894 to 1902. Its columns were decorated with woodcuts depicting walrus, whale, and polar bear hunts. The Glacier appeared at Fort Wrangell in 1886 and the North Star at Sitka in 1887. Probably the most noted magazine was the Alaska-Yukon Magazine of Seattle which had its beginning as the Alaska Monthly at Juneau in 1906. 54

Literature. In the fields of fiction, poetry, and travel the Alaskan environment attracted several noteworthy writers. Jack London wrote numerous short stories dealing with the strife of the elements and isolation. The Sea-Wolf was concerned with the conflict of pelagic sealing. The Call of the Wild and White Fang were two other novels dealing with the Alaskan scene. John Muir wrote his Travels in Alaska and numerous articles for periodicals and newspapers. Joaquin Miller wrote about his Alaskan adventures in the Overland Monthly, and Robert W. Service wrote his Spell of the Yukon. These writers and many more assisted in conveying to the American people a greater interest in their northern territory. 55


54 Underwood, op.cit., p. 296; Nichols, op.cit., p. 427; for a list of newspapers and magazines see Wickersham, op. cit., pp. 250-71

Libraries and museums. In 1866, the Western Union Telegraph Expedition established a small collection of books at Libbysville, the first American library in Alaska. Perhaps the second library was one of Russian books maintained by the Alaska Commercial Company for the natives of the Pribilof Islands.

The Sheldon Jackson Museum at Sitka is connected today with the junior college there. Governor James Sheakley in one of his annual reports indicated that the Society of Alaskan Natural History and Ethnology was organized on October 24, 1887, in connection with the Sitka Industrial Training School, the forerunner of Sheldon Jackson Junior College, in order to collect and preserve specimens and publications. Curios, skins, ivory carvings, and other specimens were housed in a large structure provided by Dr. Jackson.

When Governor Lyman E. Knapp assumed office in 1889, he found some fifty volumes of reports and books belonging to the federal government scattered about Sitka. Using these as the nucleus of a library he began a one-sided exchange with other libraries. By 1892, he had accumulated 850 bound volumes and a number of pamphlets, and in his report of that year he requested a small appropriation to maintain the library. In his annual report he also mentioned the founding of the Alaska Historical Society, which had been organized about 1890 and maintained a small library of books and manuscripts in his office.

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57 Henry W. Elliott, Our Arctic Province, Alaska and the Seal Islands (New York, 1887), p. 244.
59 Ibid., Oct. 1, 1892, III, pp. 507-08.
By 1900, the library grew to 1,200 bound volumes and included a number of unbound volumes, pamphlets, charts, and maps. On June 6, 1900, Congress enacted a law establishing the Alaska Historical Library and Museum at Sitka and thus recognized the beginnings of a collection already made by Governor Knapp and others. Under the terms of the measure money from fees paid for the certificates of the Alaska Bar was to be used to acquire books for the library and collections for the museum. However, since the law did not provide for the housing and display of the collections nor for book processing, the museum, which later removed to Juneau, was not open to the public until 1920.

After the enactment of the law of 1900, a valuable collection of Eskimo antiquities was purchased from Dr. Daniel Neuman. According to Governor John G. Brady, the library, when still located at Sitka in 1902, had 4,277 volumes, and a mineralogical collection was started in the museum with the mine owners donating samples of ore. Beginning in 1905, the Governor was required to disburse a fund named the District Historical Library Fund. The law now required the library and museum to accumulate copies of all laws pertaining to the district and all newspapers and periodicals published in Alaska as

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60 Annual Report of Secretary of Interior, 1900, p. 91.
63 Annual Report of Secretary of Interior, 1902, p. 90.
as well as curios which the governor considered to be of historical significance. 64

Science. The first scientific exploration into Russian American to be undertaken by an American was that of Robert Kennicott in a journey from Chicago to Fort Yukon and back during the period from May 19, 1859 to February 11, 1862. He planned to study the fauna and geology of the central part of British America under the sponsorship of the Smithsonian Institution and the Audubon Club of Chicago. He spent the winter of 1860-61 at Fort Yukon. During the summer of 1861, he trapped and hunted with James Lockhart, chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, obtaining numerous specimens. The next winter Kennicott catalogued his Arctic collection at the Smithsonian Institution. 65 And the results of his exploration were published in the annual Smithsonian reports. 66

In 1864, Kennicott became director of the Chicago Academy of Sciences. The next year he accepted the position of Chief of Explorations of the Western Union Telegraph Expedition with the stipulation that he could appoint a corps of assistants, who would collect specimens for both the Chicago Academy of Sciences and the Smithsonian Institution. Its members included J. T. Rothrock, botanist; William H. Dall, Henry W. Elliott, Charles Pease, Henry M. Bannister, Ferdinand Bischoff, zoologists and geologists; and G. W. Maynard, a volunteer. 67

65 James A. James, The First Scientific Exploration of Russian America and the Purchase of Alaska (Evanston, Ill., 1942), pp. 6-11; for the journal of Kennicott see pp. 46-135.
66 Ibid., p. x.
After the untimely death of Kennicott on May 13, 1866, Dall succeeded as head of the scientific corps.

These scientists collected specimens of natural history and made meteorological observations. Moreover, they made known the resources of Alaska and were consulted in connection with its purchase. After the expedition ended, Dall offered his services to the Smithsonian Institution and published his book, *Alaska and Its Resources*. From 1871 to 1884, William H. Dall was with the United States Coast Survey in charge of a scientific survey of the Aleutians and the adjacent coast which resulted in his various volumes of the *Pacific Coast Pilot* relating to Alaska. It should be noted that Frederick Whymper, the artist of the telegraph expedition, also wrote a book about the territory.

In his lengthy speech before the Senate in favor of the Alaskan purchase, Charles Sumner, suggested sending a scientific expedition to Alaska. On April 29, 1867, the New York Herald seconded the idea. Secretary Seward and Secretary of Treasury Hugh McCulloch in a conference with Benjamin Peirce, the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, decided to send a group of scientists under the leadership of George Davidson. The Smithsonian Institution prepared special instructions for Davidson to collect data about ethnology, meteorology, and

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68 Dall, *op. cit.*, p. 357.


70 Frederick Whymper, *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska* (London, 1868).
natural history. Among the other scientists in the party were A. T. Mossman, astronomer; George Farquhar, hydrographer; Theodore A. Blake, geologist; and Albert Kellogg, botanist.\textsuperscript{71}

At San Francisco the scientific party boarded the Revenue Cutter, \textit{Lincoln}. After calling at Victoria and Fort Simpson, the vessel proceeded to Sitka, arriving on August 11, 1867. Here they collected data concerning the area's resources from the Russian officials and the Hudson's Bay Company agents. The \textit{Lincoln} then sailed to Kodiak Island and to Unalaska. After making observations and surveys there, they returned to Sitka.\textsuperscript{72} By November, the expedition returned to San Francisco, and Davidson began preparing his first report. He wrote about the resources, climate, ocean currents, and other scientific and economic matters.\textsuperscript{73}

Davidson visited Alaska a second time primarily to observe a total solar eclipse occurring on August 7, 1869. He made his headquarters at an Indian village, thirty miles from the mouth of the Chilkat River. Meanwhile, on August 3, Secretary of State Seward and a group sailed from Sitka aboard the Revenue Cutter, \textit{Active}, to observe the eclipse. Davidson's observation was successful, and he returned to San Francisco.\textsuperscript{74} The results of his expeditions of 1867 and 1869 formed the basis for the \textit{Coast Pilot of Alaska}, Part I.

\textsuperscript{71}Morgan B. Sherwood, "George Davidson and the Acquisition of Alaska," \textit{Pacific Historical Review}, XXVIII (May, 1959), pp. 141-45.

\textsuperscript{72}Oscar Lewis, \textit{George Davidson, Pioneer West Coast Scientist} (Berkeley, 1954), pp. 42-43.

\textsuperscript{73}Sherwood, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 147-50.

\textsuperscript{74}Daily Alta California, Sept. 5, 1869, p. 2; George Davidson, \textit{The Alaska Boundary} (San Francisco, 1903), p. 13.
Throughout most of his life he continued to agitate for expansion of the Coast Survey into Alaskan waters.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition to the officers of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Army, Navy, Census Bureau, and Revenue Marine Service viewed Alaska as a field of scientific research.\textsuperscript{76} In particular the United States Army Signal Service made many scientific contributions. For example, in 1881, an Arctic expedition under Lieutenant P. Henry Ray was assigned to Point Barrow to erect a meteorological and astronomical observatory. Besides its primary duty of accumulating meteorological data the expedition was instructed to collect specimens of animal, vegetable, and mineral life in the vicinity.\textsuperscript{77} Also in the field of exploration United States Army expeditions such as those of Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka along the Yukon River in 1883, of Lieutenant W. R. Abercrombie along the Copper River in 1884, and of Lieutenant Henry T. Allen to the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk Rivers in 1885, added to our scientific knowledge of Alaska. Allen made a great contribution to the geographic knowledge of the interior.\textsuperscript{78}

Another governmental agency having a scientific interest was the Department of Agriculture which commissioned Frederick Funston in 1893, to collect botanical specimens and to make weather observations

\textsuperscript{75}Davidson, op. cit., p. 14; for the work in Alaska of the Coast and Geodetic Survey see Archie W. Shiel, Seward's Icebox (Bellingham, 1933), pp. 85-99.


\textsuperscript{77}Daily Alta California, July 18, 1881, p. 1.

\textsuperscript{78}Henry T. Allen, Report of an Expedition to the Copper, Tanana, and Koyukuk Rivers in the Territory of Alaska (Washington, D.C., 1887), pp. 9-29; also see Greely, op. cit., pp. 42-43.
along the Porcupine and Yukon Rivers. On April 12, he crossed Chilkoot Pass bound for the Yukon. He became the first white man to journey from the interior of Alaska to the Arctic during winter. In November, 1894, he returned to Washington, D.C. with his reports.79

Among the numerous scientists associated with Alaska was John Muir, the great naturalist and geologist. In 1879, he and Rev. S. Hall Young discovered Glacier Bay, which soon became a tourist attraction.80 In 1899, Edward H. Harriman, the railroad magnate, sponsored a scientific expedition to Alaska. After conferring with Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the United States Biological Survey, he chartered a steamer and brought a group of twenty-five distinguished scientists, artists, and photographers to Alaska. The expedition included such noteworthy scientists as John Burroughs, Charles A. Keller, John Muir, William H. Brewer, William H. Dall, C. Hart Merriam and others. These men mapped glaciers and collected natural history specimens. About 5,000 photographs were taken of the Alaskan coast. Also many research publications resulted.81 In 1890 and 1891, the National Geographic Society Expedition explored the Mt. St. Elias region. The society’s research expedition of 1909 studied glaciers


80 S. Hall Young, Hall Young of Alaska (New York, 1927), pp. 196-204; also see John Muir, Travels in Alaska (Boston, 1915).

81 George Kennan, E. H. Harriman, A Biography (Boston, 1922), I, pp. 185-88; "Discoveries in Our Arctic Regions," World’s Work, I (Dec., 1900), pp. 149-56.
in Yakutat Bay and in eastern Prince William Sound.82

Since 1867, Alaska has been a source for tremendous scientific research, particularly in the fields of geology, botany, ethnology, paleontology, zoology, and ornithology. This continuous research was an important factor in arousing the interest of the American people in their isolated territory. Although political and economic interests in Alaska seemed to lag behind the scientific interest in the period prior to 1910, scientific research probably assisted in stimulating the other interests. At least science made the public and Congress aware of Alaska during the era of its neglect.

Religion. In the early 1790's the merchants, Grigorii Shelikhov and Ivan Golikov, urged Empress Catherine and the church officials to propagate the faith among the natives of the American possessions. Hence in 1794, the first missionaries arrived at Kodiak. The first efforts to convert the natives were made there, and at Unalaska, Cook Inlet, and Sitka. About 1795, the first Greek Orthodox chapel in the colonies was built at St. Paul. At Sitka the first church was erected in 1817, but religious services were performed by a company official rather than by a priest. Churches were erected at St. Paul Island in 1819 and at St. George Island in 1833. As early as 1808, a log chapel was constructed at Unalaska and a church was dedicated in 1826.

In 1824, Father Ivan Veniaminov, the most famous churchman in Russian American, arrived at Unalaska where he started building the Church of the Ascension during the next year. His parish included the Aleutian Islands and extended to the Pribilof Islands. In 1834, he was transferred to Sitka. Already he had translated parts of the Bible into Aleut and now he performed the same task into the Tlingit tongue. After a journey to St. Petersburg, he returned to Sitka in 1841, as Bishop of Kamchatka, the Kuriles, and the Aleutians.

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On November 20, 1843, he dedicated the cathedral of St. Michael's.\(^4\)

Veniaminov was active in both the missionary and educational fields. From a missionary center at Redoubt St. Michael his emissaries even penetrated into the lower Yukon and Kuskokwim basins. In 1859, his successor became Bishop Peter, who directed the Russian Church in America until 1867.\(^5\)

After 1867, the Russian Orthodox Church continued its work in Alaska. In 1880, the church claimed a membership of 10,950.\(^6\) The only Protestant church in the Russian era had been the Lutheran chapel at Sitka, founded about 1842, by Chief Manager Adolph Etolin for the benefit of the Finns and Germans among the officers and employees of the Russian-American Company.\(^7\)

When the Hudson Bay Company established Fort Yukon in 1847, within Russian territory, Anglican missionaries from Canada penetrated along the Yukon as far as the mouth of the Tanana.\(^8\)

For the first ten years after American acquisition, the churches of the United States made no real effort to perform


\(^5\) Hulley, op. cit., p. 166; in the Report on Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census: 1890 (Washington, D. C., 1893), VIII, p. 182, Bishop Peter was mentioned as in residence at Sitka. However, Bishop Pavel was given as the last incumbent, who transferred the headquarters of the diocese, then reduced to Alaska and California, to San Francisco. Pavel's incumbency may have occurred after the purchase.

\(^6\) Bancroft, op. cit., p. 704, asserted this figure should be reduced by 2,500.

\(^7\) Census of 1890, VIII, p. 183.

\(^8\) Hulley, op. cit., p. 232.
missionary work. However, proposals were made by visiting Protestant missionaries and by General O. O. Howard. Actually the first efforts were made by some Tsimshian Indians from Fort Simpson in Canada, who had contracted to cut wood for the army at Fort Wrangell. Captain S. P. Jocelyn, commanding the station, obtained a room for their worship. They and other natives in the area attended the services.9

On August 10, 1877, Rev. Sheldon Jackson of the Presbyterian Church came to Fort Wrangell. He established a mission school and held services before returning to the United States to raise funds. Also he persuaded the Board of Home Missions of his church to appoint Rev. John G. Brady and Rev. S. Hall Young for missionary assignments at Sitka and Wrangell respectively.10 The next year Hall arrived at Fort Wrangell and commenced his work.11 Then in May, 1879, Archbishop Charles J. Seghers and Father Althorf, both of Victoria, appeared and requested permission from Hall to share the missionary field. Hall agreed and for a few years their Catholic church existed at Wrangell before its abandonment. In August, Rev. Hall organized the first Protestant church and first American church for natives in Alaska.12

Meanwhile, on April 11, 1878, Rev. John G. Brady, arrived at Sitka, and he held services in the decaying Baranov castle.13

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9Sheldon Jackson, Alaska, And Missions on the North Pacific Coast (New York, 1880), pp. 129-35.
10Ibid., pp. 140-44.
11Ibid., p. 189.
12S. Hall Young, Hall Young of Alaska (New York, 1927), pp. 171, 179.
Jackson, Hall, and Brady were the real leaders of the first Protestant missionary efforts in Alaska. By 1890, the Presbyterians had five distinct church organizations in southeastern Alaska. They had established churches and missions at Wrangell, Sitka, Juneau, and at the village of Huna on Chichagof Island. However, despite their great influence, which even reached into political affairs, the Presbyterians encouraged other denominations to enter the missionary and educational work. Also in 1890, the Society of Friends had a mission home in Douglas City. The Swedish Free Mission Society had a station at Yakutat and another at Unalaklik on Norton Sound. The Moravian Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had its Carmel Mission at Nushagak and its Bethel Mission on the Kuskokwim River while the Protestant Episcopal Church had two missionary stations on the Yukon River. Among pioneers of the Episcopal Church were Hudson Stuck, Archdeacon of the Yukon, and Peter T. Rowe, the Bishop of Alaska.

After their initial failure at Fort Wrangell, the Catholics founded the Church of the Nativity at Juneau. In 1890, they had missions on the Yukon River at Nulato, Kozerevsky, and Tununuk.

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15 Census of 1890, VIII, pp. 183-84.

16 For details about this denomination see Hudson Stuck, The Alaskan Missions of the Episcopal Church (New York, 1920).

17 Census of 1890, VIII, p. 184
The Catholic missionaries and teachers at the time numbered six Jesuit fathers and three Sisters of St. Ann. 18

According to the 1890 census the Russian Orthodox Church had 10,335 communicants compared to 1,334 for the Protestant churches and 498 for the Roman Catholic Church. 19 By 1903, Alaska had approximately eighty missions and churches, most of these belonging to the Presbyterian and Russian Orthodox denominations. 20

Duncan and the Metlakatla Christian Mission. In 1857, the Missionary Society of the Church of England sent William Duncan to Fort Simpson to begin his missionary work among Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia. 21 He studied the native language for eight months before delivering his first sermon on June 13, 1858. 22 In 1862, he started building a Christian Indian village at Metlakatla, seventeen miles south of Fort Simpson. His converts were required to adopt a rigid code of conduct in which they abandoned their superstitions and tribal ways. Instead they accepted high moral standards and agreed to be industrious and peaceful. 23

19 Census of 1890, VIII, p. 184.
20 Bulley, op.cit., p. 240.
As the result of a conflict with the Church of England and the confiscation of his lands by Canada, Duncan applied for a site in Alaska. President Grover Cleveland granted the use of Annette Island, and on March 3, 1891, Congress established it as a reservation under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior. Meanwhile, on August 7, 1887, Duncan and 823 Tsimshian Indians began the occupation of New Metlakatla. In time they built a model Indian village consisting of permanent homes, a sawmill, a school, a church, a public library, a town hall, and a water system. In 1896, a beautiful cathedral was completed. The Indians engaged in agriculture, fishing, salmon canning, boat building, and other industries. The total salmon pack from 1891 to 1907 was 247,344 cases.

In 1895, the natives organized a cooperative, the Metlakatla Industrial Company, merging the store, sawmill, and cannery. However, ten years later Duncan assumed control of the company by common consent and started to pay wages. Since the village's most profitable industry was salmon, the competition of the large salmon canneries hurt the community, forcing many of the Indians to seek employment elsewhere. In the four years before Duncan's death in 1918, the village faced serious economic, religious, and educational problems.

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24 Ibid., pp. 44-54; Arctander, op. cit., pp. 323, 35-56; Census of 1890, VIII, p. 266; George W. Rogers, Alaska In Transition, The Southeast Region (Baltimore, 1960), p. 211.


26 Rogers, op. cit., p. 211.
Hospitals and welfare activities. In Russian America sanitary conditions were abominable and the natives suffered from numerous diseases. However, hospitals were maintained at Sitka, St. Paul, and Kodiak Island. The Russian-American Company assisted the sick, aged, and disabled employees. With American acquisition support of most welfare activities was withdrawn. After a period of neglect, except for some assistance by the military services and by the Alaska Commercial Company, the missionaries rendered a little aid until the federal government began to meet these needs. On October 1, 1885, Governor Alfred P. Swineford urged the building of a hospital at Sitka to treat natives. Four years later Governor Lyman E. Knapp recommended establishing government hospitals at convenient locations.

In the nineties Bishop Peter T. Rowe of the Episcopal Church founded hospitals at Circle City and Skagway, and shortly after 1910, at Fort Yukon, Fairbanks, and Anvik.

Beginning in 1907, the Bureau of Education maintained small hospitals for natives at Juneau, Kanakanak, and Nulato. However, a native medical service was not started until after 1910.

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field of mental health a contract was in effect with a Portland
sanitarium, from 1905 to 1910, to care for the insane of Alaska
at an annual rate of $348 per person.32

Fraternal organizations. In 1899, the Arctic Brotherhood, a
fraternal organization, was organized at Skagway by Captain William
A. Connell of the City of Seattle. The original members were
passengers aboard the ship.33 The order grew and as local chapters
were founded in most Alaskan communities it became an important
factor in the enrichment of social life. At Rampart in 1903,
several United States Senators, who were investigating Alaska in
order to draft legislation for its development, were initiated
into the order.34 This organization also became a political force
in the home rule movement.35

The gold rush caused other fraternal orders to be acti­
vated in Alaska. At Nome besides the Arctic Brotherhood, the
Masons and Elks were active in social affairs during the winter
months.36 Another early organization was the Pioneers of Alaska
which had its Grand Igloo and subordinate Igloos.37 In addition
organizations such as the Alaska Club and the Arctic Club were
formed in Seattle by groups interested in Alaska as a field for
investment.38

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32 Annual Report of Secretary of Interior, 1909, p. 36; the
Nelson Act of 1905 provided that 5% of the Alaska Fund should be used
to care for the insane; see Gruening, op. cit., p. 124.
34 James Wickersham, Old Yukon (Washington, D.C., 1938),
pp. 413-15.
35 Jeanette P. Nichols, Alaska (Cleveland, 1924), pp. 239,
329-32.
36 Wickersham, Old Yukon, p. 410.
37 James Wickersham, A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature
(Fairbanks, 1927), p. 178.
38 Nichols, op. cit., p. 203.
**Reindeer service.** By the 1890's, the Eskimos as a race were declining in numbers because of the indiscriminate slaughter of seals, otters, and whales. Also a danger existed that their last food source, the salmon, might diminish. The sole salvation of the Eskimo appeared to be a continuation of the experiment of introducing reindeer which had been started by Dr. Sheldon Jackson. In this manner the Eskimo could be assured of food, clothing, and transportation.39

In the summer of 1890, when Jackson visited Arctic Alaska for the purpose of establishing schools, he found that the food supply was decreasing. Hence he reasoned that schools among a starving people would be of small value. As a remedy he urged the introduction of domestic reindeer, noting that the nomadic tribes on the Siberian side of the Bering Strait had a substantial food supply with their large herds.40

On the cruise of the Revenue Cutter, Bear, in 1891, Jackson brought his first herd of sixteen reindeer from Siberia and started his reindeer colony at Unalaska.41 The next year Jackson and Captain M. A. Healy of the Bear made five trips to Siberia to purchase reindeer. Four Siberian herders and 171 deer were landed at Port Clarence and a reindeer station was established at Teller with Miner W. Bruce as first superintendent. Jackson had obtained funds from private contributors for his first experiments. Finally on

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March 3, 1893, Congress appropriated $6,000. The Secretary of Interior assigned management of the fund to the Commissioner of Education.\(^4\)

Between 1892 and 1902, 1,280 reindeer were imported from Siberia. In 1894, Jackson by using private funds again sent William A. Kjellmann to Lapland to obtain herders. The various missionary societies were given the task of distributing the reindeer. In 1895, herds were loaned to a few apprentices. The loans were to be repaid in like number of reindeer in five years. By 1904, there were fifteen reindeer stations with an estimated total of 10,241 deer. In 1907, the industry became an integral part of the Alaskan school system. Then a code of regulations for the reindeer service was prepared which provided for an apprenticeship system.\(^4\)

In the beginning many people criticized the plan as impracticable and wasteful, but by 1903, 20,000 natives of northwestern Alaska and the miners in the interior were dependent upon reindeer. Moreover, the reindeer were used for relief of stranded whalermen and reindeer teams carried the United States mails.\(^4\)

Conservation efforts. Nikolai P. Rezanov in his first official letter from Russian America to the Czar in 1805, from St. Paul Island

mentioned that he had ordered a stop to the slaughter of seals to circumvent their complete extermination.\textsuperscript{45} However, after his departure the killing was resumed. During the 1820's restrictions were again recommended. In 1834, Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell restricted the number killed on St. Paul and imposed a closed season on St. George Island for two years.\textsuperscript{46} As already indicated, under the leasing systems efforts were made to restrict the slaughter from 1870 to 1909. However, by 1910, the herd had diminished to 132,000 seals, when the Fish and Wildlife Service assumed control over sealing on the Pribilof Islands. Under the federal conservation program the fur seal herd has been greatly increased.\textsuperscript{47}

Several early governors of Alaska complained about the lack of a means to obtain title to timber lands.\textsuperscript{48} Then in 1891, by the Forest Reserve Act, Congress authorized the President to withdraw public lands. Hence President Harrison and President Cleveland withdrew about 38,000,000 acres of federal lands. During the Theodore Roosevelt administration the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest were reserved.\textsuperscript{49} However, opponents asserted that conservation as applied to Alaska retarded the territory's economic development.\textsuperscript{50} Coal mining had just started on a

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{45} Bancroft, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 446.
  \item \textsuperscript{48} For example see Lyman E. Knapp in his \textit{Report of Governor of Alaska}, Oct. 1, 1889 (Washington, D. C., 1889), p. 28.
  \item \textsuperscript{49} Kulley, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 301-02.
  \item \textsuperscript{50} See J. A. Hellenthal, \textit{The Alaskan Melodrama} (New York, 1936), pp. 189-205 and Grueing, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 130-31.
\end{itemize}
commercial scale in Alaska when President Roosevelt by executive
order of November 12, 1906, withdrew the coal lands. Indeed, many
Alaskans sincerely believed that conservation was curtailing industry
in their land and conservation issues plagued the politics of
Alaska.52

Undoubtedly the timber and coal lands of Alaska were
bountiful, but her whaling, fur hunting, and fisheries were en­
dangered by indiscriminate practices. Hence on October 1, 1889,
Governor Lyman E. Knapp recommended: 53

"Measures should be taken to regulate the fisheries
in the district, so that wasteful and unnecessarily de­
structive methods shall not be employed, and that the
rights and proper privileges of the natives, so neces­
sary to their support and continued independence, shall
not be infringed upon."

Salmon in particular were decreasing. In 1894, Assistant
Secretary of the Treasury Charles S. Hamlin, who visited the dis­
trict, recommended conservation measures. Two years later Congress
authorized the Secretary of Treasury to close salmon streams and
to decide upon closed seasons. However, the inspection system was
inadequate and the depletion of the salmon supply continued.54
Finally in 1906, improved legislation was enacted to protect and
regulate the fisheries and to prohibit aliens from fishing in
Alaskan waters. Three private salmon hatcheries and the Yes Lake
Hatchery on McDonald Lake, operated by the Bureau of Fisheries,

51 Hellenthal, pp. 212-18; Gruening, p. 130.
52 Nichols, op.cit., pp. 363-82.
54 Gruening, op.cit., pp. 97-98.
were in existence during the season of 1906-07. Also the Bureau was preparing to establish a hatchery on Afognak Island in 1907.\(^5\)

By 1910, the federal government was becoming more aware of the need for conservation measures in Alaska. Eventually the Fish and Wildlife Service launched a thorough research program designed to safeguard Alaska's vital salmon industry.\(^6\)


CHAPTER VIII. CONCLUSION

**Summarization.** Once the Russians reached the shores of the Pacific it was logical that they should explore for new lands. The second Bering expedition in bringing back some sea otter skins started the swarming of the reckless promshlenniki who were quick to exploit the natives and sea life of the Aleutians. As Russian settlements extended and as the imperial government acquired more interest in the new American possessions the ground-work of colonization was laid by the astute Baranov. In 1799, a monopoly was formed, ending the fierce rivalry of the independent companies. After a precarious beginning the Russian-American Company began to show profits and several of its leaders acquired dreams of expansion. However, from the beginning rival nations infringed upon the Russian monopoly. For a period the company profited from the fur trade and participated in other economic pursuits, but eventually foreign rivalry, war, declining profits, and a desire to expand elsewhere motivated the Russians to sell Alaska to the United States.

The first decade of American rule witnessed military occupation and then a brief period of virtually no government. In 1884, Alaska became a customs district with an appointive governor under the provisions of the first Organic Act. Gradually a home rule movement evolved and the first territorial legislature was established in 1912 by the second Organic Act.

The wealth of the sea attracted the first Americans to Alaska. The greatest prize was the fur seal of the Pribilof Islands. In the eighties the whaling industry grew, but soon declined after
the turn of the century. In 1878, the first salmon cannery was erected at Klawak. Mining and fishing caused five white settlements to originate. These were Ketchikan, Juneau, and Douglas, Haines-Chilkoot Barracks, Cordova, and Homer. From 1895 to 1910 (and a few years beyond), Alaska experienced gold rushes which resulted in the founding of such white settlements as Skagway, Valdez, Seward, Nome, and Fairbanks.¹

**Trends in Alaskan History.** Both Russia and the United States established permanent settlements in Alaska. The Russian settlements were mainly in the Cook Inlet-Kodiak area, but also in the Aleutians, southeastern Alaska, and lower Yukon region. Wrangell began as a Russian fort in 1834, but was transferred to the English six years later. Also Fort Yukon was settled by the English.²

Alaska under both Russian rule and American rule suffered from official neglect because of its isolated position from St. Petersburg and from Washington, D.C. Hence the expression in the Russian period was: "God is high above and the Czar is far away" while in the early American period it was: "God is afar off and it is a long way to Washington."

In the incipient stages of the American period California and Washington Territory had a greater interest in Alaska than did

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²Ibid., pp. 387-91.
the East coast. As new economic wealth was discovered the white population increased and Washington, D.C. became more interested in Alaska. An important turning point was the gold rush which Ernest Gruening has aptly termed "The Third Discovery of Alaska."

From the start of the American era interest in self-government developed, but it received little encouragement until after the gold rush. Also the economic and social welfare of the Alaskan people was neglected by Congress until that time and even then legislative action lagged behind the demands of the people.

Value of Alaska and significance of the American period.

Gradually the United States became aware of the vast potentiality of its purchase. The fisheries and mineral resources were developed by the Americans. The exploration of interior Alaska was a real achievement in the American period. In this regard the United States Army and the Geological Survey made significant contributions in the development of transportation and communication prior to 1910.

Scientists with the Army, Treasury Department, Agriculture Department, Interior Department, and with private associations played important roles in proving the wealth of Alaska and in making the American people more conscious of their northern domain. Indeed, they aided in exploding the myth of Alaska being only a frozen land.

That Alaska was not just an inhospitable and barren waste was evidenced at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition held at Seattle
in 1909. A magazine concerning Alaska and the Greater Northwest entitled, *The Coast*, in its August, 1909, issue proudly stated:  

"...We are made aware through the exhibits of what has been done that Alaska is a land where agriculture can be successfully followed; where the fisheries of the future can be operated; where immense coal fields await the developing hand of the operator; where copper, marble and all kinds of minerals are found as well as gold and silver ores; where commerce and shipping and cities are bound to be built and grow as in other parts of the world; where there is a climate in parts of the Territory that differs (sic) none from that of the most favored parts of the Pacific Northwest, and we are impressed with the fact that in Alaska there is opportunity for the man without means as well as the man with riches and wealth."

Alaska in 1910 and its future. In 1867, the estimated population of Alaska was 28,000.  

Stone, op.cit., p. 384.

The first United States Alaskan Census of 1880 counted 33,426. By 1890, the figure declined to 32,052, indicating a decrease of 4.1%. The gold rush nearly doubled the population and the figure increased to 63,592 in 1900. The next decade brought a small increase of 1.2% to 64,356. By 1910, there were fourteen incorporated cities. The four largest in order of population rank were Fairbanks, Nome, Douglas, and Juneau.

In 1910, Alaska was still on the road to self-government. Two years later she officially became a territory. World War I and particularly World War II broadened the economy of Alaska. On January 3, 1959, Alaska was proclaimed the 49th State.

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4 Stone, op.cit., p. 384.
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(ADDENDUM)


The State of Alaska owns and is presently preserving two historic sites as State Parks. These are the American Flag Raising Site and Baranov Castle, at Sitka, and the Totem Bight Park near Ketchikan. This latter site has a large reconstructed Indian community house, built of logs, and a number of totem poles. Both the Sitka and Ketchikan parks have interpretative markers, and showed some signs of maintenance, but neither had any further interpretative services available.

The three most important and valuable collections of documents, books, artifacts, and specimens relating to the history, archeology, ethnology and natural history of Alaska are located in the Alaska Historical Library and Museum (the former Territorial Building) at Juneau, the Sheldon Jackson Museum of Sheldon Jackson Junior College at Sitka, and the Museum of the University of Alaska at College, near Fairbanks. In each case it should be noted that while each collection contains priceless and irreplaceable objects, not one is a true museum in the modern sense: in general, the material is exhibited in the old fashioned hodgepodge.

Within the last three years four historical societies have been organized in Alaska. These new associations are as follows: a historical society at Anchorage, which has
also started a small museum in the public library; a historical society at Skagway, which is preserving and utilizing the old Federal Court House as a museum. This society has made an excellent start in assembling its collection; the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands Historical Society at Kodiak, which also has started a small museum and carefully marked historic sites in Kodiak; and fourth, a small historical society has been formed at Eagle. The Chamber of Commerce at Valdez has also marked historic sites in the vicinity and maintains what amounts to a small museum in Valdez.

This description summarizes the extent of historical activity and preservation in Alaska. When it is considered that 85% of this vast state is still pure wilderness, this progress, limited as it might otherwise seem, represents a considerable achievement, accomplished under extremely difficult conditions.

It is plainly evident that Alaska, with its small population and almost unlimited territory, will require many years before the limited economic means of its citizens can fully develop this great frontier state. These critical economic requirements will undoubtedly have a serious and possibly adverse effect on the maintenance and preservation of historic sites in Alaska for many years to come.
SITES OF EXCEPTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

1. Kodiak (or St. Paul's Harbor)

Location: The village of Kodiak is located on the northeast coast of Kodiak Island, in Southwestern Alaska. The town can be readily reached by means of scheduled airlines operating from Anchorage and Seattle, Washington.

Significance

Located in the village of Kodiak is the oldest Russian structure standing in the United States, dating from 1793-94. In 1784 Three Saints Bay, on the southeast coast of the island, became the site of the first Russian settlement in America. In 1792 Alexander Baranov moved the chief factory of the Shelikhov-Golikov Company to St. Paul's Harbor, which today is named Kodiak, because of the fine harbor and excellent building timber there. Kodiak then served as the headquarters of the Russian American Company (the successor to the Shelikhov-Golikov Company) from 1799 to 1806, when the capital was transferred to New Archangel (Sitka). The first Greek Orthodox chapel in the colonies was built at Kodiak in 1795; a school was opened there in 1796, and one of the two hospitals in Russian America was also located at St. Paul's Harbor.

By 1805 Kodiak contained some 30 Russian buildings, and the town remained second only to Sitka in importance throughout the 19th century. On the purchase of Alaska by the United States, the Russian American Company property at Kodiak was purchased by the Alaska Commercial Company. On June 6, 1868 a fort was also established in the town by the United States Army. This post was garrisoned by
Battery G, 2nd Artillery, until 1870, when the fort was dismantled and the troops were withdrawn from the island.

In 1867 Kodiak had a population of about 400 and nearly "100 one-story houses, built of hewn-logs, braced with iron bars and anchored to the earth to resist the winds and earthquakes."¹ These Russian dwellings were small in size, and their roofs were covered with several feet of sand. The better class of houses had double windows, and dried moss was stuck between the logs to keep out the wind. Rooms were heated by large furnaces of brick or iron, but no provision for ventilation was made. Fort Kodiak, in 1868, was located at the foot of Pillar Mountain, to the west of town, and consisted of barracks erected around three sides of a parade ground.

Condition of the Sites

Of the some 100 Russian buildings standing in 1867, only three original structures still stand. Recommended for exceptional significance individually, they are:

1. Erskine House (Building No. 9 on 1868 Map of Military Reservation of Fort Kodiak).

Located on a small eminence overlooking the harbor, near the corner of Main Street and Mission Road, this large frame, two-story structure is owned by Donnelley and Acheson Commercial Company of Kodiak. The Erskine House was erected in 1793-94 by Alexander Baranov as a warehouse for the storage of furs and also for his offices as chief manager of the Company. This building is thus the oldest Russian structure standing in the United States. Although the house

could stand painting and some repairs, it appears to be in basically sound condition. The house contains 10 rooms on the first floor, five on the second and has one large attic; the structure is now utilized as a boarding house.

A short distance to the southeast of this house, under the planked wharf and more modern buildings of the Dornelley and Acheson Commercial Company (successor to the Alaska Commercial Company), still stands the original stone sea wall built by the Russians in 1792. (This wall is located at former site of Bldg. 4 on the 1868 Military Map).

Large original iron mooring rings are still in place in the face of this sea wall.

2. Russian Dwelling - The Lowe House (Bldg. No. 48 on the 1868 Military Map). The Russian residence owned by Mrs. Catherine Lowe is located on South Benson Street, off Alaska Way. The date when this one-story log house was erected is unknown, but the structure is shown on the 1868 map. The exterior has been covered by clapboard, but the original log walls are still visible in the interior. The building is used as a residence.

3. Russian Dwelling - Hubley House (Bldg. No. 46 on the 1868 Military Map). This Russian residence is owned by Mrs. John Hubley and is located on Alder Lane. The year of construction of this one-story log dwelling is unknown, but the house is shown on the 1868 map. The building has undergone considerable alteration: the original log walls are now covered from view by clapboard on the exterior and by panelling on the interior. The house is used as a residence.
Lowe House (Bldg. 48), 1867, Kodiak

N. P. S. Photo, 1961
Other physical evidences of Russian occupation have disappeared.

The present Greek Orthodox Church was erected in 1943, after the older Church was destroyed by fire in 1943. All traces of U.S. Army's Fort Kodiak have also vanished. The former sites of 10 Russian and early Territorial buildings in the village have been marked with interpretative signs by the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands Historical Society.

2. Old Sitka (Redoubt St. Michael)

Location: Old Sitka is located on Starrigavan Bay, Sitka Sound, six miles north of the present town of Sitka, on west coast of Baranof Island, in Southeastern Alaska. The site can be reached by automobile from Sitka.

Ownership: State of Alaska

Significance

Here, on July 7, 1799, in an effort to circumvent American, British, and Spanish penetration of Southeastern Alaska, Alexander Baranov and his party of Russian fur hunters landed and founded the fortified trading post known as the Redoubt St. Michael. By 1800 this Russian American Company post contained one two-story building 48 feet long by 24 feet in width, a blacksmith shop, a house for Baranov, accommodations for the officers and servants, a bath house, and a temporary kitchen. These log structures were surrounded by a strong stockade with at least three of the four blockhouses, located at the corners of the palisade, completed.

In June, 1802 the vigorous warlike Tlingit Indians surprised the fort and massacred all but a handful of the Russian and Aleut inhabitants. The settlement was burned to the ground, and the few survivors were forced to flee to Kodiak. Thus was the first effort of Baranov to colonize the Alexander Archipelago completely frustrated by the resistance of the Sitka Indians.
Condition of the Site

The former site of Old Sitka has been positively identified by means of archeological research conducted by the National Park Service in the 1930's. There are no surface remains of the settlement. Note: The squatter's cabin, erected over the original site and shown in the July 1961 photograph, has, by November 1961, been removed and the site returned to its natural condition.

Site of Old Sitka; Cabin, since removed, stands over site of 1799-1802 Redoubt.
3. Sitka (New Archangel)

Location: Sitka is located on the west coast of Baranof Island in the Alexander Archipelago, in Southeastern Alaska. Sitka can be reached by means of scheduled airlines operating from Juneau and Annette Island.

Ownership: Various; see discussion of individual sites below:

Significance

Founded by Alexander Baranov in 1804, the colony of Sitka successfully preserved Southeastern Alaska for Russia and thereby prevented the possible acquisition of this territory by Spain or Great Britain. From 1806 to 1867 Sitka was the center and seat of Russian power in Alaska, and the capital of her New World possessions. Here also, on October 18, 1867, the Russian ensign was lowered for the last time, and the Stars and Stripes were first raised, thus symbolizing the formal transfer of Alaska to the United States by Russia.

After the destruction of the first Russian colonizing attempt at Old Sitka in 1802, Baranov launched his second effort in 1804. In October of that year Baranov defeated the Tlingit Indians in battle and captured their fort (located within the present boundaries of Sitka National Monument). A new town, called New Archangel, was erected at the present site of Sitka. By the spring of 1805 the Russian American Company settlement included a fort and eight substantial log buildings. Sitka thereafter developed into the capital of Russian America and remained the center of Russian power and civilization in North America. By 1867 Sitka was the largest and most populous town in Russian America, having 958 inhabitants and some 150 buildings. Of its citizens, 349 were Russian, and the remainder were either Aleuts or people of mixed blood.
Among the most prominent buildings of the town in 1867, were the governor's house and flagstaff, standing on a hill overlooking the harbor. Beyond these was to be seen the steeple and dome of the Greek Orthodox Church, and nearer to the waterfront were the large storehouses, counting house, the barracks, and various ship hulls, the latter drawn up on the shore and utilized as storeships. Also located in the town was a large hospital, schools, a steam sawmill, and public gardens. The town was defended on the landward side by a system of batteries, stockades, and three log block houses. To the west and outside of the stockade lay the village (known as the "Ranche") of the Tlingit Indians, which consisted of a number of large log houses.

Describing the Russian settlement in 1865, one observer wrote: "The houses were all of logs, but painted a dull yellow, the metal roofs were red and with the emerald green spire of the Church, projected against the dark evergreens of the adjacent hills, presented an extremely picturesque appearance. It was quite unlike anything else in America, and seemed to belong to a world of its own."¹

Condition of Site

Of the some 150 buildings that comprised Russian Sitka in 1867, only six structures still stand. These are recommended as follows, individually, for exceptional significance:

1. **St. Michael's Cathedral.** Located at Lincoln and Maksoutoff Streets, the church is owned by the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America.

¹William H. Dall, *Alaska and Its Resources* (Boston, 1870), 254-255.
St. Michael's Cathedral was the spiritual center of the vast Greek Orthodox diocese that included all of Russian Alaska; the building is also the finest example of Russian architecture in the United States.

This magnificent cathedral was erected in 1848-50 under the direction of the great Russian religious leader, Bishop Innocent Veniaminov, the first bishop of Alaska, with funds supplied by the Russian American Company.

The church is constructed on the Pskov or cruciform plan, that is, built with a ground plan resembling a cross. The Cube, or center of the Pskov, contains the main altar, while the two side wings, representing the arms of the cross, each have a smaller altar.

The overall building is one-story in height and is constructed of logs, covered with clapboard. At the front rises a four-story bell tower that includes an eight-sided belfry, a tall, carrot-shaped steeple, and the whole is surmounted by an elaborate gilded cross.

The center portion of the church is covered by a large dome, on top of which is situated a turnip-shaped cupola and a second cross. The overall dimensions of the Cathedral are approximately 97 feet by 66 feet.

The interior of the church contains original and priceless icons, religious books, gospels and richly ornamented silver and gold chalices. The interior walls are covered with original elaborately decorated canvases. The Cathedral is the oldest church of any faith, standing in Alaska.
2. **Russian Mission or Orphanage** (Bldg. No. 102, Bishop's House, on 1867 Transfer Map of Sitka). Located at Lincoln and Monastery Streets, this large two-story house is owned by the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America. The frame house was erected in 1842 as a mission building for Bishop Innocent Veniaminov. The structure contains the Bishop's Chapel or Church of the Annunciation, with the rich and ornamented religious objects found in the Greek Orthodox Church. The building also served as a school for the children of the Russian American Company and later as a seminary for the Orthodox Church. The Russian Mission building appears to have been little altered over the years and is an extremely interesting example of Russian architecture.

3. **Church Warden's House** (Bldg. No. 35 on 1867 Sitka Transfer Map). This building is located on the corner of Lincoln and Maksoutoff Streets and is owned by the Sitka Realty Company. The one and one-half story log and frame house was erected about 1840 and was utilized until 1867 as the residence of the Church Warden for St. Michael's Cathedral. The structure is now used as a shop and dwelling. This building appears to have undergone considerable change over the years, but there is no question of its Russian origin.

4. **Russian American Company Warehouse** (Triune Service Bldg., Bldg. No. 36 on 1867 Transfer Map). This large two-story frame building is located on Lincoln Street at Maksoutoff Street and is owned by A. P. Franklin of Sitka. The building was erected about 1840 by the Russian American Company and used as a fur warehouse and residence. The original Russian structure has been much enlarged.
Church Warden's House, 1840 (Bldg. 35), Sitka
Russian American Company Warehouse (Triune Bldg.) (Bldg. No. 36), 1840, Sitka

N. P. S. Photo, 1969
by additions to the rear; the front or original portion has been further altered by the division of the second floor into apartments and the first floor into shops. In spite of these changes the Russian origin of the building is clearly evident on the exterior that fronts on Lincoln Street.

5. **Russian Residence (Tilson Building)** (Bldg. No. 29 on the 1867 Transfer Map). This large frame house is located on Lincoln Street near American Street, and is owned by Mrs. Mabel Tilson. The house is two and a half stories in height, has a gabled, peaked roof, and is believed to have been constructed about 1835. Although there has been some modification, this building is probably the finest remaining example of Russian secular architecture in Alaska. The first floor of the building is now utilized for stores and the upper floors as a residence.

6. **Buldakoff Dwelling** (Bldg. X on 1867 Transfer Map). This residence is located at Pestchouroff and Seward Streets and is owned by John Bahrt. The one and a half story frame dwelling was standing in 1867 and was then owned by Michael Buldakoff.

The surface traces of all other former Russian block houses, barracks, stockades, and structures have vanished. The original sites of many of these buildings, and the Russian Cemetery, which is still much in evidence, have been marked with historical signs. The combination of the six surviving structures, with the former sites, and the epic scenery, make Sitka the finest and most interesting surviving example of a Russian settlement in the United States. In spite of vast changes, Sitka still retains a picturesque and unique flavor of another world.
Russian Residence (Tilson Bldg. 29) 1835, Sitka

N. P. S. Photo, 1959
Buldakoff Dwelling (Bahrt House) (Bldg. X), 1867, Sitka

N. P. S. Photo, 1959
The seventh site in Sitka recommended as possessing exceptional significance is:

7. **The American Flag Raising Site** (This is the site of Bldg. No. 8—the Governor’s House, on the 1867 Transfer Map.) This site, containing 1.4 acres, is located on "Castle Hill," overlooking the harbor at the southwest edge of Sitka. The site is owned by the State of Alaska.

Here, on the afternoon of October 18, 1867, the Russian ensign was lowered for the last time and American flag first raised before parading troops of the United States and Russian armies. This formal ceremony symbolized the passage of sovereignty over the vast territory of Alaska from Russia to the United States, and marked the elimination of one more European power from the western hemisphere.

In 1804 Alexander Baranof erected a strong fort on Castle Hill, and by 1810 he had constructed a substantial residence. Here also, in 1837, was erected the large two-story timber residence, noted for its size and lavish furnishing, that was used as the Governor's House. It was before this structure, known as "Baranov's Castle," that the Flag Raising ceremony took place in 1867. The "Castle" was then utilized by federal and local governmental officials for office and residential purposes until the building was destroyed by fire on March 17, 1894.

**Condition of the Site**

The Flag Raising site is located on a small, isolated hill that juts out into Sitka Harbor. Rising sharply on all sides, the top of this hill is level, and here the flag raising ceremony took place in 1867; here also the old "Castle" was located. All surface traces of the
American Flag Raising Site - 1867 (Baranov Castle site), Sitka

N. P. S. Photo, 1969
Governor's House have vanished; the site of the 1867 flagpole has been marked by a plaque, and on the grass covered summit stand six or seven old iron Russian cannon, mounted and pointing out to sea.

The site is a State Park and is marked by an interpretative marker.


167
8. Fur Seal Rookeries, St. Paul Island, Pribilof Group

Location: St. Paul Island, the principal island of the Pribilof group, is located in the Bering Sea, near latitude 57°10' and longitude 170°15'. During July and August St. Paul can be reached by special tourist flights on a scheduled airline operating from Anchorage. St. George Island, second largest island in the Pribilof group, and located 40 miles southeast of St. Paul, is normally inaccessible to visitors.


Significance

The Pribilof Islands are the greatest single source of furs in the world, having produced some 6,000,000 seal skins valued at more than $75,000,000 between 1786 and 1909. At the seal rookeries on these islands can be seen, in living form, the fur resource that lured to the ends of the world the Russian, British, French, Spanish and American fur hunters. With wealth based on furs, the fur traders dominated the destiny of Alaska from 1760 until 1897, when the great gold rushes of 1897-98 introduced the economic interest powerful enough and a population numerous enough to break the hold of the fur companies.

The great seal herds of the Pribilof Islands are also of exceptional significance as an outstanding example of the application of the principles of conservation, as embodied in the Convention of July 7, 1911 for the protection of the Fur Seals of the North Pacific.

On June 12, 1786 Gerassim Probilof, sailing for the Lebedef-Lastohkin Company, discovered St. George Island. On June 29 of the following year he sighted an unknown island to the northwest, which he named St. Paul. These islands, which contained the great seal rookeries that soon became the heart of the Russian fur trade, were uninhabited by man when
first discovered, but the Russians soon thereafter settled Aleuts on the islands for the purpose of hunting the seals.

In June of each year the fur seals (Callorhinus ursinus) come to the rocky beaches of the Pribilof Islands. The mature bulls or beachmasters as they are called, arrive first and take up stations on well-defined beach areas. The females, arriving shortly thereafter, are collected into large harems by the males. Here the animals mate; the pups are born and taught to swim. Each November the great herds depart on their annual migration to the south, not to return until the following summer.

Here in July and August of each year, the Aleut inhabitants hunt the seals with traditional methods and techniques that have been employed in the Fur Trade since 1786. At about 3 A.M. each day in sealing season, the crews, composed of 20 to 50 Aleuts, proceed to the selected beach. Here the sealers cautiously work their way along the beach between the bachelor seals and the ocean. Once in position, the hunters then slowly drive the young male seals inland to the general "roundup" area or killing field. Here one small group of seals after another is separated from the main herd, and animals of the desired size are quickly killed with a blow on the head from a long hardwood club. Seals judged to be larger or smaller than the desired size are permitted to escape and to return to the sea.

Each sealskin is then removed by a stripping process that is completed by the Aleut sealers within a few seconds. The day's collection of skins is then transported to the villages for processing.
Russian exploitation of the Pribilof herd at first followed the same destructive pattern that resulted in the annihilation of fur seals south of the equator. Twice during the Russian administration the herd on the Pribilof Islands was threatened with extinction: first, from a failure to restrict the numbers of seals killed each year, and later by failing to protect the females. Rezanov, in 1805, halted the indiscriminate slaughter and established limits for the annual kill. The killing of females was forbidden by Governor Wrangell after 1834, and the herd then began to increase.

From an estimated two million animals in 1867, the seal herd in the Pribilof Islands, under American rule, was reduced by ruthless pelagic hunting (killing the seals out at sea) to about 134,000 animals by 1909, and the fur seal was faced with extinction. The conclusion of the convention of July 7, 1911, between the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and Japan, provided for the first time a sound basis for the protection and management of the North Pacific fur seals. Under international protection and a management program, the Alaska fur seal herd, by 1952, has been able to increase to about one and a half million animals, and provide an average annual yield of 65,000 skins.

Condition of the Site

The beaches of St. Paul Island, which contain the great rookeries of the fur seals, are as unaltered and intact as when they were first sighted in 1787. Here, in July and August, the visitor can see the great beachmasters with their numerous harems and thousands of young pups. By exercising common prudence, and also by utilizing wooden

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scaffolds that have been erected at some rookeries, it is possible to approach closely to the herd so that these unique animals can be viewed at close range.

The daily roundup, drive, and kill of the fur seals by the Aleuts can also be observed by visitors. Factories where the seal skins are processed and cured are also open to public inspection, and an explanation of the work is given. St. Paul Island thus affords the visitor a unique opportunity to come face to face with the Fur Trade, in many of its facets little changed from the day when this industry was the backbone of empire in North America.


Merle Colby, A. Guide to Alaska - Last American Frontier (New York, 1950); 344-349; William H. Dall, Alaska and its Resources (Boston, 1870), 248, 308, 491, 494-497.

Roundup and Kill of Fur Seals, St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands

N. P. S. Photo, 1961
9. **Chilkoot Pass and Dyea**

**Location:** Dyea is located at the head of the Lynn Canal, on the Taiya Inlet, in Southeastern Alaska. Adjacent to Dyea is Chilkoot Pass, which is 3,550 feet in elevation and about 35 miles in length. The pass lies between the drainage of the Taiya River into Lynn Canal and that of the Yukon River into the Klondike. Dyea and the southern foot of the Chilkoot Pass can be reached by means of a nine-mile road from Skagway.

**Ownership:** United States Government (Bureau of Land Management). The State of Alaska, for the purpose of acquiring ownership, has applied for selection of the Chilkoot Pass area under terms of the Federal General Grant law.

**Significance**

Chilkoot Pass and Dyea, together with Skagway and White Pass, was the most direct route to the Klondike and the upper Yukon Valley. The discovery of gold near Dawson City, Canada, touched off in 1897 one of the greatest gold stampedes in history—a rush comparable only to the great California stampede of 1849 and the Fraser River rush of 1858. It is estimated that between 1897 and 1900 some 200,000 people attempted to reach the Klondike, and that about 50,000 of these succeeded in reaching Dawson. Total production of the Klondike gold fields has been placed at well over $200,000,000.

The great Klondike Rush, 1897-1900, attracted world-wide attention and caused the first true discovery of Alaska by the American people and their Federal Government. The tremendous increase in population and capital investment, resulting from the rapid rise of the mining industry in Alaska, also gave great impetus to demands for self-government. For the first time interests more powerful than the Fur Traders appeared in Alaska. As a result of the Klondike strike, with the succeeding rushes to Nome and Fairbanks, the rule of the Fur Traders, all powerful in Alaska from 1760 to 1898, came to an end. Alaska also received its first substantial increase in population.
In August, 1896, the first strike was made on Bonanza Creek in the Klondike. One year later, in July 1897, the news of the find reached the outside world, and the great stampede was on. In July, Dyea contained only a trading post and several saloons, but by August, 1897, some 3,000 people had crowded into the tent towns that had risen at Dyea and Skagway, and thousands more were enroute.

The Chilkoot Pass from Dyea was the older and better trail in 1897; White Pass from Skagway was newer, but more dangerous. Although both passes were utilized, Chilkoot Pass was the route of the majority at first. During the winter of 1897-1898 long lines of men inched their way up the steep and icy slopes of the Chilkoot Pass. (See photographs following page 86.) In April 1898, some 50 climbers were killed by a snow avalanche that roared down the mountain side. By the summer of 1898 Dyea and Skagway were wide-open boom towns; transportation from both points over the passes was improved, and construction of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad was begun. When this railroad, connecting Skagway with Whitehorse and the Yukon, was completed in July 1900, Dyea's days were numbered. Traffic shifted immediately from the Chilkoot trail to the White Pass route.

By 1902 Dyea had become a ghost town, and many of its buildings were removed by water transport to nearby Skagway.

Condition of the Sites

Dyea: The former town of Dyea is located on the flats at the mouth of the Taiya River. The only traces left of this boom town are two abandoned and very badly deteriorated log cabins and two overgrown cemeteries. Except for two or three modern summer log cabins widely scattered through the forest, Dyea has reverted almost completely to a
state of nature. The silence which prevails over the meadows and forest is broken only by the call of a raven and the scream of the bald eagle.

**Chilkoot Pass Trail:** The Chilkoot trail leads from Dyea north along the narrow valley of Taiya River. Between Dyea and the Chilkoot Pass proper, a distance of some 15 miles, the trail crosses and recrosses the river a total of 15 times. The path is closely hemmed in by snow covered mountains that rise on either side to elevations of five and six thousand feet, thus providing a majestic and scenic setting. At the timberline, the ascent becomes so steep that in 1897-98 some 1,500 steps were cut in the ice. The climb from this point, known as Sheep Camp, up to Scales at the summit, required about six and a half hours.

The Chilkoot trail and pass have also returned to a state of nature and are unimpaired by modern intrusions. The general trace of the route is still visible through much of its course. In the summer of 1961 the State of Alaska had a considerable section of the original trail cleared of brush and made passable. Plans are under consideration for the development of a tour that would enable the visitor to ride the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad to the vicinity of Lindeman Lake. After crossing the lake, the visitor could then hike or ride on horseback down the Chilkoot Pass and trail into Dyea, and then continue on to Skagway.


10. **Skagway and White Pass**

**Location:** Skagway is located at the head of the Taiya Inlet on the Lynn Canal in Southeastern Alaska. Northeast of Skagway is White Pass which is 2,886 feet in elevation and about 45 miles in length. The pass separates the drainage of the Skagway River into the Lynn Canal from that of the Yukon River into the Klondike.

Skagway can be reached by train from Whitehorse in Canada, or by scheduled airline flights from Juneau. Skagway is also visited by tour ships in the summer months.

**Ownership:** A Historic District - in public and private ownership.

**Significance**

Skagway and White Pass, together with Dyea and Chilkoot Pass, was the most direct route into the Klondike and the upper Yukon Valley. The discovery of gold near Dawson City, Canada, touched off one of the greatest gold rushes in history. Founded in 1897 as a part of this first and most important mining stampede to Alaska, Skagway has the largest and finest collection of original buildings still standing in Alaska that reflect the spirit of '97-98. In July 1897, news of the Klondike Strike reached San Francisco; within a month's time some 3,000 people had crowded into the tent cities of Dyea and Skagway, which had suddenly blossomed at the bases of the Chilkoot and White Pass, and thousands more were enroute for these ports. At first the Chilkoot Pass from Dyea was the route of the majority, for it was older and safer than the new and more treacherous trail from Skagway over the White Pass.

In spite of these difficulties, however, it has been estimated that more than 5,000 people attempted to cross the White Pass trail when it was opened for the first time in the fall of 1897; but only a few reached the Yukon River via this route before the winter freeze began. The remainder were forced to winter at Skagway. In 1898, with
a population of some 10,000, Skagway was the largest city in Alaska; and through its streets passed, in addition to thousands of miners, such writers as Robert Service and Jack London, who were destined to immortalize the Klondike story in story and poem. In 1898 transportation for Dyea and Skagway over the passes was improved and construction of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway begun. On July 29, 1900, this narrow gauge railroad, running 110 miles from the port of Skagway via White Pass to Whitehorse, in Canada, was completed. The journey to the Klondike was no longer a hazardous trip for men or freight; the Chilkoot Pass route thereafter rapidly declined, and by 1902 Dyea was a ghost town.

In 1900 the Klondike district reached its peak, producing some $22,270,000 in gold, but the big rush was over and production gradually declined. As gold production declined so did Skagway, until the port was reduced to only a fraction of its former importance. With port and railroad, however, Skagway was able to survive, although on a reduced scale, as a shipping center and supply point for miners and trappers of the Yukon and Klondike districts.

**Condition of Sites**

Skagway is situated in the narrow valley at the mouth of the Skagway River amid an Alpine setting of great majesty and beauty. Snow-covered mountains rise abruptly to five- and six-thousand-foot elevations on either hand. Approximately 100 original buildings still stand in Skagway that date from the great gold rush days that first brought Americans to Alaska in large numbers. These surviving structures are the finest examples of the mining frontier town, 1897-1910, in Alaska.
The heaviest concentration of the old buildings is to be found on Broadway Street, between First and Sixth Avenues. Here are located the original (1906) Depot of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad, the old hotels, saloons, and lodge halls, including the 1899 building of the Alaska Brotherhood. The old Federal Court building, now utilized as a museum, stands at the east end of Seventh Avenue. Scattered more widely about town are churches, original log cabins and residences, as well as the "Parlor" of the outlaw "Soapy" Smith. There has been relatively little intrusion by modern construction in this setting.

The narrow-gauge White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad still traverses the historic and scenic White Pass route and affords the visitor a comfortable mode of transportation to visit Whitehorse and Dawson in Canada.


Sites of Exceptional Value in the National Park System related to this Theme

Sitka National Monument

This 54-acre monument contains the site of the log stockade in which the Sitka Indians made their last stand against the Russian invaders led by Baranov. Here, in October, 1804, after withstanding several Russian attacks and a siege lasting several days, the Indians were forced to retreat, thus leaving the way open for the Russian development of Sitka. The monument also protects an outstanding collection of Alaska Indian totem poles.
1. Unalaska

**Location:** The village of Unalaska (or Iliuliuk) is located at the head of Iliuliuk Bay on the northeastern side of the island of Unalaska, in the eastern Aleutian Islands. Unalaska can be reached by means of a scheduled airline that flies from Anchorage to Dutch Harbor, and points further west.

**Significance**

The Aleutian Islands were the setting for the first "swarming of the promyshlenniki." By 1760 these fearless and ruthless Russian fur traders had pushed eastward from Asia through the Aleutian chain to the great island of Unalaska, near the Alaskan mainland. The Aleuts, forced to hunt for furs by the Russians, arose against them in desperation on Unalaska and its neighboring islands in 1763 and met with temporary success. The following year, however, the promyshlenniki, led by Ivan Solovief, crushed the Aleuts with an iron hand and thus completed the subjugation of these people. Between 1766 and 1770, Solovief established a fur trading post at the head of Iliuliuk Bay, now the site of the village of Unalaska.

Father Ivan Veniaminov, the most famous churchman in Russian America, arrived at this village in 1824. His parish for the next 10 years included the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. In 1825 he established a school at Unalaska for the native children, and here, in 1826, he also dedicated a church. By 1834, when he was transferred to Sitka, Veniaminov had mastered the Aleut language, invented an Aleut alphabet, compiled a grammar of the Aleut-Fox language, and translated the sacred books of the Bible into native tongue. He had also written several scientific studies of the population, climate, history, and products of the Unalaska region.
In 1867, at the time of Alaskan transfer, Unalaska was third in importance only to Sitka and Kodiak. The Alaska Commercial Company then took over the facilities of the Russian American Company, and Unalaska continued to serve as the chief supply center of fur trading posts along the Aleutian chain and for those posts on the mainland that bordered on the Bering Sea.

During the successive gold rushes (1897-1904), Unalaska, with its splendid harbor, also served as an important way station for hundreds of vessels carrying miners and supplies from Seattle to Nome and St. Michael (see photograph following page 130). In World War II Dutch Harbor and the village of Unalaska were subjected to Japanese air attacks on June 3 and 4, 1942.

**Condition of the Site**

The village of Unalaska today has a population of some 400 people, of whom nearly all are Aleuts. There are no buildings standing that date from the Russian period of occupation (1766-1867). Many major buildings in the town, however, do date from the early American period of occupation, 1867-1900. Included in this latter group are the former Alaska Commercial Company buildings, now owned by the Moses Commercial Company, and the headquarters building of the Bering Sea Patrol. The present Russian Orthodox Church was erected in 1894 and contains a few religious articles saved from the 1826 church, which was destroyed by fire. The 1894 church is built on the Pskov or cruciform plan, similar to that used for St. Michael's Cathedral at Sitka. Near the church stands a frame two-story Russian schoolhouse, now vacant, that was erected between 1894 and 1900. The remainder of the village is made up of many small frame houses and shacks that serve as the residences.
Village of Unalaska, from Amakpak Island (Dutch Harbor)

N. P. S. Photo, 1961
of the Aleuts.

The village of Unalaska and the general setting at Dutch Harbor, across the bay, have been heavily intruded upon by the large-scale and numerous military installations that closely ring the village and great harbor on every side. Included in this category are an airfield, many gun emplacements, and hundreds of deserted shops, warehouses, and barracks.

2. Three Saints Settlement, Kodiak Island

Location: The former site of Three Saints settlement is located on the western shore of Three Saints Bay. The Bay is situated on the Southeastern shore of Kodiak Island and can be reached only by means of boats or float planes chartered at the village of Kodiak.

Significance

Here on August 3, 1784, Gregorii Shelikhov established the first Russian colony in America. Fortifications, warehouses, offices, and dwellings were erected, and the Three Saints settlement served as the headquarters of the Shelikhov-Golikov Company until 1792, when Alexander Baranov transferred the chief factory to St. Paul's Harbor (now called the town of Kodiak).

Bancroft described the original site of the Three Saints Bay settlement as follows:

The shores of Three Saints Harbor are generally steep and rocky, but about a mile from its entrance a gravelly bar or spit from the southern side forms a horseshoe, opening into the interior of the bay. Such locations were peculiarly adapted to the requirements of the Russians at that time. The small land-locked basin formed by the spit was deep enough for such vessels as they had; the shelving shore enabled them to beach their vessels during winter and to utilize them as dwellings or fortifications, while the level sandbar afforded convenient building sites. The adjoining hills and mountains being devoid of timber, there was no danger of surprise from the land, and water enclosed three sides of the settlement.¹

¹Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Alaska (San Francisco, 1885), 224, fn. 1.
By 1880, Bancroft reported, "only one dilapidated log-house and one native semi-subterranean hut marked the site of the earliest permanent location of the Russians, and these buildings are perched upon the hillside, overlooking the san spit from which floods and tidal waves have long since eradicated all traces of former occupancy."  

Condition of Site

There are no surface remains of the Three Saints settlement. While the general location of the first colony on Three Saints Bay is established beyond doubt, there remains some uncertainty as to the exact site of the original settlement on the Bay. In the summer of 1961 an archeological team, sponsored by the University of Wisconsin, was digging on the reputed site of the first colony. Evidence from this source may possibly provide a conclusive answer.

3. Russian and American Settlements, Pribilof Islands

Location: St. Paul and St. George Islands

Significance

The Pribilof Islands, when discovered in 1786 and 1787, were uninhabited by man, but the Russians soon thereafter settled Aleuts on the islands for the purpose of hunting seals.

In 1870, shortly after the Alaskan transfer, the village of St. Paul, located on the island of the same name, had some 250 native residents. The Aleuts lived in some 40 dwellings, each built half underground, and constructed of whalebones, driftwood, and turf. On the highest terrace stood a wooden church with red roof, surmounted with white crosses, that had been erected by the Russians in 1918.

2Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Alaska (San Francisco, 1895), 324, fn. 23.
In 1870 the Pribilof Islands were leased by the United States Government to the Alaska Commercial Company. This company took over the former facilities of the Russian-American Company. On St. Paul these consisted of two houses or magazines, a salt-house, a barn, and two large board structures. On St. George Island the American traders and governmental officials occupied three wooden buildings. About 150 Aleuts lived on St. George, occupying huts similar to those on St. Paul, except that the St. George structures were constructed entirely aboveground. The first church on St. George was erected by the Russians in 1833.

Acting under the terms of the lease, the Alaska Commercial Company opened a school for Aleut children on each island, and also a hospital on St. Paul. Until 1878 these were the only American-supported schools in Alaska.

By 1880 the company had rebuilt both villages, laying the towns out in regular streets. St. Paul contained 80 new one-family houses, and St. George from 20 to 24 residences for use of the Aleuts. The American fur traders occupied eight other structures, which included large warehouses and salt-sheds. Each Aleut family lived in a comfortable frame house built aboveground that was lined with tarred paper, painted, and furnished with stoves and outhouses. (See photographs following page 73.)

**Condition of Sites**

All surface remains of structures erected between 1786 and 1910, with but one exception, have disappeared from both St. Paul and St. George Islands. The Russian Orthodox Church on St. Paul was built in 1907. The present Russian Orthodox Church on St. George Island was erected in 1927.
Kenai (Redoubt St. Nicholas)

Location: Kenai is situated on the Kenai Peninsula, at the mouth of the Kenai River, on the eastern shore of the Cook Inlet. The village can be reached by automobile or scheduled airline from Anchorage.

Significance

Redoubt St. Nicholas was the most important Russian fur trading post situated on the Kenai Peninsula. The fortified post was established at Kenai in August 1791 by Grigor Konovalof for the Lebedef-Lastochkin Company. The founding of St. Nicholas represented a deliberate invasion of territory previously monopolized by the Shelikhov-Golikov Company's fortified post, Redoubt St. George (now called Kasilof), which was located 20 miles to the south of Kenai. Intensive competition and even actual warfare prevailed between the two posts until both companies were merged into the Russian-American Company in 1799.

Visited St. Nicholas in 1794, Captain George Vancouver reported that the post was situated on a high bank overlooking the Kenai River from which a poor path led up the steep ascent through masses of filth and offal. The fort occupied a space about 120 yards square, which was enclosed on every side by a 12-feet high stockade constructed of pine logs. The largest building, about 35 yards long, was the barracks, which consisted of one large room divided by partitions into stalls, with sleeping benches on the sides. The commander occupied a smaller house by himself, and about twenty other small buildings completed the complement of structures that then made up the fort. According to the Russian missionary, Father Juvenal, this particular site for the fort had been selected because it was in an open, exposed place, where it was hoped that
the wind would sweep across it and drive away the plague of mosquitos and gnats that normally swarmed in that country.

In 1800 Chief Manager Alexander Baranov finally succeeded in gaining control of St. Nicholas for the new Russian-American Company and reported that he had drawn up a plan for a new fort and selected a more convenient site. But as Baranov left the execution of the plan to the local agent, it is not clear that the change in location was ever actually carried out. The Russian garrison in 1817 numbered 11 men.

A Russian Orthodox chapel was erected at Kenai in 1841, to be followed by a church in 1849. In addition to fur-trading, Kenai also became a brick-making center, and by 1860 was producing some 50,000 bricks a year.

On the transfer of Alaska to the United States, the U.S. Army attempted unsuccessfully to establish a fort at Kenai in 1868. On April 17, 1869 Battery F, 2nd U.S. Artillery, made a second and this time successful effort to establish Fort Kenai. The U.S. fort was situated on the site of the former Russian post of St. Nicholas. The American garrison, however, barely had time to settle down, when they were withdrawn. Fort Kenai was officially abandoned in July 1870, just 15 months after it had been established.

**Condition of Sites**

The site of the original Russian stockade, and the later U.S. Fort Kenai, which were located on the edge of the bluff, have long since disappeared. All vestiges of these forts have crumbled away with the edges of the bank as it has sloughed away. There are today in Kenai no structures standing that can be traced directly to the
Russian or early American periods of occupation.

The present Russian Orthodox church was built in 1896. The log memorial building, which stands adjacent to the church, was erected in 1907 and marks the graves of the first and second Orthodox missionaries to Kenai. The village itself contains 10 or 12 cabins of interesting log construction, but the oldest of these—that occupied by the elder of the Russian Orthodox Church—only dates back to 1907.

5. Seward (Resurrection Bay)

Location: Seward is located in Resurrection Bay, on the eastern shore of the Kenai Peninsula. Seward can be reached from Anchorage by train, plane, and automobile.

Significance

Resurrection (or Sunday) Bay was selected by Alexander Baranov, Chief Manager of the Shelikhov-Golikov Company, in 1792 as the site for a shipyard which he called Voskresenskaya. Here, in 1794, was built and launched the Phoenix, the first vessel to be constructed in Alaska. Two additional ships were launched in 1795.

In 1902 the American city of Seward was founded at the northern head of Resurrection Bay. Seward was the intended southern terminus of the Alaska Central Railroad, and the line was to be built into the interior to reach the Matanuska coal fields. Construction began in 1903, and docks and streets were built at Seward. In 1907, after 71 miles of track had been laid, the coal lands were withdrawn by the Federal Government, and all construction on the road was suspended in 1909.

In 1914 Seward was selected again as the southern terminal of a proposed government-owned railroad. The line was to extend from
Seward on the coast, inland to Fairbanks in the Tanana Valley. Construction on the government railway began in 1915, and the last spike in the 467.6 mile main line of the Alaska Railroad was driven in 1923.

**Condition of Sites**

Although many early Russian-made tools have been picked up in the vicinity of Seward, the exact location of Baranov’s 1792-95 shipyard has never been definitively established. Some authorities, judging chiefly by ground evidence, have located the shipyard on the west side of Resurrection Bay and at a short distance below Seward. The Russian map in P. Tickhmenef’s *Historical Sketch of the Beginnings of the Russian American Company* (1861-63), however, places the yard near the present townsite of Seward.

Few buildings in Seward today pre-date 1917. In 1916 a large part of Marathon mountain, which stands to the west of the town, slid down, damming up a stream and thereby creating a lake. In 1917 these waters suddenly burst their dike, poured down upon the town, and swept away most structures in the city. The only two structures still standing in Seward today that were erected prior to the 1917 disaster are: St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, built 1905-06, and a frame two-story boarding house that is located at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Jefferson Street.

The original docks of the Alaska Railroad Company were also replaced with new structures in 1955.

6. **St. Michael (Redoubt Mikhailovsk)**

*Location:* The village of St. Michael is located on a small island of the same name, situated in the Bering Sea, and close to the southwest shore of Norton Sound. St. Michael can be reached only by float planes chartered at Unalakleet.
**Significance**

Erected by Lieutenant Michael Tebenkof in 1833, Redoubt St. Michael served as the major supply depot of all the vast Yukon—Kuskokwin area for both the Russian and American fur companies from 1833 to 1897. With the discovery of gold near Dawson, in Yukon Territory, Canada, St. Michael emerged in 1897 as the major transshipment point on the second most important route into the Klondike gold fields. Between 1897 and 1904 thousands of miners and tons of freight arrived at St. Michael via the sea. Blocked from direct entry by the shallow waters off the mouth of the Yukon River, cargo and men were transferred through St. Michael to shallow-draft, sternwheeler steamers for the 1,600 mile journey up the Yukon River to the new gold fields.

St. Michael remained an important transportation and communication center from 1897 to 1922; the town also served as headquarters of the U.S. Army in Alaska from 1900 to 1925. St. Michael, however, rapidly lost its strategic position and economic importance on the completion of the Alaska Railway in 1922. The seasonal river traffic on the Yukon could not compete with the year-round open route of the railroad from Seward to Fairbanks.

In 1865 the fortified Russian fur trading post of St. Michael consisted of log buildings arranged in the form of a square. Intervals between the structures were filled in by a palisade about 10 feet in height, surmounted by a Chevaux-de-frise of pointed stakes that was also continued round the eaves of the building. Two log bastions or blockhouses, pierced for cannon and musketry, were located at diagonally opposite corners of the stockade. The principal
buildings, built of spruce logs and covered with plank roofs, included the commander's four-room house, several buildings used as storehouses, a bath-house, and separate houses for the married and unmarried workmen. Outside of the stockade were situated several other buildings. Among these were a small storehouse for furs, a large shed where boats were drawn up for storage in the winter, a blacksmith's shop, and a Russian Orthodox church. The church was described as being "octagonal in shape, with a small dome, surmounted by a cross, and a beam bearing a bell at the side of a small porch which covers the doorway."

In 1867 Redoubt St. Michael became the property of the Alaska Commercial Company. Parts of the Russian buildings and stockade were retained, and the American Fur Trading Company constructed their quadrangle upon the same site occupied by the Russian stockade.

When the great gold stampedes began in 1897, commercial and trading companies built large hotels, enlarged their warehouses, and feverishly constructed river boats at St. Michael to handle the on-rushing hordes. Between June and October of each year, the numerous stern-wheelers transported thousands of tons of freight upstream, and it is said that as many as 10,000 people lived at St. Michael during the gold rush period, 1897-1904, awaiting transportation to the gold fields.

On October 20, 1897, the War Department set aside all of the land known as St. Michael Island, and the islands and land contiguous for 100 miles around, as a military reservation. Troops were sent to Fort St. Michael, as the new post was named, in the fall of 1897.

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for the purpose of maintaining law and order among the gold seekers.
On January 19, 1900, the Department of Alaska was created by the
Army, with its headquarters established at Fort St. Michael. From
1903 until 1925, Fort St. Michael was the center of the telegraph
and cable system that linked all military garrisons in Alaska with
Washington, D.C. In 1903 the first radio station in northern Alaska
was also erected by the Army at St. Michael. With the decline in
river traffic in 1922, St. Michael lost its former importance, and
the Army abandoned Fort St. Michael in 1925.

Condition of the Site (as of 1951)

St. Michael was visited by Dr. A. Arthur Woodward for the
National Park Service in 1951, and the following remarks describe
the condition of St. Michael as of that year:

In 1951 St. Michael was a small cluster of houses with but one
Northern Commercial Company store still operating to keep alive the
long tradition of trade. The population numbered about 140 people,
most of whom were natives. Only one structure, a small log warehouse,
still stood in 1951 surviving from the Russian period (1833-1867).
The original warehouse was located adjacent to the Northern Commercial
Company store, which also owned the building. The log warehouse was
still being utilized for fur storage and as a general catchall.

The Russian Orthodox church standing at St. Michael in 1951
had been erected in 1886 and its bell tower added in 1896. The
church was in fairly sound condition, but vacant; and the natives
were beginning to pull away boards for fire wood.

The yellow and white barracks and other buildings of U.S. Fort
Michael (1897-1925) were still standing in 1951 and also in fairly
good condition. The commanding officer's headquarters were then being utilized as a native school, but most of the other former army buildings were vacant.

Shortly after World War I, the hundreds of stern-wheeler river boats that once plied the Yukon River in the gold rush days were hauled out upon the beach at St. Michael. By 1951, however, only the twisted masses of rusting iron machinery remained, in this vast boneyard—mute evidence of the former importance of river traffic on the Yukon River.

7. Wrangell (Redoubt St. Dionysius)

Location: The town is located on the northern end of Wrangell Island, in the Alexander Archipelago, near latitude 56°26', longitude 132°23', in Southeastern Alaska. Wrangell is readily accessible by scheduled airlines operating from Annette Island, Ketchikan, and Juneau.

Significance

Wrangell (or Redoubt St. Dionysius) was founded in 1834 by order of Baron Ferdinand Petrovich von Wrangell for the purpose of blocking the Hudson's Bay Company attempts to encroach on Russian territory.

From 1874 to 1883, when placer gold was found in the nearby Cassiar district, Wrangell developed into a trading center of some importance for the mines tributary to the Stikine River. Wrangell, 1877-79, was the scene of the first American missionary efforts made in Alaska.

Learning of the Hudson's Bay Company's plan to invade Russian American Company territory by using the Stikine River, Governor von Wrangell dispatched Lieutenant Dionysi Zarembo, with two armed vessels, to establish a fortified post to block access to the river. Zarembo established a stockaded fort, with blockhouses, in 1834 on a small
peninsula of Wrangell Island, the neck of which was flooded at high tide, and named the post Redoubt St. Dionysius. On June 18, 1834, when Peter Skene Ogden endeavored to proceed up the Stikine River, his Hudson's Bay Company ship was stopped by Russian cannon fire. British plans to appropriate this territory were thus checked.

After five years of competition and rivalry the Russians leased the coastal strip of Russian Alaska, from the Portland Canal north to Cape Spencer, to the Hudson's Bay Company for an annual rent of 2,000 land otter skins. The British further agreed to sell large quantities of food products to the Russians at reasonable rates from the Fort Vancouver and other company farms situated on the Columbia River. Under this agreement the British were permitted to occupy Fort Dionysius, and on May 30, 1840 the post was named Fort Stikine. The Hudson's Bay Company remained in possession of this fur trading post until 1867, when Alaska was acquired by the United States.

In 1868 a United States military post, named Fort Wrangell, was established on the island. The troops were withdrawn in 1870, but returned in 1875 to help preserve order in the gold fields. The U.S. fort was officially abandoned on July 11, 1877 and its buildings sold off the same year.

When placer gold was discovered in the Cassiar district in 1874, Wrangell developed rapidly into an important supply base for these mines. John Muir, the naturalist, visiting Wrangell in August, 1879, reported:

"Wrangel (sic) is a rough place, the roughest I ever saw. No wildcat mining hamlet in the grizzly gulches of California, or in the remote recesses of the sagebrush State, approaches it in picturesque, devil-may-care abandon. It is a moist dragglement of unpretentious wooden huts and houses that go wrangeling and angling along the boggy,
"curving shore of the bay for a mile or so, in the general form of the letter S..."¹ (See photo following page 61.)

Another visitor noted:

"The main street is choked with decaying logs and stumps, and is passable only by a narrow plank sidewalk. Most of the habitations contain but one room, with sleeping-berths arranged round the walls, and a stove in the centre, and many of them have neither windows nor openings, except for the chimney and a single door."²

While the mines were prosperous, Wrangell was for a few months of each year the busiest town in Alaska, with about 4,000 miners wintering annually at the settlement from 1874 to 1883. But when the placers of the Cassiar were exhausted, the miners left, and by 1883 the population of Wrangell was again reduced to only a few score of whites. The Klondike gold rush of 1897 brought a second revival to the town when Wrangell became the outfitting base for miners who intended to push up the Stikine River and follow the Teslin River and Pelly Lake route into the Yukon. From 1897 to 1901 a small detachment of United States soldiers was again stationed at Wrangell to preserve law and order among the miners.

In August, 1877 Reverend Sheldon Jackson of the Presbyterian Church arrived at Wrangell. Here he established a mission school for the Indians that was placed under the supervision of Mrs. Amanda McFarland. The next year Reverend S. Hall Young, sent by the Presbyterian Board of Missions, also arrived at Wrangell and organized, in 1879, the first Protestant church in Alaska. The work of Jackson and Young at Wrangell was the first American missionary effort made in Alaska.

²Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Alaska (San Francisco, 1886), 678.
In May 1879, Archbishop Charles J. Seghers and Father John Althoff of Victoria, British Columbia, established a Catholic mission for the Indians at Wrangell. Although this institution soon failed, their attempt was the first of the Roman Catholic missionary efforts to be made in Alaska.

**Condition of the Site**

There are no structures standing that date from the Russian, British, or early American periods of occupation. Approximately one-half of the entire town of Wrangell was destroyed by fire in 1955. The original buildings of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches and missions are gone, as are all traces of U.S. Fort Wrangell.

The original site of Redoubt St. Dionysius has been marked with a historical marker. There are no surface traces visible of the fort, and a large part of the fort site has been heavily intruded upon by a collection of cottages and shanties.

Located on Chief Shakes Island, in the Wrangell harbor, is a splendid example of a large Indian community house and also a number of totem poles.

8. **Nulato**

*Location:* Nulato is located near latitude 64°45', longitude 158°. It is situated on the right bank of the Yukon River, about 100 miles from Norton Sound and 550 miles from the Bering Sea via the river.

**Significance**

This Russian fur tradingpost was established by Malakoff, who erected a small blockhouse here in 1838. The tiny fort was burned several times by the Indians and rebuilt by the Russians. In 1842 Lieutenant A. Zagosken, an explorer of the Russian Navy, and Derzhavin, a fur trader from the Redoubt St. Michael, constructed a stockaded
fort at Nulato. For ten years this post functioned as an important fur trading center. On February 16, 1851 the Indians surprised the fort and massacred the trader Derzhavin, his English guest, Lieutenant John J. Barnard of H.M.S. Enterprise, and most of the Russian and native inhabitants of the post.

Nulato was rebuilt in 1855 or 1859 on a large scale in the form of a square. Buildings formed two sides and a part of the third wall, while the remainder of this side and all of the fourth wall were enclosed by a stockade about 16 feet high, built of pointed logs set upright in the ground. Seven buildings were situated in the fort. These included two large log structures of equal size, each surmounted by a turret pierced for cannon and musketry. These two houses were situated opposite each other and thus made up two walls of the fort. One was utilized as the commanding officer's house, and also contained the magazines for trading goods, furs, and food; the other building served as the barracks for the workmen and their families. Along the third wall were located a small guest house, a fuel shed, bath house, and cook shed.

These buildings were constructed of round logs, with the seams calked with dry moss; and the windows were made of parchment or seal intestines. The roofs were nearly flat, covered with earth, and could be reached in the event of an attack by means of steps provided for the purpose. Robert Kennicott, Chief of the scientific party of the Western Union Telegraph expedition died suddenly of a heart attack at Nulato, on May 13, 1866.

After 1867 the Alaska Commercial Company took over the Russian facilities at Nulato and continued to maintain a fur trading post at that site.

196
Condition of the Site (as of 1951)

The present town of Nulato is located two miles upstream from the site of the 1838-67 post. A. Arthur Woodward visited this place for the National Park Service in 1951. At the original site of Nulato he found that low mounded lines formed by ruins of the former buildings and stockade were still visible. Near the fort site and surrounded by wooden fences, were the marked graves of Derzhavin, Lt. Barnard, and Mrs. James Beam (an American woman slain by the Indians in 1878 at a tradingpost on the Tanana River).

9. Unalakleet

Location: Unalakleet is located on the eastern shore of Norton Sound, at the mouth of the Unalakleet River, and about 50 miles northeast of St. Michael. The town can be reached by means of scheduled airline from Anchorage.

Significance

Lieutenant A. Zagosken, an explorer of the Russian Navy, built a Russian fur tradingpost on the right bank of the Unalakleet River in 1842 for the purpose of covering the portage from this point to Nulato on the Yukon River.

The stockade at Unalakleet was built on the same plan as that used at St. Michael, although on a smaller scale. The fort was laid out in the form of a square, with two square bastions or blockhouses, pierced for cannon, located at opposite corners of the stockade. The log buildings included a barrack, a storehouse, cook-house, bath-house, and storage sheds.

Condition of Site (as of 1951)

One of the original old Russian blockhouses, moved to a new location, survived until after 1939, but was finally destroyed by fire. There were also no visible remains left of this Russian fur tradingpost when A. Arthur Woodward visited the site in 1951.
10. Fort Yukon

**Location:** Fort Yukon is located just north of the Arctic Circle near longitude 145°18'; and is situated on the right bank of the Yukon River. The village can be reached by means of scheduled airline from Fairbanks.

**Significance**

The establishment of Fort Yukon, erected in 1847 as a result of the intense commercial rivalry between the Russian-American and the Hudson's Bay Companies, represented a deliberate invasion of Russian territory by the British in the struggle to control the fur trade. Fort Yukon was the first English-speaking settlement to be made in Alaska and here, also, the first English-speaking mission in Alaska was established in 1861.

Fort Yukon was built as a fortified fur trading post for the Hudson's Bay Company by Alexander Hunter Murray in 1847. His fort was situated on the east bank of the Yukon River about one mile upstream from the present townsite. The post was laid out in the form of a square, measuring about 105 feet on a side, and was enclosed by a strong log stockade, with pickets approximately 14\(\frac{1}{2}\) feet in height. The fort was further strengthened by four log bastions or blockhouses, each 12 feet square that were located at the corners of the palisade. Within these walls were situated four one-story log dwellings and storehouses. In 1864 the powerful currents of the Yukon River finally succeeded in undermining and washing away the riverbank upon which the first fort was situated. That year, the post and buildings were moved downstream to their present site.

The second fort was described by an American visitor in 1867 as follows:
"The present buildings consist of a large house, containing six rooms, for the commander; a block of three houses, of one room each for the workmen; a large storehouse; a kitchen; and four block houses, or bastions, pierced for musketry at the corners of the proposed stockade. Outside of the fort is a small house of two rooms..."

"All the houses were strongly built, roofed with sheets of spruce bark pinned, and fastened down by long poles. The sides were plastered with white mortar made from shell marl, obtainable in the vicinity. Most of the windows were of parchment but those of the Commander's house were of glass. The latter was provided with good plank floors and the doors and sashes were painted red with ochre. The yard was free from dirt and the houses with their white walls and red trimmings, made a very favorable comparison with any of those in the Russian posts."¹

In 1869, Lieutenant Charles W. Raymond, of the United States Army Engineers, ascended the Yukon River and determined the longitude, proving that Fort Yukon was located within the United States. Raymond notified the agent in charge to remove the post to Canada, which the Hudson's Bay Company did in 1870. The Alaska Commercial Company took over the former British facilities at Fort Yukon; but with the departure of the English fur traders, the town went into a gradual decline that was only briefly interrupted by great increase in river traffic during the gold rush to Dawson, 1897-1900.

**Condition of the Site**

There are no structures standing at Fort Yukon today that date from the British or early American occupation periods. The site of the first fort (1847-1864) was, of course, completely destroyed by

¹William H. Dall, *Alaska and its Resources* (Boston, 1870), 103.
river erosion in 1864. The site of the second Fort Yukon (1864-1883) has now been two-thirds destroyed by the river carrying away the bank, and the erosion is continuing at a rapid rate. The only visible vestiges of the second fort are a few log posts, sunk in what is now the riverbank, that have been uncovered by river erosion.

Adjacent to the second fort site is the Hudson's Bay Company cemetery, which contains several graves and wooden grave markers that date back to at least 1868.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Mission, founded in 1861, is still active among the Indians and settlers at Fort Yukon, but the present church buildings are of recent origin. The town itself contains at least 40 log cabins, many of interesting construction, but the oldest of these are believed to date back only to 1908. Flooding by the Yukon River in recent years has also caused settlers to remove their cabins to new locations.

11. Sitka, Territorial Capital (1867-1906)

After the Russian departure from Alaska, Sitka served as the capital of the new American territory from 1867 until 1906, when the administration was finally removed to Juneau. Sitka was also the military headquarters of Alaska from 1867 to 1877. American soldiers at Sitka were garrisoned in the former Russian forts and barracks. U.S. troops were officially withdrawn on June 14, 1877.

Condition of the Site

All structures in Sitka related to this phase of Alaska's history have been destroyed. Included in this classification were the U.S. Governor's house, the Legislative building, the Russian barrack, blockhouses, and stockade. The former sites of the barracks and parade ground are now occupied by the Alaska Pioneer's Home.
12. Sheldon Jackson Junior College

Location: Sitka, Southeastern Alaska

Significance

Sheldon Jackson Junior College, established as Presbyterian Mission School for Indians in 1878, is the oldest American-founded educational institution in Alaska.

On April 11, 1878, Reverend John G. Brady, who had been selected by the pioneer Presbyterian missionary, Reverend Sheldon Jackson, arrived at Sitka and held church services in the decaying "Baranov Castle." On April 17, 1878 Brady opened a school for the Indians in the old Russian barracks with 50 pupils in attendance. After a precarious beginning, the mission school assumed a permanency. By 1880 the school was meeting in the former Russian hospital building and had a total of 130 pupils. In January 1882 the school was burned to the ground. That summer Dr. Sheldon Jackson selected a tract of ground outside of the village (the present school site) as the permanent location of the school. On this ground was erected Austin Hall, a large two-story frame building, 100 feet by 50 feet, capable of accommodating 100 Indian boys and girls. (See photo following page 187, and note building in distance at far right.) During this time the school was known as the Sheldon Jackson Institute, but in 1884, the school was renamed as the Sitka Industrial and Training School.

In 1895 there were 100 Indian boys and girls in the school, and all were fed, clothed and housed at no charge. They were taught the rudiments of an English education and some industry. The school had an excellent carpenter shop, shoe shop, steam laundry, and bakery. The girls were taught sewing, cooking and general housework.
By 1909, the year of Dr. Jackson's death, the number of buildings on the campus had grown to 15, and the enrollment was 106. On June 11, 1911 the name of the school was changed to Sheldon Jackson School. In 1917 a high-school class was added. In 1935 the school became fully accredited as a high school, and all classes below junior high-school level were dropped. In 1944 the school became Sheldon Jackson's Junior College and graduated its first class in 1946.

Condition of the Site

The oldest of the school buildings is the one-story, octagon-shaped, cement structure that Dr. Jackson erected himself in 1895 as a museum. This building still serves its original function. The other school buildings, all erected 1910-11, include four dormitories, a heating plant, laundry, classroom building and gymnasium.

13. Juneau

Location: Juneau is located near latitude 58°18'; longitude 134°24', in Southeastern Alaska, and is situated on the Gastineau Channel. The city can be reached by means of scheduled airlines from Seattle and Anchorage.

Significance

Juneau is the oldest American settlement in Alaska. The discovery of gold near this town in 1880, with the resulting influx of American miners also introduced the necessary interests and power that were to make the first headway against the opposition of the fur traders (the Alaska Commercial Company) to the establishment of self-government in Alaska.

The naturalist John Muir, in his report of 1879, had expressed his belief that valuable gold quartz lodes would be found on the mainland in Southeastern Alaska. Acting on this opinion, George E. Pilz,
a pioneer of Alaskan mining, sent out prospectors from Sitka to various parts of Southeastern Alaska. In April 1880, he grubstaked Richard T. Harris and Joseph Juneau to prospect the mainland for gold and silver. After searching in several localities, they proceeded to the Gastineau Channel. Here, on August 17, 1880, they succeeded in washing out a large amount of gold in a stream which they named Gold Creek. Their discovery started a rush to the Silver Bow Basin. On December 2, 1880, Pilz staked off the townsite of Auk, now Juneau. Four days later a mining district was formed. Harris later asserted that he had first staked off the town in November, 1880, modestly calling it Harrisburg, after the capital of Pennsylvania, he said. As a result of the general confusion over names and conflicting claims, a miners' meeting renamed the town, Juneau, and the district, Harris, in May 1882. By 1884, about $300,000 in gold had been obtained from the placers in the vicinity of Juneau. The town then had some 50 houses, with from 300 to 400 permanent residents, and a floating population of 400 or 500 miners. (See 1889 photo of town, following page 81.)

By the 1890's Juneau had become the largest city in Alaska. In 1900 it was officially designated as the capital of the territory, but the executive and legislative offices were not actually transferred from Sitka to Juneau until 1906.

Bishop John Seghers and Father John Althoff, of Victoria, British Columbia, founded the first successful Roman Catholic Mission in Alaska at Juneau in 1885-86.

**Condition of Sites**

A series of fires, together with constant change and rebuilding, have left very little in the way of original buildings to reflect the
role of early mining in Juneau, or its status as the territorial capital, in the period 1906-1910.

The territorial capital period is symbolized by but two surviving structures: the former Federal Court House and the Governor's Mansion. The Court House was erected in 1904; its original central tower has since been removed, and the building is now utilized as a jail. The Governor's Mansion, still used for its original purpose, was erected in 1912-1913 at a cost of $40,000.

High above the streets of Juneau, on the mountain side to the east of the city, stand the silent mills, buildings, machinery, and gold mine of the Alaska Juneau Company. In 1897 this company bought up the 23 individual lode claims that covered the outcrop on Mount Roberts and began working the lode as a unit. Prior to 1916, however, the Alaska Juneau Company mine yielded only modest returns in comparison with the Treadwell mines on Douglas Island, just across the Gastineau Channel.

In 1921, as the result of greatly improved methods of handling the ore and also the opening of new bodies, production of the Alaska Juneau Company exceeded $1,000,000 for the first time. This increased output continued steadily, and in 1937 a total of more than $5,300,000 in gold was produced. The Alaska Juneau mine, however, was closed down in 1942 and has not resumed operations since World War II.

St. Ann Mission, the first Roman Catholic mission to be successfully established in Alaska, is located at Fifth and Gold Streets. The church, established in 1885 and called the Cathedral of the Nativity, appears to be either the original or at least, a pre-1910 building. St. Ann School, founded in 1886, now utilizes a school building that
was built in 1916.

At 326 Gold Street is located the octagonal frame Russian Orthodox Church, which was erected in 1894-95. This building is an excellent example of the many new churches, chapels, and schools that were erected in Alaska in the 1890's, reflecting the marked revival of Orthodox religious activities that occurred under the guidance of Bishop Nicholas from 1891 to 1898.

14. **Douglas Island**

**Location:** The town of Douglas is situated on Douglas Island, opposite to and separated from Juneau by the Gastineau Channel, in Southeastern Alaska. The village of Douglas is accessible via bridge from Juneau by means of auto or bus.

**Significance**

From 1882 until the great Gold Rush of 1897, the Treadwell mines, located on Douglas Island, were the most important gold mines in Alaska. The opening and operation of these mines constituted the first real economic development made by Americans in Alaska.

On May 1, 1881, Pierre J. Errussard, a prospector, located the Paris claim, a large quartz ledge on Douglas Island. In November of that year, John Treadwell, a San Francisco capitalist, purchased the Paris claim for $400. A series of four tunnels were driven into Treadwell's ledge. In 1882, as the mines first went into production, he erected a five-stamp mill and organized the Alaska Mill and Mining Company in San Francisco for the purpose of securing more development capital. In 1883 a twelve-stamp mill, chlorination works, a wharf, and more furnaces were added. In 1890 the Alaska Treadwell Gold Mining Company assumed operation of the Paris mine. Between 1882 and 1891 this one mine had a total yield of more than $3,100,000. By 1905 the Treadwell mines had produced a total of $26,556,470 in gold. The mines
continued to maintain an output of about $3,000,000 a year until 1917. On April 23 of that year a disastrous cave-in, accompanied by flooding by the sea, completely destroyed two of the company's largest mines. The only Treadwell mine to escape this fate, the Ready Bullion mine, continued production until 1922, when it was shut down for the last time.

**Condition of Sites**

**Douglas City:** Douglas was a thriving city built up during the operations of the Treadwell mines. (See 1913 photo of Douglas, following page 81.) The town was completely destroyed by a great fire in 1937; there are therefore no buildings left in Douglas that pre-date 1910.

**Treadwell Mines:** These mines are located about one mile to the southeast of Douglas City, near the shore of the Gastineau Channel; they can be reached only by hiking in from Douglas on old roads passing through heavily overgrown country.

The great "Glory Hole" of the Treadwell Mines which collapsed in 1917 is still clearly visible and can be reached by following a washed-out dirt road for about one mile to the south of Douglas; adjacent to the Glory Hole still stand stone ruins of the Treadwell stamp mill.

Further south of the Treadwell ruins, and also on the channel shore, are the large and numerous buildings of the Alaska Juneau Company's iron foundry. Production at these works has been halted since 1948.

The dense, heavy growth of ferns, bushes and trees made it impossible for the writer to penetrate this rain forest for any distance from the road; and in spite of several attempts, the Ready Bullion Mine was not located.
Ruins of Treadwell Stamp Mill, Douglas Island

N. P. S. Photo, 1961
15. Barrow

**Location:** Barrow, a large Eskimo village, is situated about 500 miles north of Fairbanks and 12 miles south of Point Barrow, the northernmost point in Alaska. Barrow can be reached by means of scheduled airlines, including special tourist flights in July and August, from Fairbanks.

**Significance**

Barrow has played a significant role in the exploration and scientific observation of the Arctic. It was also once an important site in the whaling industry.

The British captain, Frederick W. Beechey, discovered the northernmost cape of Alaska in September 1826, and named it Barrow in honor of Sir John Barrow, the friend and sponsor of many polar expeditions. In 1837 the Hudson's Bay Company sent Thomas Simpson and Peter W. Dease down the Mackenzie River in Canada. From the river's mouth the men were the first to trace the arctic coast line of Alaska westward to Point Barrow.

About 1880, American whalers, chiefly from San Francisco, began entering the Point Barrow region in large numbers. In 1881, Lieutenant P. Henry Ray of the U.S. Army erected a meteorological and astronomical observatory. In 1897-98 the U.S. Revenue Cutter Bear rescued whalers stranded on the ice in the vicinity of Barrow. By 1907, Point Barrow was the most important reindeer station in Alaska.

**Condition of the Site**

Two structures stand at Barrow that were erected prior to 1900. The older of these is the Cape Smythe Whaling and Trading Company Store, now owned by Robert Brower and utilized as a store and restaurant. This building was erected by the United States Government, probably in the late 1870's, as an emergency shelter for use of whalers stranded in the ice in the vicinity of Point Barrow. In 1886, Charles D. Brower, the
early arctic pioneer, purchased the house and utilized it as his trading post. The house has undergone some modification for use as a restaurant.

The second early structure is the original building of the Presbyterian Utkeayuk Mission, founded in 1891. The small church, erected in 1891, has been considerably enlarged by additions made in 1948. All traces of the reindeer station have disappeared, and the great reindeer herds that once ranged north of the Brooks Mountains are now extinct.

The memorial marking the site of the 1935 airplane crash that killed Will Rogers and Wiley Post is located on the coast about 12 miles southwest of the village. The monument site is completely inaccessible to visitors and can only be reached by chartering float planes.

16. Metlakatla

**Location:** Metlakatla is an Indian village located on the west coast of Annette Island, in Southeastern Alaska. Annette Island is served by scheduled airlines operating from Seattle, Juneau, and Anchorage. Although Metlakatla is situated only six and a half miles north of the airport and is linked to the airfield by means of a rough gravel road, there is no regular or public transportation available between the airport and village. Visitors must plan to make special arrangements at either the airport or in Ketchikan, if they wish to reach the town.

**Significance**

This religious colony is the most developed Indian community in Alaska.

In 1857 the Missionary Society of the Church of England sent William Duncan, a Scottish lay preacher, to Fort Simpson, in Canada, to begin his missionary work among the Tsimshian Indians of British Columbia.
He soon mastered the native language and preached to them in their own tongue. In 1862 Duncan began building a Christian Indian village at Metlakatla, a place then situated 17 miles south of Fort Simpson. His converts were required to abandon their primitive superstitions and tribal ways and to adopt the moral standards of the white man, that is, those of being industrious, sober, and peaceful.

As a result of a dispute with the Church of England and the confiscation of his lands by the Canadian Government, Duncan applied in 1887 to the United States for a site in Alaska. President Grover Cleveland granted the use of Annette Island, and on March 3, 1891, Congress officially established the island as a reservation under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior.

Meanwhile, as these legal technicalities were being worked out, William Duncan and 823 Tsimshian Indians began the occupation of New Metlakatla, on Annette Island, on August 7, 1887. Here, they built up a model Indian village, consisting of permanent homes, a sawmill, a school, church, public library, town hall, and water system—all constructed in the white man's manner. The Indians engaged successfully in agriculture, fishing, salmon canning, boat building, and other industries. (See photograph following page 126.)

In 1895 they organized a cooperative known as the Metlakatla Industrial Company, which merged their store, sawmill and cannery into one organization. The cooperative continued operations until 1905, when by common consent, Duncan assumed control of the company and started to pay wages. The missionary died in 1918.

**Condition of the Site**

The town has retained much of its late 19th century appearance.
Among the original buildings are William Duncan Memorial Church and his Cottage.

The church, the largest in Alaska, was erected by the Indians in 1895. The exterior of this building still retains its original appearance. The interior, however, was redecorated by the Indians in 1938. The church has been affiliated with the Methodist Church since 1944.

William Duncan is buried close to the church, and his grave is marked by a monument.

His original home, known as the William Duncan Memorial Cottage, is still standing and is preserved as a museum. The one-story frame house is open to the public, and his belongings are exhibited in place.

17. Nome

Location: Nome is situated on the southern coast of the Seward Peninsula, and on the shore of Norton Sound and the Bering Sea. The city can be reached by means of scheduled airlines operating from Anchorage or Fairbanks.

Significance

The gold rush to Nome of 1899-1900, following close on the heels of the Klondike rush of 1897-98, was the second in the series of great stampedes that brought into Alaska a substantial population, and, for the first time, truly focused the attention of the United States on this territory.

In 1897 an expedition, led by Daniel B. Libby, was outfitted in San Francisco to prospect in the Golovnin Bay region of Norton Sound. In March 1898, his party discovered gold on Melsing Creek, a tributary of the Niukluk River. They organized the El Dorado Mining District, and in the summer of 1898 Council City was founded on the Niukluk River as the first mining camp in the Seward Peninsula.
Encouraged by the Melsing Creek strike, three Scandinavians, Jafet Lindenberg, Erik Lindblom, and John Brynteson continued the search and, on September 20, 1898, struck the incredibly rich placer deposits of gold on Anvil Creek, near the future site of Nome. The Cape Nome Mining District was organized the following month, and by January 1899, about 500 men from Council City and other nearby points had reached Cape Nome. Here, at the mouth of the Snake River, they established a camp that was first called Anvil City and later, Nome.

During the summer of 1899 additional miners arrived from the Yukon and the United States, and more than $2,400,000 in gold was produced by some 800 prospectors. In 1900 an estimated 15,000 newcomers landed at Nome, and the town became a vast boom town, made up of hundreds of tents and huts and some fifty frame buildings.

In February, 1899, United States troops were rushed from the Army post at St. Michael to help to preserve order among miners at Nome, and Fort Davis was established two miles southeast of Nome in 1900 as their base.

Due in part to the activities of a corrupt federal judge, Nome unfortunately experienced a turbulent controversy over its mining claims from 1900 to 1902. This story has been related by Judge James Wickersham in his Old Yukon Tales -- Trails and Trials and also in Rex Beach's novel, The Spoilers. In spite of these difficulties mining activities spread rapidly from the Nome beaches to the entire Seward Peninsula. Men with technical experience arrived, as did expensive equipment and transportation. Mining companies with large amounts of capital were rapidly organized to carry on the industry, and the individual prospector was soon a thing of the past.
From 1900 to 1905, the production of gold was more than $4,000,000 a year, and in this period Nome rose from a barren strip of beach to a city of 25,000 complete with schools, theaters, banks, churches, paved streets, and a communication system. Production at Nome reached its peak with $7,500,000 in 1906, but gradually declined thereafter. By 1910 the population of Nome had fallen to 2,680 people.

The placer deposits of the Nome region, which have been estimated at about $90,000,000, never equaled the fabulous riches of the Klondike, estimated at more than $200,000,000, but Nome's producing area was larger, and Nome also had a longer sustained high production level than the Klondike.

Condition of the Site

With the exception of three buildings, all structures in Nome dating from gold rush days have been destroyed by the hurricanes and fires that have swept the city several times. The surviving historic structures are as follows:

1. Erik Londblom Cabin: This building is located at 431 Main Street West and is owned by Mrs. Sheldon. The one-story log cabin was the home of Erik Londblom, one of the three Scandinavian prospectors who discovered gold at Anvil Creek on September 20, 1898. The house is vacant and in very poor condition.

2. The Methodist Church. This frame building was erected in 1902. A new church is being erected across the street, and the original building will soon be retired.

3. Former Catholic Hospital: This large four-story frame building was erected in 1906 and utilized as a Catholic hospital. The building is now owned by the United States Smelting and Mining Company and is used by that firm as its office building.
Cabin of Erik O. Limblom, 431 Main Street, Nome

N. P. S. Photo, 1961
The first or original beach line, where gold was "rocked" in 1899-1900, has been completely covered by a large stone breakwater constructed to protect Nome from erosion by the powerful currents of the Bering Sea. The second and third beach lines and Anvil Creek, which are located to the east of Nome, are largely intact and deserted. Only a few gold dredges still remain in operation.

Remains of the narrow-gauge Seward Peninsula Railroad are to be found on the slopes of Anvil Mountain, located to the east of town. This railroad, which ran from Nome to Taylor, 97 miles to the interior, was constructed in 1900 and abandoned in 1922. The remnants include a few rusty rails still in place, engine cab—with machinery removed, several extremely battered flat cars, and two badly dilapidated frame shacks or "stations."

All traces of military buildings of the former U.S. Fort Davis have disappeared.

18. Fairbanks

**Location:** Fairbanks is located in the heart of Interior Alaska, at the junction of the Tanana and Chena Rivers. The city can be reached by means of bus, automobile, train, or scheduled airline from Anchorage.

**Significance**

Here, in 1904, occurred the third in the series of great gold rushes that had started with the Klondike stampede of 1897-98 and continued with the rush to Nome in 1899-1900. The Fairbanks rush rapidly opened the Tanana Valley area to settlement and brought a large population into the interior of Alaska for the first time.

Fairbanks was founded in 1901 as a tradingpost by Captain E. T. Barnette, an old river boat captain. In the summer of 1902, Felix Pedro, a miner of Italian origin who had been prospecting in this general area since 1898,
made a rich strike of placer gold on a stream that was later known as Pedro Creek. News of his discovery soon attracted other prospectors. By the winter of 1902-1903, Fairbanks had a population of 800, largely drawn from Circle, Eagle, and Dawson, in Canada. By 1904 Fairbanks' population had increased to 5,000; it rose to 6,000 in 1905 and reached its peak of 8,000 in 1906. The value of the gold shipments amounted to about $40,000 in 1903, increased to $350,000 in 1904, and leaped to $6,000,000 in 1905. Between 1906 and 1909 about $9,000,000 a year was the average value produced.

In 1906 a great fire, starting in the Eagle saloon at the corner of First Avenue and Cushman Streets, destroyed much of the booming town, but Fairbanks recovered rapidly and was rebuilt anew.

In spite of the prospectors' early hopes, strikes in the Fairbanks area turned out to be no poor man's diggings. It was discovered that much of the gold-bearing strata were buried deeply under many feet of frozen mud and gravel. Large amounts of capital had to be invested in elaborate and expensive equipment, such as dredges, mechanical excavators, and other hydraulic tools, and new techniques for thawing the ground had to be invented, before the Fairbanks gold fields could be fully exploited.

**Condition of the Site**

The site of Felix Pedro's discovery claim, made in the summer of 1902, is marked by a monument, which is located 17 miles north of Fairbanks, at Mile 17 on the Steese Highway.

The oldest portion of Fairbanks is located adjacent to the shore of the Chena River and includes the suburb of Graehl on the north bank, and First and Second Avenues on the south bank. In this area are to be found
some 50 one- and two-story log cabins which appear to date back to the
1906-1910 period. What is said to be the original cabin of Captain E. T.
Barnette is located at 1502 Second Avenue. This one-story log residence
is in excellent condition.

Other buildings erected in 1906, following the great fire and still
standing, include Gordon's Department Store at Fifth Avenue and Cushman
Street, and the Masonic Temple at 813 First Avenue.

The S.S. Nenana, an 1898 stern-wheeler river boat, is permanently
anchored at the foot of First Avenue, on the Chena River. The ship is
owned by the city of Fairbanks, which plans to preserve and exhibit the
boat as a museum. The craft is in excellent condition and is one of the
few surviving original specimens of this once important means of trans­
portation on the Yukon and Tanana Rivers.

19. Cordova

Location: Cordova is located in South Central Alaska, on
Cordova Bay in Prince William Sound. The city can be reached by means
of scheduled airlines operating from Anchorage, Juneau and Seattle.

Significance

Cordova was the center of the copper mining industry that was de­
developed in the Copper River Valley between 1908 and 1936.

In 1885 Lieutenant Henry T. Allen of the Second U.S. Cavalry, in
his exploration of the vast area drained by the Copper, Tanana, and
Koyukuk Rivers, reported the existence of copper in large quantities in
the Copper River basin.

In 1900, Stephen Birch, a young mining engineer, acquired several
prospectors' claims in the Copper River area and set out to raise the large
amounts of capital that would be necessary to develop his holdings.
Eventually the Kennecott Copper Company was organized by Simon Guggenheim
and J. P. Morgan. The Guggenheim-Morgan syndicate acquired two rights of way to their Copper River holdings, one leading from Valdez through Keystone Canyon to the interior, and the other from Katalla on the coast. Their attempt to build a seawall for a harbor at Katalla failed, and after completing some preliminary work for a railroad along the Valdez route, the Kennecott Company also abandoned that right-of-way. In 1908 the syndicate finally selected Cordova as the terminal of their railroad to the Chitina and Copper River Valleys. Construction was begun at once, and the 191-mile railway was completed in 1911 at a cost of $23,500,000. Copper production began in 1911, and it is estimated that the company has taken a total of about $175,000,000 in copper out of the Kennecott district. By 1936, however, the rich lode mines were exhausted and closed down. The railway was abandoned in 1938.

**Condition of the Site**

It is estimated that from 50% to 75% of the buildings standing in Cordova today were erected in the 1908-11 period. Tracks and docks of the Copper River Railroad through town have been torn up. On the south-east side of the village, however, the office and warehouse of the railroad are still standing and in good condition. These structures are owned by the town. Also standing in this same area are a number of former residences of company officials; these are in good condition and are still utilized as dwellings.

A portion of the abandoned roadbed to the Copper River has been converted into a modern highway. The "million dollar bridge," the railroad bridge constructed across the moving face of the Child's Glacier—a difficult feat of engineering described in Rex Beach's novel, *The Iron Trail*, still stands and is now used as a highway bridge.
Main Street, Cordova

N. P. S. Photo, 1961
20. Valdez

Location: Valdez is located at the head of Port Valdez, on Prince William Sound, in South Central Alaska. The city can be reached from Anchorage by automobile or bus via the Glenn and Richardson Highways, or from Cordova and Anchorage by scheduled airlines.

Significance

Valdez was founded in 1897 as a transshipment point for prospectors seeking an "all American" route to the Klondike. The tent city was first called Copper City but received its present title in 1898. In the winter of that year, several thousand gold seekers made a desperate effort to cross the great Valdez glacier in order to push on to Yukon, but most were forced by the bitter weather to return to Valdez.

Captain William R. Abercrombie, of the Second U.S. Infantry, went to Valdez in 1898 with a detachment of troops to maintain order among the rough miners. In 1899 he directed the construction of a 93-mile long pack horse road from Valdez, up the Lowe River through the Keystone Canyon, and over Thompson Pass to Tonsina Valley. With the opening of this road into the interior, the rich copper deposits that later became the Kennecott Company mines were discovered in the Copper River Valley, and the first ores were brought out over this road into Valdez.

Two companies, the Home Railway Company of Valdez and the Copper River Railway Company, were organized to construct a railroad from Valdez into the interior to tap the copper mines. Both companies engaged in intense competition to secure the right of way. This bitter and sometimes bloody struggle, particularly for control of Keystone Canyon, has been narrated by Rex Beach in his novel, The Iron Trail.

In 1908, however, the Guggenheim-Morgan interests gave up the Valdez route and selected Cordova, situated 50 miles to the south, as the terminal of their railroad to the Kennecott Copper Company mines in the Copper River.
Valley. This change of route caused much bitterness against the syndicate among the citizens of Valdez.

The port of Valdez, however, boomed during the Fairbanks gold rush of 1904-1906, and the Copper Valley rush of 1907. In 1910 Valdez had a population of about 1,500. (See photo following page 98.)

Fort Liscum was established by the United States Army in 1900, across the bay from Valdez, to maintain order in the region. The post was abandoned in 1925.

Condition of the Site

In 1915 a fire destroyed most of the business section of Valdez. Only a few buildings still stand that predate this disaster; among these are the Hotel Valdez, erected in 1907, the Harris residence, built in 1910, and the now abandoned Congregational Church, built in 1911.

A small museum maintained by the Valdez Chamber of Commerce preserves artifacts relating to the history of the vicinity, but an even better idea of the former glories of Valdez can be formed from the numerous collection of 1900-1915 photographs of the town on exhibit in the Gold Pan Cafe.

The unfinished tunnel, constructed by the railroad companies in their 1904-1906 contest over the right of way through Keystone Canyon, is located on the Richardson Highway, 14 miles to the east of Valdez. The tunnel and canyon are unimpaired by modern intrusions, other than the modern highway. The tunnel site is marked by a historical sign erected by the Valdez Chamber of Commerce.

Twenty-six miles to the east of Valdez also on the Richardson Highway, is Thompson Pass, 2730 feet in elevation. Except for the modern highway, the pass has changed little since 1897-1899.
A few buildings of abandoned Fort Liscum still stand across the bay from Valdez, but the post can be reached only by chartered boat.

21. Ketchikan

Location: Ketchikan is located on Revillagigedo Island in the Alexander Archipelago, in Southeastern Alaska. The city can be reached by scheduled airlines operating from Anchorage, Juneau and Seattle, via Annette Island.

Significance

Originally a small Indian village known as Kichikan, Ketchikan was the site of an early salmon cannery, erected in 1886 and destroyed by fire in 1889. During the gold rushes of the 1890's Ketchikan next became a supply base for the miners, and the white population increased from nine in 1890 to 286 in 1900. (See photo following page 96.)

With the decline of mining after 1900, halibut and salmon fishing and canning became the mainstay of the town. Ketchikan soon became the center of the salmon industry.

Condition of the Site

A series of fires, the latest occurring in 1961, have left few traces of pre-1910 buildings in Ketchikan. The Protestant Episcopal Church, erected in 1904, is the oldest building standing in town.

Two Indian sites of considerable interest are located on the outskirts of Ketchikan. Two miles to the south east is located the village of Saxman, where in a small park is to be found a fine collection of totem poles.

Totel Bight, a State-owned park, is located four miles north of Ketchikan, and has a fine example of a large Indian community house, of log construction, and also a number of totem poles. Both parks can be reached by car from Ketchikan.
APPENDIX I
CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF SITES

The National Park Service has adopted the following criteria for selection of sites of exceptional value:

1. Structures or sites in which the broad cultural, political, economic, military, or social history of the Nation is best exemplified, and from which the visitor may grasp the larger patterns of our American heritage. Such sites are naturally the points or bases from which the broad aspects of prehistoric and historic American life can best be presented.

2. Structures or sites associated importantly with the lives of outstanding historic personages.

3. Structures or sites associated with important events which are symbolic of some great idea or ideal of the American people.

4. Structures which embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural type-specimen, exceptionally valuable for a study of a period style or method of construction; or a notable work of a master builder, designer, or architect whose individual genius reflected his age.

5. Archeological sites which have produced information of major scientific importance by revealing new cultures, or by shedding light upon periods of occupation over large areas of the United States. Such sites are those which have produced, or which may reasonably be expected to produce, data which have affected theories, concepts, and ideas to a major degree.

6. All historical and archeological sites and structures in order to meet the standards of exceptional importance should have integrity; that is, there should not be doubts as to whether it is the original site or building, original material or workmanship, and original location. Intangible elements of feeling and association, although difficult to describe, may also be factors in weighing the integrity of a site or structure.

7. Structures or sites of recent historical importance relating to events or persons within 50 years, will not, as a rule, be eligible for consideration.
APPENDIX II

Notes on Nine Historic Sites in Alaska not Visited

1. Port Graham, located on English Bay, on the Cook Inlet and Kenai Peninsula. Site of Fort Alexandrovsk, established in 1785 by the Shelikhov-Golikov Company. The log huts and Russian Orthodox church of this post were still standing, but abandoned in 1868.

2. Kasilof, located on the Kenai Peninsula, on Cook Inlet, about 20 miles south of Kenai. This is the site of Fort George, a former fortified Russian fur trading post established by Kolomin in 1786 for the Shelikhov-Golikov Company.

3. Nuchek, located at Port Etches, on Hinchinbrook Island, in Prince William Sound. The site of Redoubt Constantine, which was founded by the Russians in 1793. The fur trading post eventually became a considerable settlement, complete with blockhouses, stockade, and church.

4. Yakutat Bay, located in Southeastern Alaska. The Glory of Russia, a Russian convict colony, was established by Baranov in 1795 near Ankaau Creek on the southeastern shore of Yukutat Bay. The fortified town was destroyed and the inhabitants were killed by the Indians in 1804. It was reported that cellars marking the site were still visible in 1891, with many cellars containing spruce trees, some of which were up to two feet in diameter.

5. Nushagak, located on Bristol Bay. Redoubt Alexandrovsk was established in 1818 as a fortified fur trading post by the Russians at the mouth of the Nushagak River.

6. Kolmakof Redoubt. The Russian fortified trading post was established by Ivan Simonson Lukeen in 1832 on the north bank of the Kuskokwin River, about 200 miles above its mouth. The post was rebuilt and renamed Kolmakof Redoubt in 1841. Dall, writing in 1870, reported that the Russians had withdrawn the garrison and dismantled this post in 1866.

7. Circle, located on the Yukon River, 50 miles south of the Arctic circle, is accessible by auto from Fairbanks over Steese Highway, 162 miles. Gold was discovered on Birch Creek, a tributary of the Yukon, in 1892. Circle City was founded nearby and was the first American mining town in the interior. It reached its peak in 1896 with the production of $700,000. In 1897-98, however, the population was drawn first off to the Klondike, then in 1900 to Nome, and finally, in 1902, the rush to Fairbanks left Circle a ghost town.

8. Eagle City, is located on the left bank of the Yukon River and 10 miles west of the Alaskan-Canadian border. The town is situated at the northern terminus of the Taylor Highway and is accessible by automobile from Fairbanks and Anchorage. The trading post established here
in 1881 became a booming mining camp called Eagle in 1898. The town, with a population of 383, was incorporated in 1901. It was the seat of the U.S. District Court for the Fourth Judicial District until 1904. With the rush to Fairbanks in 1904, Eagle was reduced to almost a ghost town. Fort Egbert was established at Eagle by the U.S. Army in 1899 to maintain order among the miners; the post was abandoned in 1925. The village, now composed of some 25 families, is still an incorporated city. It is reported (as of 1961) that many abandoned old cabins and the federal court house are still standing—little changed since 1904. Six buildings and the parade ground of abandoned Fort Egbert are also intact.

9. Attu. Located near east longitude 173°, is the westernmost large island of the Aleutian chain. Travelers must receive permission from U.S. Coast Guard before entering this area. Attu was captured by the Japanese in June 1942. After a full scale assault and heavy fighting from May 11 to June 4, 1943, the island was recaptured by American forces. It is reported, as of 1960, that many of the World War II fortifications are still standing, and that much American and Japanese battle equipment remains on the battlefield also abandoned and exposed to the weather.

Note: Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, was founded in 1914 as a railroad construction camp. As the city was established after 1910, sites in Anchorage have not been considered in this Survey.

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