

HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH

A Historic Resource Study for the
Seattle Unit of the Klondike Gold
Rush National Historical Park



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Prepared for
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Columbia Cascades Support Office

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Lisa Mighetto
Marcia Babcock Montgomery
Seattle, 1998

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INTRODUCTION

The Legacy of the Klondike Gold Rush

"It was through the gold rush that Seattle learned the marketing flair it now applies to selling computer software or persuading people to pay \$2... for a cup of coffee."

The Economist, 1997

Seattle, according to a recent article in *The Economist*, "is remarkable for its golden touch." The metropolitan area serves as a base for Bill Gates, America's richest man, along with several thousand Microsoft millionaires. The city supports numerous companies recognized as "standard-setters in their businesses," including Boeing, Nordstrom, and Starbucks. Seattle became the largest city in the Pacific Northwest almost a century ago -- and for nearly that long historians and other analysts have examined the reasons for this growth. *The Economist* has offered an intriguing, if somewhat ahistorical, interpretation: what sets Seattle apart from other successful cities is a series of characteristics resulting from the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-1898. [1]



Pioneer Square, including the Maynard Building (pictured left), Pioneer Building (in the middle), and the Hotel Seattle (pictured right) during the Klondike Gold Rush era, 1899.
(Courtesy Seattle Public Library)

During these years, thousands of prospectors headed for the Far North, passing through San Francisco, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, Victoria, and Vancouver, British Columbia. Of the approximately 100,000 miners who started for the gold fields, 70,000 used Seattle as their point of departure. [2] For the most part, however, it was not the stampeders who struck it rich. As was the case with other gold rushes in the western United States, it was the merchants who profited from the Klondike Gold Rush -- and Seattle provides an excellent example of how this event encouraged population growth and the development of businesses that outfitted and transported the miners. During the late 1890s, "Klondike" became a

"magic word," and Seattle merchants used it to sell a variety of goods and services. [3]



Pioneer Square from a similar vantage point a century later, 1998.
(HRA Photo)

The Klondike Gold Rush fueled a longstanding commercial spirit in Seattle that has continued through the present. John Nordstrom and George Bartell, for example, started companies during this era, providing clothing and supplies -- and both remain thriving businesses today. As *The Economist* observed, the Klondike Gold Rush helped Seattle develop the "marketing flair" now applied to selling computer software and coffee. Few public relations campaigns in American history could match the advertising blitz organized by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce during the stampede to the Yukon and Alaska. As a result of that marketing effort, Seattle became linked to Alaska and the Far North in the public mind. Moreover, according to *The Economist*, the energetic, risk-taking entrepreneurship that developed in the city during the late nineteenth century remains a "recipe for business achievement." [4]

Of course, this interpretation is very much a product of the 1990s. It is difficult to imagine *The Economist* printing such an idea 25 years earlier, with Boeing laying off thousands of employees and Seattle's economy plunging into recession. The 1990s, however, have exhibited a resurgence of the commercial success, along with the vitality and energy, that characterized the gold-rush era of the late 1890s and the early twentieth century. As an article in *Pacific Northwest* observed, during the 1990s Seattle transformed from a "modest place" to "musical mecca, center of the coffee universe, hip tourist destination, hacker heaven and superliveable place." [5] Because 1997-1998 marks the centennial of the Klondike Gold Rush, this seems an especially appropriate time to examine its legacy.

As noted, the Seattle area owes a good measure of its current good fortune to the presence of Microsoft. As chairman of this company, Bill Gates has seen a connection between the gold rush and the development of the software industry. "The Internet," he wrote in 1997, "is another case where people who are selling pans to the prospectors often will do better than the prospectors themselves. Analysts, the people who assemble trade shows, consultants, and others providing internet-related services may have a more sure-fire way of benefiting than the poor prospectors out there wielding picks and axes...." [6] No one in America has demonstrated this point better than Gates. He personifies a quality called "hard drive," which is manifested in the philosophy "work hard, make better products, and win." [7] Persistence and assertiveness are

essential components of Microsoft's ethos. [8]

Interestingly, 100 years earlier a miner by the name of Swiftwater Bill Gates (no relation to the current chairman of Microsoft) supposedly leaned from the window of a Seattle hotel, showering gold nuggets from the Klondike on the passersby below. [9] The new "gold rush" of the 1990s has once again brought recognition and prosperity to Seattle.

This proposed design for a city seal illustrated the spirit of determination that characterized Seattle in 1897.
[Source: Museum of History and Industry, Seattle.]

Not all historians, however, see the connection between the gold rush and the current economy. Neither do historians agree as to the importance of the gold rush to Seattle's development. Some view it as a pivotal event affecting the course of the city's history. Others argue that the arrival of the transcontinental railroad proved to be far more significant in encouraging population growth and the expansion of local industries that had already gained a foothold in the area. Few historians, however, would



deny the importance of the late nineteenth century in the development of Seattle. At the very least, the Klondike Gold Rush coincided with major events, including the arrival of the railroad, and it exemplified continuing trends in the city's history. If not the primary cause of the city's growth and prosperity, the Klondike Gold Rush nonetheless serves as a colorful reflection of the era and its themes, including the celebrated "Seattle spirit."

This Historic Resource Study examines these issues, beginning in the early 1850s with the founding of Seattle, and ending in 1909 with the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition commemorating the Klondike Gold Rush and the growth of the city. Chapter One describes early Seattle and the gold strike in the Klondike, while the following three chapters analyze how the city became the gateway to the Yukon, how the stampede to the Far North stimulated local businesses, and how the city's infrastructure and boundaries changed during the era of the gold rush. Chapter Five looks at how historians have interpreted the Klondike Gold Rush throughout the twentieth century. The final chapter brings the Klondike story up to the present, describing the establishment of the Pioneer Square Historic District and the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. It also describes the buildings and structures associated with the gold rush that remain standing, emphasizing those that have not yet been recognized or listed in the National Register. These historic resources serve as reminders of the period that, in the words of one observer, "put Seattle on the map." [10]

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CHAPTER ONE

"By-and-By": The Early History Of Seattle

"In a sense, Seattle itself arrived on the steamer Portland."

Ross Anderson, *The Seattle Times*, 1997

Founding the City

Seattle has a long history of profiting from gold rushes. Beginning with the stampede to California in the mid-nineteenth century and continuing through the Klondike craze of 1897-1898, Seattle business interests were quick to spot economic opportunity. The California Gold Rush rapidly expanded the development of San Francisco in the early 1850s, opening a market for the lumber that grew in abundance in the Puget Sound region. Seattle's first business was a sawmill located at the foot of what is now Yesler Way. "You have the timber up there that we want and must have," one California miner advised an early Seattle resident. "By selling us lumber ... you'll soon be rich." [1] The city's founders swiftly recognized the potential value of the area's natural resources. They named their initial settlement in what is now West Seattle "New York-Alki," reflecting their ambition that "by-and-by" it would enjoy a prosperity rivaling that of the large cities on the eastern seaboard. [2]

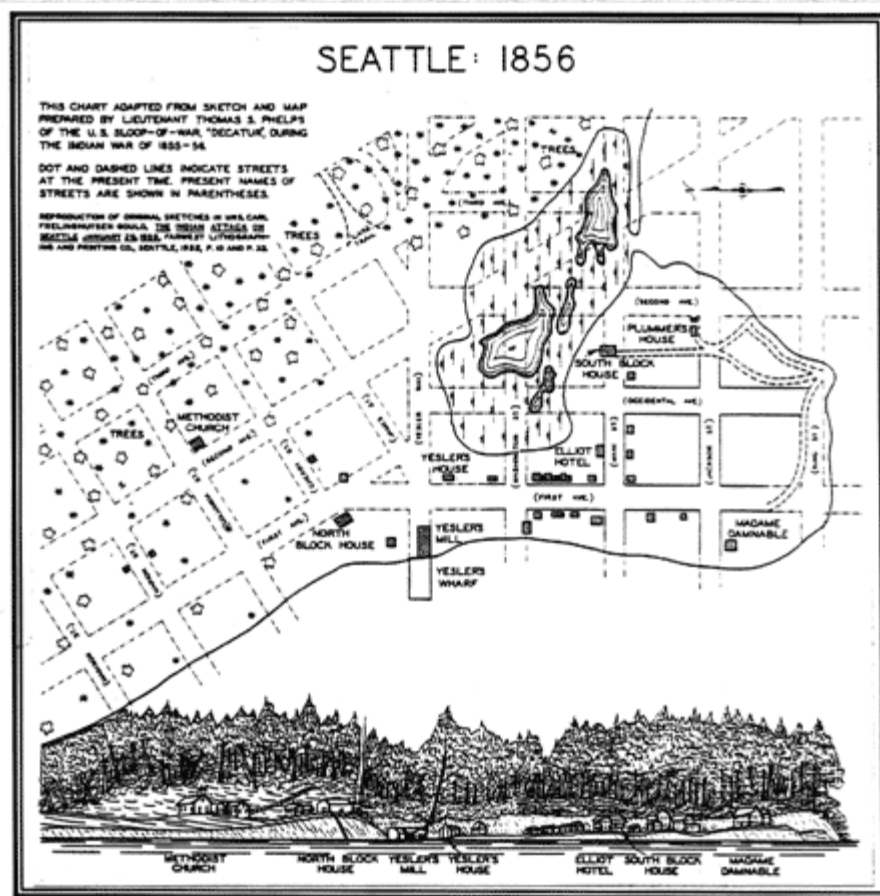
The Denny party, which included 24 people led by former Illinois resident Arthur Denny, first settled on Alki Point in 1851. They arrived aboard the schooner *Exact* on a dreary November day. As many historians have recounted, some of the party's women responded to the wet, unfamiliar landscape by weeping. [3] This site proved to be unsuitable, prompting Denny, Carson Boren, and William Bell to explore the sheltered shoreline of Elliott Bay to the east. Here, in February of 1852, they chose a new location for their town, calling the site "Duwamps," after the nearby Duwamish River. That summer, they changed the name to Seattle, after the Indian leader Sealth. [4]

The new settlement consisted of an eight-acre island bordered by a saltwater lagoon to the east, and tideflats to the south. The settlers' initial claims ran from the foot of what is now Denny Way south to the island, near the intersection of First Avenue and King Street. The island's high point was located between Jackson and King streets on First Avenue. Throughout the nineteenth century, Seattle residents filled the surrounding tidelands, which today stand approximately 12 feet above the high-water

level. [5]

Shortly after the members of the Denny party had staked their claims, Dr. David Swinson (known as "Doc") Maynard arrived. Perhaps the most colorful of Seattle's pioneers, he headed west from Ohio in 1850, hoping to escape a bad marriage and to strike it rich in the California gold fields. [6] "The first entry in his travel diary," observed historian Murray Morgan, "expressed the intention of many another man who eventually settled in Seattle: 'Left here for California.'" [7] A personable, gregarious, and "hard-drinking" man, Maynard was also a "buyer and a seller." In 1852, he settled in Seattle, where he opened the first store. He established a 58-block tract that included part of the island and the lagoon, and joined other settlers in donating land to Henry Yesler for the creation of a sawmill. [8] Maynard served as a physician, justice of the peace, and the town's first booster. [9] As historian Roger Sale explained, he "was willing to do anything to make Seattle grow." [10]

Yesler's business became the hub of Seattle's economy, and the new town's labor force expanded. Workers skidded enormous trees down Mill Street -- or "Skid Road" (now Yesler Way), to be cut into lumber. In 1854, Yesler constructed a wharf, and he began depositing sawdust from his mill into the bay and saltwater lagoon, thus increasing the land base along the waterfront. He also built a cookhouse, which became Seattle's first restaurant, along with a hall that became the town's meeting place. [11] By 1860, Seattle's population had reached approximately 150 residents. The commercial district on First Avenue South ran four blocks, from Yesler's mill to King Street. The city, incorporated in 1865, began to address the transportation problems created by the wet climate, which turned dirt streets into impassable bogs. Road crews planked Third Avenue with wood, marking the eastern border of the town. [12]



Seattle, 1856.

[Source: Calvin F. Schmid, *Social Friends in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1944)]

In 1869, when Seattle received its first charter, Yesler became mayor. Like Maynard, he hailed from Ohio. In contrast to Maynard, however, he remained "dour and tight-fisted," eventually selling his sawmill to pursue a more lucrative career in real estate. In Sales' estimation, had Seattle been settled mostly by people like Yesler, it would have evolved into little more than a company town rather than the largest city on Puget Sound. [13]

From the outset, Seattle's character differed from that of other early communities on Puget Sound, such as Port Gamble. According to numerous historians, Arthur Denny embodied the nature of this difference. A man with "an innate business sense," he had left his home in Illinois to take advantage of the opportunities that the West presented - - and he realized the economic connection between Seattle and San Francisco very quickly. During the early 1850s, ships arrived from California loaded with merchandise to be sold on commission in Seattle. Denny found a way to keep the profits by building a store on the corner of First Avenue and Washington Street, and purchasing stock directly in San Francisco. His entrepreneurial activities helped "reduce San Francisco's hold on Seattle." [14]

Throughout the remainder of his life, Denny engaged in a variety of businesses, ranging from banking to producing building materials. He also surveyed and platted much of the downtown area, donating land for establishing a university. Perhaps the best example of Denny's foresight

was his interest in the railroad and his efforts to expand Seattle's transportation system, described below. Taken individually, these activities were not unique in burgeoning western communities. What set Denny apart was the extent of his "energy and vision." When he saw a need in the community, he stepped in to fill it, sometimes turning a handsome profit in the process. Even so, he was motivated by more than money, "feeling the growth of his own property to be a part of the growth of Seattle." Denny's activities led to "a decreasing dependence on the outside world for Seattle's essential livelihood," paving the way for future development. [15] He thus represented the vitality and the entrepreneurship that would characterize Seattle later in the century -- qualities that would place the city in an advantageous position during the Klondike Gold Rush era.



Seattle, early in 1856, from Main Street and First Avenue South, looking north.
[Source: Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*
(Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916)]

CHAPTER ONE

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CHAPTER TWO Selling Seattle

"There is probably no city in the Union today so much talked about as Seattle and there is certainly none toward which more faces are at present turned. From every nook and corner of America and from even the uttermost parts of the earth, a ceaseless, restless throng is moving -- moving toward the land of the midnight sun and precious gold, and moving through its natural gateway -- the far-famed City of Seattle."

The Seattle Daily Times, 1898

"We are taking advantage of the Klondike excitement to let the world know about Seattle."

Erastus Brainerd, 1897

Erastus Brainerd and The Seattle Chamber of Commerce

Seattle's reputation as the gateway to Alaska and the Far North is widespread. Alaska Airlines remains based in this city, providing a modern example of the transportation connections that were established in the late nineteenth century. As historian Murray Morgan observed, Seattle residents "tend to look on Alaska as their very own....Seattle stores display sub-arctic clothing, though Puget Sound winters are usually mild; Seattle curio shops feature totem poles, though no Puget Sound Indian ever carved one." [1] This perception is in part a legacy of the Klondike Gold Rush, which linked Seattle and the Far North in the public mind. It resulted from an extensive advertising campaign designed and launched by the Seattle Chamber of Commerce in 1897.

From the outset of the gold rush, Seattle newspapers promoted their city as the obvious point of outfitting and departure for the Yukon. "If there ever was competition between Seattle and other cities on the Pacific Coast relative to Alaska business," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* boasted on July 25, 1897, "it has entirely disappeared....Seattle controls the trade with Alaska. There is no other way to state the fact -- the control is complete and absolute." As the *Post-Intelligencer* concluded, the rush to the Klondike was "centered in Seattle." [2] Despite such bold assertions, however, it took the Seattle Chamber of Commerce months of effort in

public relations to make this "fact" a reality. Comprised of only seven key members, it proved to be a very vocal force in promoting Seattle.

Cooper and Levy -- a major outfitter in the city -- moved Seattle boosters to action. One of the owners notified the Chamber of Commerce that railroad companies were not routing many of the early Klondike stampeders through Seattle. Initially, only the Great Northern Railway took Yukon-bound passengers to this city, while the Southern Pacific routed passengers to San Francisco, the Northern Pacific advertised Portland, and the Canadian Pacific promoted Vancouver, British Columbia. The Chamber of Commerce thus established the Bureau of Information on August 30, 1897, to devise a plan for promoting Seattle as the Klondike outfitting and departure center. It also charged the Bureau of Information with counteracting the efforts of other cities in this direction. Even more significant, members appointed Erastus Brainerd as secretary and executive officer. [3] Were it not for this move, Seattle might not have figured as prominently as it did in the Klondike trade.

Brainerd proved to be the most influential of Seattle's boosters during the Klondike Gold Rush. What was most remarkable about his advertising campaign was that it was waged during an era before the practice of swaying public opinion had become commonplace. His social status and his professional contacts helped his publicity efforts. Born in the Connecticut River Valley in 1855, Brainerd attended Phillips Exeter Academy, and graduated from Harvard at the tender age of 19. After serving as curator of engravings at the Boston Museum of Arts, he traveled to Europe, where he promoted a tour for W. Irving Bishop, a "lecturing showman." While in Europe, Brainerd displayed his gregarious personality and his propensity for joining, becoming a Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, a Knight of the Red Cross of Rome, a Knight Templar, and a Mason. [4]

Bureau of Information, Seattle Chamber of Commerce, 1897

Erastus Brainerd, Secretary
Edward F. Sweeney, president of
Seattle Brewing
and Malt Company
J.W. Goodwin, J.W. Goodwin &
Company
Emil Lobe, Golden Rule Bazaar
Samuel Rosenberg, Kline and
Rosenberg, clothiers
A.B. Stewart, Stewart and Holmes,
wholesale druggists
F.S. Sylvester, president of Seattle
Trading Company, grocers

Source: "Answers to Queries," *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*,

October 13, 1897, p. 6.

Returning to the United States, Brainerd turned to journalism, landing a job as a news editor of the Atlanta *Constitution*. In 1882, he married Jefferson Davis' granddaughter, which endeared him to Southern readers. One reporter described Brainerd at this time as "an accomplished gentleman, a desirable citizen, and an engaging friend." Moving to Philadelphia, Brainerd again joined a variety of organizations, including the Union League, Penn Club, and the Authors and Press clubs of New York. [5]

In 1890, Brainerd suffered from several attacks of influenza. His desire for employment opportunities as well as his ill health prompted him to relocate to Seattle, where he became the editor of *The Press-Times*. Brainerd joined the Rainier Club and organized a local Harvard Club, becoming known as "a social swell and an authority on terrapin [edible turtles]." His activities included fishing trips with the eminent Judge Thomas Burke. By 1897, when Brainerd became secretary of the Bureau of Information, he had developed valuable social -- and editorial -- connections in the Puget Sound area and throughout the nation. As one biographer summarized, Brainerd was a "man of the world, confident and self-assertive." He was also an "unusually facile writer"-- a characteristic that would serve Seattle well in the publicity campaign. [6]

CHAPTER TWO

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CHAPTER THREE

Reaping the Profits of the Klondike Trade

"This town of thirty to forty thousand was all Klondike"

- Robert B. Medill, *Klondike Diary: True Account of the
Gold Rush of 1897-1898*

*"The stores are ablaze with Klondike goods; men pass by
robed in queer garments; ... teams of trained dogs, trotting
about with sleds; men with packs upon their backs, and a
thousand and one things which are of use in the Klondike
trade."*

- *The Seattle Daily Times*, 1897

An "All-Klondike" Town

Descriptions of Seattle from 1897 and 1898 share a common theme: a sense of energy and purpose had gripped the city. After years of depression, the stampede to the Klondike invigorated the economy, rekindling the Seattle spirit. As was the case with many gold rushes throughout the West, it was generally not the miners who struck it rich. The business district -- centered around what is now Pioneer Square -- flourished, as thousands of gold seekers bound for the Yukon poured into the city, and a variety of merchants stepped forward to meet their needs.

One observer, returning to Seattle after a seven-month absence in the late 1890s, marveled that the sluggish, stagnant town he left bustled with new prosperity. "Up First Avenue and down Second Avenue is one train of fanciful, kaleidoscopic pictures from real life," he wrote. "The stores are ablaze with Klondike goods; men pass by robed in queer garments; ... teams of trained dogs, trotting about with sleds; men with packs upon their backs, and a thousand and one things which are of use for the Klondike trade." [1] Martha Louise Black, a prospector headed for the Yukon, had a similar reaction to Seattle's streets. "Everywhere were piles of outfits," she recalled. These included camp supplies, sleds, carts, and harnesses, together with dogs, horses, cattle, and oxen. [2] The increased commercial activity affected the mood of the city. As one miner summarized, "We found no discouragement in Seattle. This town of thirty to forty thousand was all Klondike." [3]

So profitable was the Klondike trade that during the late 1890s Seattle became the financial center of the Pacific Northwest. [4] By 1900 Seattle's bank clearances -- the amount of money that changed hands in the daily course of the city's commercial life -- had soared more than 400 percent, surpassing those of Portland and Los Angeles. At the turn of the century, only San Francisco enjoyed a greater volume of business among West Coast cities. Seattle bankers attributed this prosperity to the gold rush. [5] The city's merchants, too, remained well aware of the source of their profits. Wa Chong & Company, for example, reported in 1898 that "times are very good.... Klondike gold has helped things very much." [6]

The amount and variety of goods in a typical Klondike grubstake boosted numerous businesses in Seattle. During the winter of 1898, the Northwest Mounted Police required that each miner bring enough provisions to last a year, which could weigh between 1,500 and 2,000 pounds. The "one-ton rule" helped ensure that prospectors would arrive at least somewhat prepared to withstand the difficult environment of the Far North. It also benefited the merchants, who sold the miners this vast quantity of supplies, along with a myriad of services. Approximately 70,000 stampedeers passed through Seattle during the Klondike Gold Rush -- each one a potential customer. Some gold seekers invested as much as \$1,000 for supplies and transportation. [7]

Not all were men. [8] Although the Seattle Chamber of Commerce discouraged women from traveling to the Yukon, it established a Women's Department, which distributed advice on purchasing an outfit. Moreover, some entire families set out for the Klondike, providing additional opportunities for sales. Articles commonly purchased included groceries, clothing, bedding, sleds, hardware, medicine chests, tents, and harnesses and packsaddles. [9]

Some of the materials marketed to gold seekers were manufactured in the city. The Seattle Woolen Mill, for example, produced blankets and robes "for the Arctic Regions." [10] Another firm made a "special miner's shoe," turning out several dozen pairs per day. [11] Seattle also featured food processing plants, breweries, and foundries that supplied gold seekers. [12] Even so, Seattle merchants obtained many products -- including dry goods and clothing -- from suppliers in New York and Chicago, who shipped their goods west. Sometimes wholesalers in Seattle re-packaged these products under new, Klondike-related brand names. Lilly, Bogardus, and Company, Inc., a Seattle grain and feed dealer, sold products purchased from the Chicago stockyards as "Alaska Dog Feed." [13] By purchasing goods from the East and Midwest, Seattle merchants forged important commercial connections that allowed large stocks to move quickly and efficiently, at reduced costs. [14]

In addition to collecting fees from various merchants to finance its advertising campaign, the Chamber of Commerce gathered testimonials from miners to help Seattle businesses. "I never ate better bacon," one prospector vouched for The Seattle Trading Company. "The flour and beans could not be beat." Moreover, he and his partner did not lose any provisions, indicating that "the packing was first-class." Erastus Brainerd published these testimonials, many of which mentioned specific businesses, in Seattle newspapers. [15]

From the summer of 1897 throughout 1898, the Seattle press was filled with large, illustrated advertisements directed at stampeders. Merchants used the word "Klondike" to sell everything from arctic underwear to insect-proof masks. Crystallized eggs and evaporated foods were heavily advertised. Advertisements promoted an array of ingenious gadgets, including Klondike frost extractors (boilers) and air-tight camp stoves. The smaller "want ads" during this period further demonstrated the range of businesses that used the gold rush to sell their products and services. Vashon College, for example, offered Yukon-bound parents a place to leave their sons and daughters, "while their home is broken up." [16] The connection between the Yukon and what was being sold often appeared tenuous. One business advertised, "Going to the Klondyke? Have your watch repaired." [17] Even clairvoyants used the Klondike craze to sell their services. Flo Marvin, for instance, had predicted the gold strike -- and she frequently advertised her "occult powers," which included locating mines. [18]

Such an array of advertised products made it difficult for gold seekers to distinguish the essential from the useless and cumbersome. Miners had to decide whether to buy an air-tight camp stove, for example, or whether one of Palmer's Portable Houses would prove to be a better investment than a tent. [19] Purchasing agents were available to assist gold seekers in selecting and buying an outfit, but this approach had its drawbacks. Some unscrupulous purchasing agents -- called "cappers" -- took money from naïve miners and bought inexpensive, inadequate food and equipment, pocketing large profits. [20] In any case, some observers reveled in the city's unbridled consumerism during the gold rush. "I like Seattle," William Ballou noted in 1898, "all its different fakirs trying to sell you a gold washer, a K. stove, or a dog team with one lame dog which would get well by tomorrow." [21]

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CHAPTER THREE

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CHAPTER FOUR Building the City

"Seattle is the result of a patriotic, unselfish, urban spirit which has been willing to sacrifice in order to gain a desired end -- the upbuilding of a great city....Seattle has well-paved streets, a thorough and satisfactory street car system, large and handsome business blocks, and residence districts adorned by palatial homes and green and velvety lawns."

- Daniel L. Pratt, "Seattle, The Queen City,"
The Pacific Monthly, 1905

Seattle changed more during the gold-rush era than in any other period in its history. The rapid economic and population growth of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries spurred the development of the city's infrastructure, transforming it from a town to a metropolis. As one historian observed, if Rip Van Winkle had appeared in 1883 after a 30-year absence, he would have easily recognized what he saw: a town dependent on the lumber industry and water transportation. Similarly, if he awakened in the 1940s after a 30-year absence, he would find the city bigger but not fundamentally changed. However, if he fell asleep in 1880 and returned in 1910, he would not have known where he was. Although natural landmarks such as Mount Rainier and Puget Sound remained in their familiar positions, "Seattle had undergone more profound changes during these thirty years than in any other thirty year period." [1] An examination of the city's infrastructure reveals the extent of these changes.



Established in 1890, the Merchants Cafe, located at Yesler and Marion, advertises itself as Seattle's oldest restaurant.

It operated during the Klondike Gold Rush.
(HRA photo)

Buildings

During the gold-rush era, building along the waterfront increased dramatically. Schwabacher's rebuilt and extended its wharf. The Northern Pacific Railway extended its Yesler dock, and the Great Northern Railway added a new facility that included docks, warehouses, and a wheat elevator. [2]

The changes within the commercial district were especially visible. As noted, brick and masonry buildings replaced wooden structures after the fire in 1889. Building in the downtown area became denser, and the size and scale of structures increased. The [Alaska Building](#), the city's first steel-frame skyscraper, appeared in 1904. Located at Second and Cherry, this 14-story structure symbolized the significance of the gold rush to Seattle. The porthole windows along the top floor looked out over the waterfront, providing a view of the shipbuilding, shipping, and rail industries that the gold rush encouraged. For many years a gold nugget embedded in the front door of this building reminded visitors of the stampede and the city's connection to the Far North. Construction of the [Arctic Building](#) at Third and Cherry in 1914 similarly represented Seattle's connection to Alaska. This stately structure was noteworthy for its Italianate terra-cotta façade, tusked walrus heads, and rococo-gilt Dome Room. [3]

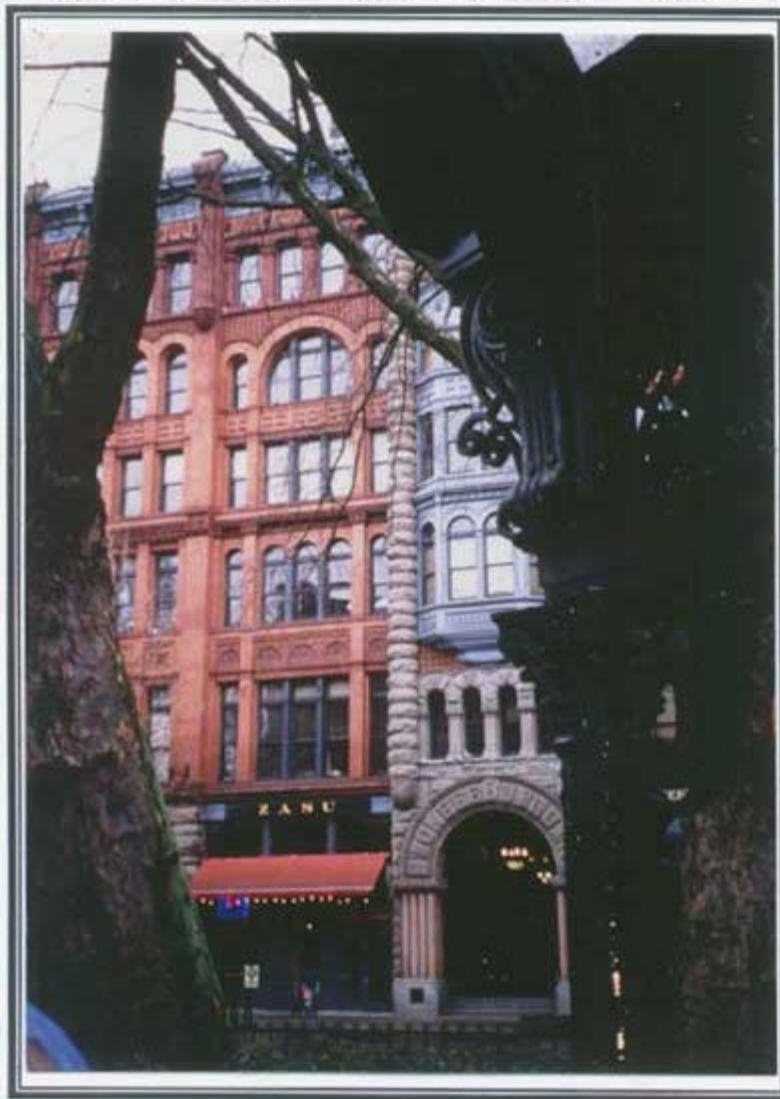
(HRA photo)

The Alaskan window (pictured right) appears on the first floor of the Morrison Hotel, located at 501 Third Avenue. This

building, constructed in 1908, was the original home of the Arctic Club, comprised of the city's leaders and entrepreneurs.



That year, the Arctic Club merged with the Alaska Club, a commercial organization of Alaskans in Seattle. For years, the Alaska Club had maintained a reading room featuring Alaska newspapers and mineral exhibits, and its leaders promoted the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. In 1916, the Arctic Club moved to the Arctic Building.



Prominent architect Elmer Fisher designed the Pioneer Building, pictured below. Constructed in 1889-90, this building reflected the optimism of the developing city after the fire. This Victorian structure is embellished with Romanesque Revival features, including rusticated stone columns extending above the building's central entrance. This

striking building was located in the heart of the city's commercial center during the Klondike Gold Rush.
(HRA photo)

CHAPTER FOUR

[Buildings](#) | [Street and Transportation Improvements](#)
[City Parks](#) | [Regrading](#) | [Sewage, Water, and Electricity](#)
[Harbor and Waterway Improvements](#)

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

CHAPTER FIVE

Interpreting the Klondike Gold Rush

"The Seattle gold rush of 1897-98 was more than just an interesting story. It was the major turning point in the city's history."

- David V. and Judith A. Clarridge, *A Ton of Gold: The Seattle Gold Rush, 1897-98, 1972*

"The boost Seattle received from the Gold Rush was not a major contributor to its essential economic development."

- Roger Sale, *Seattle, Past to Present, 1976*

Historians and other commentators wasted no time taking on the task of interpreting the Klondike Gold Rush. Early in the twentieth century they began examining the stampede's influence on the development of Seattle and the region, starting a process that has continued for nearly 100 years. Although popular and scholarly accounts have varied greatly throughout this period, a general trend emerged: many early histories downplayed the gold rush's role in economic and population growth, while later interpretations increasingly presented the stampede as a major influence in the city's history. Throughout the twentieth century, most historians have agreed that the gold-rush era brought monumental changes to the city; it would be very difficult to argue otherwise. The following chapter focuses on how the stampede as a single event has been interpreted.

Early Interpretations

During the early twentieth century, popular, promotional publications continued to tout the Klondike Gold Rush as a pivotal event. An article in *The Pacific Monthly* in 1905, for example, retained the spirit of the advertising campaign that the Seattle Chamber of Commerce had waged during the late 1890s. "Seattle is an achievement, not a mere growth," boasted the author. "Seattle is the result of a patriotic, unselfish, urban spirit which has been willing to sacrifice in order to gain a desired end -- the upbuilding of a great city." To his mind, the "turning point in Seattle's career came in the summer of 1897," when Seattle became "a busy, prosperous port" focused on outfitting thousands of gold seekers. [1] In 1909, four years after this article appeared, the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition celebrated the gold rush as part of Seattle's connection to the

Far North.

Edmond Meany was one of the first historians to tackle the significance of the gold rush. In 1910, he noted that the stampede brought immediate improvements in Seattle's economy. In assessing its long-term impact, however, he broadened the picture beyond the events of 1897 and 1898, concluding that "the industrial and economic life of Washington was profoundly affected by the series of events known as the golden era of Alaska." [2]

Welford Beaton, another early historian, presented the stampede in a different light. In *The City That Made Itself*, published in 1914, he claimed that the "greatest single factor in the upbuilding of Seattle was not the Klondike rush." To his mind, "it was the coming of the Great Northern Railway" that marked the turning point for the city, "for without the railway service which that company provided Seattle would not have been able to avail itself to the upmost of the possibilities the gold presented." [3]

Beaton was not the only observer to emphasize the importance of the railroad. In 1909, the Seattle Chamber of Commerce produced a pamphlet promoting the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. Looking back, the publication credited the city's rail connections for its economic growth during the late nineteenth century. The pamphlet did not mention the stampede. Although this was a piece of boosterism and not a thoughtful reflection on the past, it is revealing that the very promoters who had once focused so intensely on the gold rush had all but forgotten the event a decade later. [4]

Similarly, Clarence B. Bagley's portrayal of the gold rush is interesting mostly for what he did not say. One of the best known early-Seattle historians, Bagley also served as secretary of the City's Board of Public Works. He produced detailed, year-by-year accounts of various events in his three-volume, *History of Seattle From the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, published in 1916. Although this work mentions the Klondike stampede and the frenzied activity on the city's waterfront, Bagley's brief description is buried in a chapter on Alaska shipping interests. He did not indicate that the gold rush was responsible for the city's prosperity in the late 1890s. Nor did he present the stampede itself as an event of long-term significance. Bagley presented Alaska trade and commerce as the important influence during the era -- and presumably to him the Klondike stampede represented one small part of that larger topic. [5] Also revealing is the absence of Erastus Brainerd in Bagley's discussions of individuals important to the city's development.

Six years after Bagley's work appeared, Jeannette Paddock Nichols offered a similarly low-key interpretation. In 1922, she published an article devoted to advertising and the Klondike Gold Rush in *The Western Historical Quarterly*. Her strongest statement read as follows: "It cannot be gainsayed that the Bureau of Information of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce gave momentum to the growth of both the Klondike and Seattle." [6] The idea that promotions of Seattle "gave momentum" to the city's growth is very different from the notion that advertising proved to be essential to the city's growth.

In summary, the first historians to examine the Klondike Gold Rush had the difficult task of assessing the long-term impact of events that occurred only 10 or 20 years previously. Perhaps the early commentators needed sufficient time to place the stampede in a larger context, witnessing more of its aftermath. On the other hand, historians who lived during the gold-rush era, experiencing it firsthand, were perhaps in a good position to evaluate different types of evidence. In 1998, the most readily available primary documents specifically pertaining to the gold rush include newspaper articles, guidebooks, and promotional materials -- sources that by their very nature emphasize the importance and success of the event. As Nichols pointed out, the Klondike Gold Rush is a study in the effectiveness of advertising. It is possible that promotional sources wielded less influence on early historians, who were well aware of their intent -- and perhaps this point accounts for the reserved manner in which some of them presented the stampede.

Also, some of the early histories mentioned here generally focused on politics, economics, and prominent community leaders, in accordance with the standards of the time. Typically, they remained subdued in tone, avoiding a more lively, spirited presentation appropriate for a popular, general audience. It is difficult to imagine Bagley adopting a style that would later characterize the work of Murray Morgan or William C. Speidel -- whatever the topic.



The Pioneer Building and Hotel Seattle in March of 1899.
(Courtesy Seattle Public Library)

CHAPTER FIVE

[Early Interpretations](#) | [Mid-Twentieth Century Interpretations](#)
[Modern Interpretations](#)

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



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Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

CHAPTER SIX

Historic Resources in the Modern Era

"Today we need not regret that the commercial center moved on, leaving the area to stagnate. This lack of interest and investment insured that a remarkable stand of urbanistically compatible buildings from the end of the nineteenth century would remain. Streetscapes like that from Pioneer Square south along First Avenue are rare in a modern metropolis forced to reuse the same downtown area over and over."

*- Sally Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery,
A Guide to Architecture in Washington State, 1980*

Pioneer Square: Seattle's First Commercial District

When the Klondike Gold Rush began in 1897, the area now called "Pioneer Square" was a thriving commercial district. A variety of businesses served the stampeders, including outfitting, hardware, and grocery stores. Today, most of Seattle's historic resources associated with the Klondike Gold Rush are located within this commercial district, extending from Columbia Street south to King Street and from Third Avenue west to Alaskan Way S. In 1970, this 52-acre area was listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). In 1978, the boundaries of the district were expanded to 88 acres, and an additional three acres along the district's southwest end were added in 1987. [1] The district's three National Register nominations are included in the Appendix. After Pioneer Square was listed in the National Register, the City of Seattle established its own [preservation district](#) to facilitate management at the local level.

Buildings within the [Pioneer Square Historic District](#) date from three periods between the years 1889-1916. The first period, lasting from 1889 to 1899, represents the city's redevelopment after the fire. In the following period, which lasted from 1900 to 1910, Pioneer Square experienced tremendous growth and underwent significant development projects including regrading and filling in the tide flats. Just prior to World War I, the district experienced a final surge of construction. [2] After the war, Seattle's retail district moved north of Pioneer Square along First and Second avenues.

Over the years, this shift resulted in the abandonment of Pioneer Square. Buildings in Pioneer Square that once hummed with commercial activity were left vacant or used for storage.

In 1966, an "urban renewal" project proposed by a local planning group known as the Central Association threatened the area. Under the Central Association's plan, buildings in Pioneer Square would have been replaced by modern parking garages. [3] However, as architectural historians Sally Woodbridge and Roger Montgomery explained, "streetscapes like that from Pioneer Square south along First Avenue are rare in a modern metropolis forced to reuse the same downtown area over and over." [4] Recognizing the importance of this intact historic district, preservationists, led by the non-profit Allied Arts of Seattle, worked to raise awareness of Pioneer Square's historic and architectural significance. As a result of these efforts, Pioneer Square became the city's first National Register district in 1970. [5] Historic designation revitalized Pioneer Square by attracting the attention of private developers interested in rehabilitating buildings; businesses seeking commercial space; and individuals interested in the area's stores and colorful history.

In 1976, as Pioneer Square regained its foothold as an important commercial center, Congress established the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, which included a Seattle Unit, in the district. A copy of the statute that created the Park is included in the Appendix. Today, the Park's interpretive exhibits and tours of Pioneer Square allow visitors to envision Seattle during the gold-rush years of the late 1890s.

CHAPTER SIX

Pioneer Square: Seattle's First Commercial District Seattle's Gold-Rush Era Properties Located Outside the Pioneer Square Historic District Recommendations

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

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¹³ Crowley, *National Trust Guide, Seattle*, p. 46; Jeffery Karl Oschsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994, p. 348.

¹⁴ Margaret Corley, Colman Building National Register Nomination, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia, 1969; Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Washington State Department of Community Trade and Economic Development, *Historic Places in Washington: National Historic Landmarks, National Register of Historic Places, and Washington Heritage Register*, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia, 1997, p.27; Dorpat, *Seattle Now & Then*, p. 79.

¹⁵ Seattle City Directory, 1908, p. 149 and 1909, p.147.

¹⁶ Jane Lotter, "The Life and Hard Times of the Moore Theatre." *The Weekly*, April 29-May 5 1981. pp. 19

¹⁷ Margaret Corley, Moore Theatre and Hotel Building National Register Nomination, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia, 1973.

¹⁸ Margaret Corley, German Club National Register Nomination, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Olympia, 1969.

¹⁹ Seattle City Directories 1905-1909; Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1905 and 1916.

²⁰ Seattle City Directories, 1892-1915.

²¹ Roberta Deering, Designation/Staff Recommendation to the Board — U.S. Assay Office, Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, 1983.

²² Roberta Deering, Landmark Nomination Form, U.S. Assay Office, Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, 1983.

²³ Roberta Deering, Landmark Nomination Form, U.S. Assay Office, 1983; Margaret Corley, German Club National Register Nomination.

²⁴ Office of Urban Conservation, Landmark Nomination Form, Colman Building. Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, n.d.

²⁵ Margaret Corley, Colman Building National Register Nomination, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1969.

²⁶ Office of Urban Conservation, Landmark Nomination Form, Colman Building, n.d.; Corley, Colman Building National Register Nomination, 1969; Ochsner, *Shaping Seattle Architecture*, p. 348; Crowley, *National Trust Guide, Seattle*, p. 46-47.

²⁷ Office of Urban Conservation, Landmark Nomination Form-Colman Building, n.d.

²⁸ Earl Layman, Landmarks Preservation Board, Seattle Historic Building Data Sheet, Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, July 8, 1975.

²⁹ Seattle City Directory, Polk's Seattle Directory Co., Publishers, Seattle, 1908, p. 149 and 1909, p.147.

³⁰ Office of Urban Conservation, First Avenue Groups National Register Nomination, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1980.

³¹ Office of Urban Conservation, First Avenue Groups National Register Nomination Form, 1980.

³² Office of Urban Conservation, First Avenue Groups National Register Nomination Form, 1980.

³³ Seattle City Directories, 1898-1914.

³⁵ Seattle City Directory, 1897; "Seattle Woolen Manufacturing Co.

Advertisement," *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, July 20, 1897, p.5.

³⁵ Nancy Susman, National Register Nomination-Holyoke Building, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1976; Crowley, *National Trust Guide*, 1998, p.75.

³⁶ Office of Urban Conservation, First Avenue Groups National Register Nomination, 1980.

³⁷ Advertisement for the Northwest Fixture Company. *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, June 7, 1897, p.4.

³⁸ Seattle City Directories, 1894-1902.

³⁹ Office of Urban Conservation, First Avenue Groups National Register Nomination, 1980.

⁴⁰ Seattle City Directories, 1903-1912.

⁴¹ King County Assessor's Records, History Card for 1932 Second Avenue, Puget Sound Regional Branch of the Washington State Archives, Bellevue, 1938.

⁴² Lotter, "The Life and Hard Times of the Moore Theatre," p. 19.

⁴³ Margaret Corley, Moore Theatre and Hotel National Register Nomination Form, Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1973.

⁴⁴ Corley, Moore Theatre and Hotel National Register Nomination Form, 1973.

⁴⁵ Richard Emanuel, "Outfitting the Rush: 'Ho! For the Klondike!'" in *Alaska Geographic*, (24) 1997, p. 12.

⁴⁶ James R. Little, "Squaw Kate," *Alaska Life*, March 1943, vol. 3, p.18.

⁴⁷ Seattle City Directories, 1897-1922; "Klondike Discoverer Is Called by Death," *Seattle Times*, June 6, 1922, p.9

⁴⁸ Esther Hall Mumford, *Seattle's Black Victorians, 1852-1901*, Seattle: Ananse Press, 1980, p.14 and 93.

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⁵⁰ Seattle City Directories, 1892-1915; Folke Nyberg and Victor Steinbrueck, *Green Lake: An Inventory of Buildings and Urban Design Resources*, Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, 1975.

⁵¹ Pioneer Square Planning Committee, Draft 1998 Pioneer Square

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park**

CHAPTER ONE

"By-and-By": The Early History Of Seattle

Early Local Industries

The Donation Land Claim Act of 1850 encouraged settlement of the Pacific Northwest. This early homestead measure offered each white male adult 320 acres of land if single, and if he married by December 1, 1851, his wife was entitled to an additional 320 acres in her own right. To take advantage of this measure, settlers were required only to reside on the land and cultivate it for four years. [16]

Seattle further benefited from its proximity to farmlands in the Duwamish Valley. While the town's lumber industry developed during the 1850s, farmers staked claims along the river and prairies as far south as Auburn. Here they raised livestock and a variety of crops, including wheat, oats, peas, and potatoes, which they traded with Seattle settlers. [17]

Probably no development proved more influential to the early growth of Seattle than the arrival of the railroad. Arthur Denny realized the importance of connecting the town by rail line from the outset of his settlement on Puget Sound. His dream was delayed, however, by conflicts with Indians during the 1850s, and by the opening of Kansas and Nebraska for homesteading, which diverted potential settlers. During the 1860s, the Civil War further slowed railroad development in the West. Denny's hopes were rekindled in 1870, when the Northern Pacific Railroad began building a road west from Minnesota and a branch line from the Columbia River to Puget Sound. To help finance construction, the federal government gave the Northern Pacific the rights to millions of acres of land. [18]



The Columbia and Puget Sound Railway Terminals on King Street and Occidental Avenue about 1883.

[Source: Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*

(Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916)]

Seattle and Tacoma competed for the position as terminus for this transcontinental railroad. In 1873, Seattle residents urged the Northern Pacific to build its terminal in their town, extending offers of \$250,000 in cash and 3,000 acres of undeveloped land -- much of which was located along the waterfront. The railroad company, however, decided to make Tacoma its terminus, owing to the greater opportunities for land speculation that the "City of Destiny" to the south presented. As *The Oregonian*, a Portland newspaper, explained, Tacoma became a company town, "largely the creation of the Northern Pacific" for "the benefit of some of its managers who compose the Tacoma Land Company." [19] Disappointed Seattle residents, including Denny, formed the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad, resolving to build their own connection over Snoqualmie Pass. On May Day of 1874, they organized a picnic and started laying track. Historians came to view this "bold and amusing" incident as reflecting a distinctive "spirit" in Seattle, characterized by optimism and determination. [20]

The effort to build a rail line from Seattle across the Cascade Mountains soon languished, due to lack of funds. Similarly, the Northern Pacific had collapsed in 1873, when Jay Cooke, its financier, went bankrupt. [21] Meanwhile, the discovery of coal deposits south and east of Seattle further encouraged city residents to develop local rail lines. By the 1870s, Seattle had nearly exhausted its supply of timber -- and the coal located in Renton, on the southern shore of Lake Washington, presented the opportunity for an additional export. In 1876, James Colman purchased Yesler's wharf, taking over construction of the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad. He extended the rail line to Renton and Newcastle, and Seattle began sending coal to markets in Portland and San Francisco. Trains carried coal across the tideflats, to docks on Elliott Bay. The rail connections, along with deposits discovered in Issaquah and Black Diamond, helped make coal a significant export, second only to lumber. So significant was the development of coal that Seattle came to be called "the Liverpool of the North." [22]

During the 1880s, Seattle enjoyed its "first great spurt of growth.." [23] Residents established a chamber of commerce to promote business interests in 1882, and five years later the Northern Pacific Railroad completed its transcontinental line to Tacoma, thus linking Puget Sound to the markets of the eastern United States. The railroad also helped make Seattle accessible to migrants, who traveled north from Tacoma on a branch line. [24] As the mayor of Seattle, Henry Yesler viewed these railroad connections with considerable enthusiasm. He predicted in 1886 that "in the near future more than one transcontinental railroad will be humbly asking for our trade and support." So bright were Seattle's prospects that Yesler downplayed its competition with Tacoma. Once the transcontinental railroad reaches Seattle, he suggested, "it will be a matter of wonder that any other city upon Puget Sound ever dreamed of being our rival, far less our superior." [25] By 1888, a tunnel through Stampede Pass, which cut through the Cascade Mountains, had allowed for direct rail service from eastern points to Seattle.

During the 1880s, the city's population expanded from 3,500 to more than 43,000. [26] Rapid growth had its drawbacks, at least from an aesthetic perspective. Ernest Ingersoll, a writer who visited Seattle at this time, characterized it as "scattered" and disorganized. "The town has grown too fast to look well or healthy," he informed readers of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*. "Everybody has been in [such] great haste to get there and get a roof over his head that he has not minded much how it looked or pulled many stumps out of his door-yard." [27]



Yesler's Wharf about 1885.

[Source: Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1916)]

Seattle's commercial district remained centered around the waterfront, which, by the late 1880s, had featured a patchwork of piers and frame buildings extending over the bay. [28] While developing its rail connections, the city relied heavily on maritime traffic -- some of which focused on the Far North, due to an increasing commercial interest in the region's fur seals and fisheries. Although the Alaska Commercial Company was based in San Francisco, by the 1880s, Seattle also had become a center of water trade between Puget Sound and the Far North.

[29] The construction of "larger and better wharves" and improved shipping facilities hastened this transition. [30]

The Pacific Coast Steamship Company provided the first direct, regular service from Seattle to Alaska in 1886. During the mid-1890s, the Alaska Steamship Company formed in Seattle, and the Japan Steamship Company placed its western American terminus at the city, contracting with the railroad for exchange of freight and delivery. This development represented an "immense advance in the commerce of the city." [31] When the Japanese steamship *Miiki Maru* sailed into Elliott Bay with a cargo of silk and tea in 1896, the Seattle city council declared a holiday. [32] In the years before the Klondike Gold Rush, then, Seattle established a trade link with Alaska and the Far North as well as with the Far East.

A variety of shipping company offices were located along First Avenue South , which also supported such businesses as meat packing, food processing, furniture manufacturing, and breweries. These industries served Seattle residents as well as the outlying logging, farming, and mining communities. [33] City laborers found lodging in hotels, tenements, and boarding houses located off Main Street. [34]

During this era, Seattle included a Chinese community, located initially in the area around First Avenue South and Occidental Avenue. Chinese immigrants came to the Northwest in the 1870s, to work on the region's rail lines and in its mines. For the next two decades, they also labored on regrading projects and in laundries, canneries, and stores. By the 1880s, the Chinese community had moved to Washington Street, between Second and Third avenues, where residents often lived above stores and retail businesses. Anti-Chinese sentiment, encouraged by white laborers, erupted in riots during the mid-1880s, prompting declaration of martial law. Before troops arrived, many Chinese workers were evicted from the city. Those remaining in Seattle continued to live along Washington Street, where they were joined by an influx of Japanese workers. [35]

Most of the town's infrastructure -- including streets, wharves, businesses, and residences -- was made of wood. In 1889, however, Seattle had the opportunity to rebuild itself. On June 6 of that year, a devastating fire swept through downtown, beginning in a store on the corner of First Avenue and Madison Street eventually destroying more than 30 blocks. Although destructive, this blaze resulted in new development, as Seattle passed an ordinance requiring that buildings downtown be constructed of brick and stone. [36]

Early Population Growth in Seattle

1860	c. 150
1865	c. 350
1870	1,107
1875	1,512
1880	3,533
1895	9,786

Source: Clarence B. Bagley, *History of Seattle from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time*, Vol. 2 (Chicago: S.J. Publishing Co., 1916), p. 698.

Observers -- and investors -- noted that the fire sparked the "Seattle spirit" of optimism and determination. Seattle resident Judge Thomas Burke, for example, described the post-fire mood of the town as one of "vigor and energy." The flames "had scarcely been extinguished before the rebuilding of the City and the re-establishment of business in the various lines had been begun," he stated in July of 1889. "Banks have now on deposit more than they ever had before." [37] Early historians similarly praised the pluck and resolve of Seattle citizens for their swift response to the disaster. "Fate lit a torch," explained Welford Beaton in 1914, "which called to arms the enterprise and spirit of the people," who began the task of rebuilding "while the ashes were still warm." [38] Citizens in Seattle had further cause for optimism in July of 1889, when territorial delegates met in Olympia to draft a state constitution and by-laws. On November 11 of that year, Washington was admitted to the Union as the 42nd state. [39]

After the fire, the center of business activity in Seattle gradually expanded from Yesler's wharf to the north, east, and southeast. Neighborhoods emerged along the electric streetcar lines, established in 1884, that ran north and east from downtown. [40] Many residents lived in the core of the city, in the five blocks on either side of Yesler Way, between First and Third Avenues. According to Sale, downtown Seattle featured "furniture and cabinet makers, machine shops, groceries, laundries, dressmakers, meat and fish merchants, and in a great many instances the owners and employees of these businesses lived there or nearby." In short, "light industry and office work were next to each other, and both were next to all kinds of residences." [41] The presence of these various industries, along with the transportation infrastructure, helped business interests in Seattle take advantage of the opportunities presented at the onset of the Klondike Gold Rush.

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The 1890s

The rebuilding of Seattle and the continued expansion of the town's infrastructure encouraged some residents to meet the 1890s with high expectations -- and the decade began favorably in Seattle. In 1890, *The Overland Monthly*, a national publication, characterized the industrial growth in Puget Sound as "very remarkable." [42] By that year, the population of Seattle had reached 40,000. According to *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, newcomers were attracted to the town's "independent enterprise and go-aheadiveness." [43] The decade began in Seattle with a "building boom" prompted not only by the fire but also by the arrival of James J. Hill's Great Northern Railway. Judge Burke persuaded Hill to select the town as the terminus for his transcontinental line, which reached Puget Sound in 1893. Historians would later view this event as monumental in significance for its contribution to the growth of the city's economy and infrastructure.

The 1890s, however, proved to be anything but gay. In 1893, unchecked speculation on Wall Street and overexpansion of railroads created the worst economic downturn that the nation had yet experienced. Europe, South Africa, and South America also felt the effects of what came to be known as the Panic of 1893. Frightened foreign investors sold their American bonds, draining gold from the U.S. Treasury. The prosperity in Seattle stimulated by the Great Northern Railway "collapsed with an abruptness that ruined thousands." [44] Edith Feero Larson, who lived in Tacoma during the Panic of 1893, later recalled that "the Northwest should have boomed with the completion of the railroads.... It did for a few months, then money began to disappear and no one had any work. For a while our papa cut firewood for the railway for a dollar a day -- a fourteen-hour day. 'It keeps us eating,' he said." [45] So dismal was the economic depression during the 1890s that one local historian has portrayed it as "the decade of misery." [46]

Economic hard times strengthened interest in the People's or Populist party throughout the Pacific Northwest. Populism appealed to voters who regarded the "Gilded Age" of the late nineteenth century with disenchantment. While the industrialization of the country after the Civil War had brought vast fortunes to a few individuals, the gap between the

wealthy and the poor had widened considerably. The misery of the depression gave rise to unrest. In 1894 unemployed workers from the Pacific Northwest -- known as Coxey's Army -- marched east toward Capitol Hill, intending to demand jobs. The U.S. Army overtook these desperate men in Wyoming, after they had commandeered a train. That year, the Pullman strike also marked the first nationwide walkout by railroad workers. Corruption in government added to the dissatisfaction that fueled Populist sentiment -- and by the early 1890s unprecedented unemployment increased calls for reforms. These included government ownership of railroad, telegraph, and telephone lines as well as federal anti-trust legislation to curtail corporate power. [47]

One of the most prominent platforms of the Populist party became the free and unlimited coinage of silver by the federal treasury. The hope was that this inflationary measure would stimulate the national economy, while bolstering the flagging silver mining industry in the West. Opposition to the Free Silver Movement generally came from eastern-based bankers and financiers who favored the traditional hard money, or gold standard. Many voters in Washington state, however, embraced the Populist party -- especially after the Panic of 1893. [48] By 1896, *The Seattle Daily Times* had become a voice of the Populist party, advocating free coinage of silver. The newspaper's masthead supported laborers against "the silk-stockinged gentlemen" who favored the gold standard. [49]

In the presidential election of 1896, Washington and Idaho supported William Jennings Bryan, the Populist and Democratic candidate and an advocate of free silver. "You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns," he warned the opposition at the Democratic convention. "You shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold!" His words revealed that free silver had become "almost as much a religious as a financial issue." Even so, Republican "Gold Bugs" triumphed over what they regarded as the "silver lunacy," with their candidate, William McKinley, winning the presidency. [50] The advocacy of Free Silver as a means to alleviate the depression in the 1890s directed national attention to the discovery and mining of precious metals throughout the West and Far North, helping to set the stage for the Klondike Gold Rush. [51]

The anxious tone of the early 1890s was further reflected in Frederick Jackson Turner's Frontier Thesis. Delivered in 1893 before a Chicago meeting of the American Historical Association, this bold interpretation of American history suggested the national identity had been shaped by the so-called "frontier experience." As Turner explained, "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development." According to him, the expansion into western lands had transformed immigrants into self-reliant, independent, inventive Americans. The frontier, moreover, represented the opportunity for fresh starts. Turner's thesis touched a nerve in the 1890s, as the forces that he claimed had shaped the American character seemed to be fast disappearing. Three years earlier, the U.S. Census had declared the frontier to be "closed," ending an era in American history. As the Superintendent of the Census explained in 1890, "at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a

frontier line." [52]

Scholars have debated Turner's thesis since it appeared in the 1890s. The New Western Historians in the 1980s and 1990s, for example, criticized its ethnocentric assumptions, pointing out that the "free land" Turner described was hardly a "frontier" to the Indian and Latino peoples already living there. [53] Even so, during the 1890s, Turner's thesis signaled a concern that the West no longer represented a land of promise or a safety valve for the laborers of the East. Although the number of Americans aware of it would have been limited in 1893, Turner's thesis exemplified "a growing perception that the frontier era was over." [54]

This concern was not limited to the perceived availability of western lands. The dispirited tone of the 1890s appeared in a variety of forums, including popular journals, which summarized the "mood of the age" as one of "pessimism." [55] As *The Seattle Daily Times* explained in 1897, "the great majority of the American people ... have suffered so much loss of property and the ordinary comforts of life, during the last four years." So "burdensome" had the economic hard times become "that endurance for another year seemed almost impossible." [56] For many Americans, the Klondike Gold Rush provided a welcome distraction. Although its precise impact on the depression is difficult to determine, the stampede became a focus for hope and expectation during the late 1890s -- even for those who did not leave for the Far North.

As the historian Roderick Nash pointed out, for many Americans the Yukon promised more than economic gain. The timing of the Klondike stampede, he explained in *Wilderness and the American Mind*, was particularly significant:

When the forty-niners rushed to California's gold fields in the mid-nineteenth century, the United States was still a developing nation with a wild West. The miners did not seem picturesque and romantic so much as uncouth and a bit embarrassing to a society trying to mature. But with the frontier officially dead (according to the 1890 census), the time was ripe for a myth that accorded cowboys and hunters and miners legendary proportions. Americans of the early twentieth century were prepared to romanticize the "ninety-eighters" and paint their rush to the gold of the north in glowing colors.

The image of the Far North as a wild, savage place proved appealing. The wide circulation of Jack London's novel, *The Call of the Wild* (1903), exemplified the popularity of this romanticized view of the gold rush. [57]

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Gold Fever Strikes

Few events in the history of Seattle have produced more excitement than the stampede to the Yukon. Gold discoveries at Circle City and Cook Inlet in Alaska sparked a small rush in Seattle in 1896, but the fervor did not equal that generated by the Klondike strike. The discovery of gold in 1896 on Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike River, heralded a momentous era for the city. In July of 1897, the ships *Excelsior* and *Portland* docked in San Francisco and Seattle respectively, carrying three tons of gold between them from the Far North. The media lost no time in spreading the news, sparking the "Klondike Fever" that gripped much of the nation and Seattle for the next two years. *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* produced one of the most memorable accounts of the *Portland's* arrival. The paper chartered a tug so that one of its correspondents could meet this vessel as it sailed, laden with gold nuggets, into Puget Sound. "GOLD! GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!," the headline of July 17, 1897 read. "Sixty-Eight Rich Men on the Steamer Portland. STACKS OF YELLOW METAL!" [58] This would prove to be one of the most enduring images in Seattle's history, contributing to the city's identity. As one reporter observed 100 years later, "in a sense, Seattle itself arrived on the steamer *Portland*." [59]

**Miners on board the *Portland*, along with
fortunes from the Klondike gold fields,
including the following:**

Clarence	
Barry	
James	
Clemons	
Frank	
Keller	
James	\$45,000
Pickett	50,000
William	10,000

Stanley	20,000
G.W.	10,000
Anderson	25,000
William	10,000
Sloan	10,000
Wilkerson	70,000
Frank	10,000
Phiscator	10,000
Anderson	10,000
Simms	10,000
George	12,000
Gray	15,000
Charles	
Warden	
Jack	
Moffit	
James	
Coslow	

Source: *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 17, 1897

The Seattle Daily Times conveyed the sense of excitement and exhilaration that swept the town. "All that anyone hears at present is 'Klondyke,'" it reported on July 23, 1897. "It is impossible to escape it. It is talked in the morning; it is discussed at lunch; it demands attention at the dinner table; it is all one hears during the interval of his after-dinner smoke; and at night one dreams about mountains of yellow metal with nuggets as big as fire plugs." [60] Similarly, the celebrated nature writer John Muir, hired by the *San Francisco Examiner* to describe the Far North, observed, "The Klondyke! The Klondyke! Which is the best way into the yellow Klondyke? Is all the cry nowadays." [61]

Confusion about the term "Klondike" added to the mystery of the gold fields. The press typeset the words "Klondike," "Klondyke," and "Clondyke," sometimes seemingly at random, although the *Post-Intelligencer* favored "Clondyke," while the *Times* preferred using a "K." In August of 1897, the U.S. government and the Associated Press chose "Klondike" as the official spelling. [62]

Whatever the spelling, it soon became clear what the word conveyed to readers. The national journal *Leslie's Weekly*, for example, reported that it "stands for millions of gold, and is a synonym for the advancement, after unspeakable suffering, of hundreds of miners from poverty to affluence in a brief period of a few months." [63] Four years of depression had increased the appeal of the gold fields. One ounce of gold was worth \$16 in 1897 -- a year when typical wages totaled approximately \$14 for 78 hours of work. Moreover, the Far North offered opportunity for adventure and exploration during an era that had witnessed the close of the "frontier." [64]

News of the Klondike strike quickly spread to the Midwest and East

Coast, where stories of instant wealth were circulated with a vigor that matched the media coverage in the West -- at least initially. Two days after the *Portland* docked in Seattle, New York City was "touched" with gold fever. "Klondyke Arouses the East," announced *The Seattle Daily Times* on July 20, 1897. "Effete Civilization ... Affected by the Reports." New York City had contributed a large number of Forty-niners to the California Gold Rush, and observers expected it would again be well represented among the eastern argonauts headed for the Far North. [65] *The New York Times* reported the Klondike strike as monumentally significant. This publication quoted Clarence King, a celebrated geologist, as asserting, "The rush to the Klondike is one of the greatest in the history of the country." [66]

The *Post-Intelligencer* proved even more enthusiastic, describing the Klondike stampede as "one of the greatest migrations in the history of the world." [67] Both the *Times* and the *Post-Intelligencer* sent correspondents to the gold fields. Reporter S.P. Weston took a dozen carrier pigeons to send messages to the Associated Press and the *Post-Intelligencer*. [68] These Seattle papers also produced special Klondike editions, providing information on outfitting and prospecting. [69] *Harper's Weekly*, a national publication, sent special correspondent Tappan Adney to the Yukon to keep its readership informed, while *The Illustrated London News* sent Julius Price. [70]

The impact of this kind of media attention was immediate. Hundreds of spectators had crowded the waterfront in Seattle to greet the *Portland*. On July 18, 1897 -- just one day after that vessel arrived, the steamer *Al-Ki* departed for the Yukon, filled to capacity with miners and 350 tons of supplies. [71] As a *Times* headline explained on July 19, "Men With the Gold Fever" were "Hustling to Go." [72]

So strong was the lure of the Klondike that cities along Puget Sound had difficulty retaining employees. Much of Tacoma's fire department resigned to leave for the Yukon, while several Seattle policemen also quit. Some stores had to close because their clerks left abruptly for the Far North. The Rainier Produce Company lost its manager when news of the gold strike hit Seattle. [73] The labor shortage similarly affected the Seattle District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which had difficulty retaining workers to complete its fortification projects in the Puget Sound region. "Due to the Klondike excitement," explained one contractor, it is "impossible to secure steady and reliable men in anything like adequate numbers." [74] Even Seattle's mayor, W.D. Wood, succumbed to gold fever, as did Col. K.C. Washburn, a King County and state legislator. "Seattle is Klondike Crazy," one *San Francisco Chronicle* headline explained on July 17, 1897. "Men of All Professions [Are] Preparing for the Gold Fields." [75]

Within a week, the Seattle city council raised the salaries of police officers, and the *Post-Intelligencer* issued a warning to job hunters that there was no labor shortage in the city, to prevent a rush for the abandoned positions. [76] The discovery of gold in the Yukon was even credited with lowering the crime rate in the Puget Sound area, "since the men who would ordinarily commit offenses against the laws of the city or state now have something else to think about." [77] These were crimes

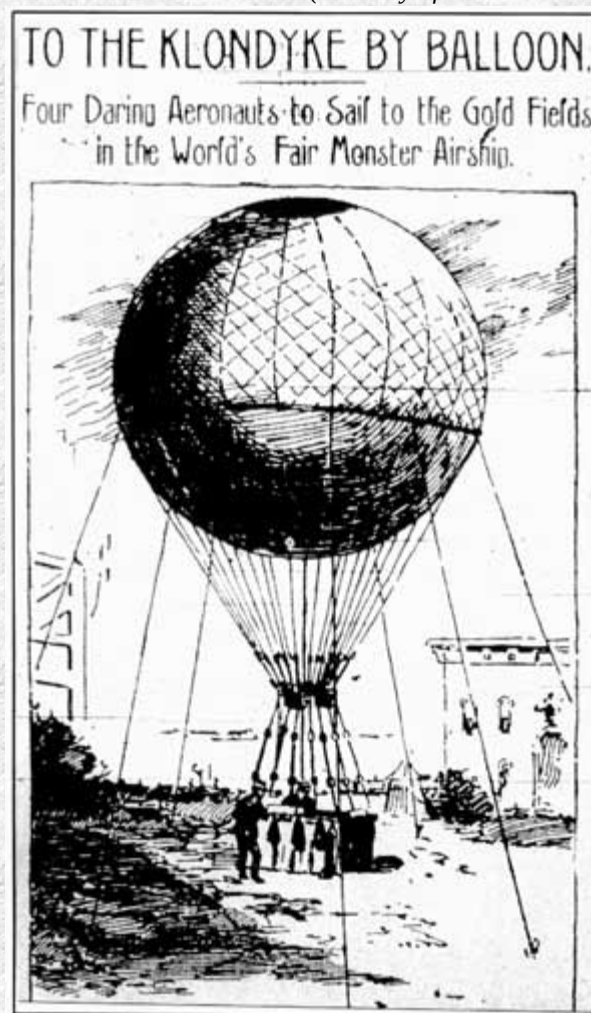
such as burglary, for the gold rush encouraged the development of vice-related offenses.

When the gold craze hit the nation, few Americans were familiar with the geography of the Far North. Many assumed that the Klondike was located in Alaska, instead of in the Yukon, in Canadian territory. [Klondike guidebooks](#) -- some of which were hastily produced in a matter of days -- further obscured the issue. *The Chicago Record's Book for Gold Seekers*, for example, used the terms "Klondike" and "Alaska Gold Fields" interchangeably. Blinded by visions of treasure, many prospective miners were ignorant of what a trip to the Far North would entail. [78] Upon hearing the news of the Klondike strike, a group of enterprising New Yorkers made plans to walk to the gold fields from the East Coast. [79] Similarly, one New York woman inquired upon arriving in Seattle, "Can I walk to the Klondike or is it too far?" [80]

(Courtesy of Terrence Cole)

Others planned to reach the Yukon by balloon. Charles Kuenzel, a resident of Hoboken, New Jersey, organized an airship expedition. "We may get lost away up in the air somewhere," he conceded. "The Western and Klondike country is strange to me, and I may make some mistakes in steering. There are no charts for the air. But I'll land all right." [81] Similarly, a group of enthusiastic Canadians planned to launch a "line of airships" to the Klondike. [82]

Although these whimsical, optimistic schemes can appear charming today, the stampede to the Klondike brought tragedy to many -- even to those who remained home. By 1898, the Seattle police had received hundreds of inquiries about missing persons. One distraught woman from Olympia reported that her husband had left for Seattle and was not heard from again. She feared he had fallen ill, or had become a victim of "the wicked part of the city." As *The Times* described the situation, "Children left behind and forgotten want to come to their fathers and mothers; old fathers in the East inquire for sons; wives in destitute circumstances for husbands; old, gray haired mothers write tear stained letters pitifully begging the Chief of Police to hunt up



their wayward boys." [83]

The gold rush, according to the *Post-Intelligencer*, had resulted in a "Nest of Missing People." Clearly some gold seekers did [84] not want to be found. Even so, many died attempting to reach the Klondike -- and their identities were not always known. On a February evening in 1898, for example, the steamer *Clara Nevada* exploded and burned while en route between Skagway and Seattle. More than 70 of its passengers were lost, and aside from the crew it was not clear who was on board. [85] A month after the disaster, the ship's carpenter notified *The Seattle Daily Times* that although the newspaper reported his death, he remained "alive and hardy and well." [86]

The Klondike Gold Rush attracted approximately 100,000 miners, 70,000 of whom passed through Seattle, nearly doubling the population of the city. So extensive was this migration that the *Post-Intelligencer* ran a regular column titled "The Passing Throng." [87] Although the majority were white men, African-Americans traveled to the gold fields as well. Many women went, too, sometimes bringing their families. The Klondike Gold Rush was a multi-national event, attracting argonauts of various ages and ethnicity. [88]

For the most part, however, it was not the prospectors who profited from the stampede to the Klondike. Instead, it was the merchants who struck pay dirt, as the gold rush encouraged the development of businesses that outfitted and transported the miners. As noted, Seattle already had the transportation network, infrastructure, and local industries needed to benefit from the migration to the Far North. Seattle also benefitted from the farmlands, coal deposits, and forests in the surrounding area. All that was need was publicity promoting the city -- a theme that is analyzed throughout the following chapter.

End of Chapter One

CHAPTER ONE

[Founding the City](#) | [Early Local Industries](#)
[The 1890s](#) | [Gold Fever Strikes](#)

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



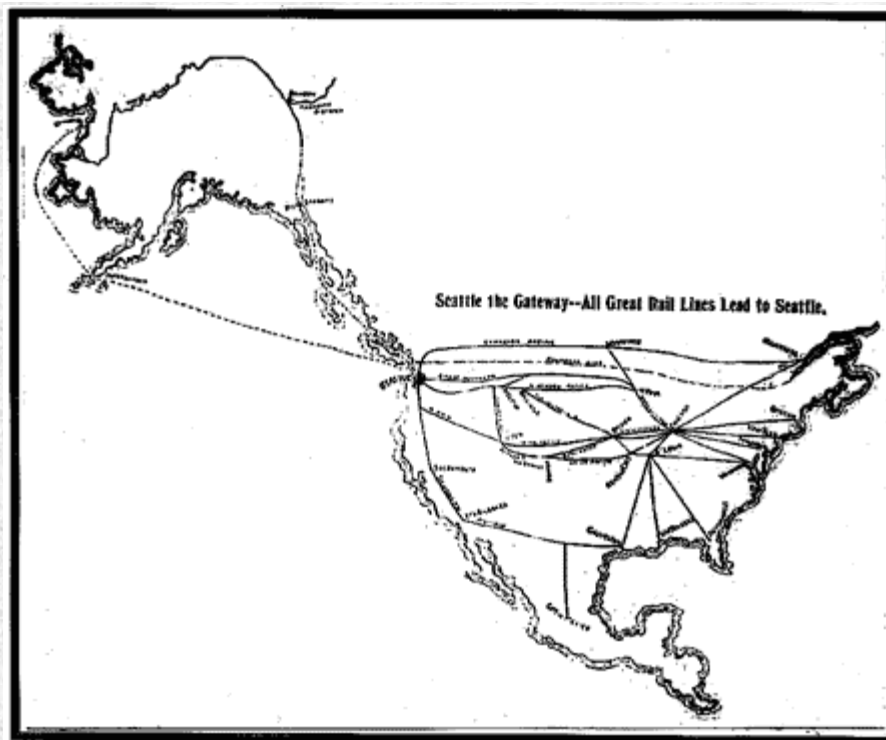
A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

CHAPTER TWO Selling Seattle

The Advertising Campaign

Brainerd's strategy was to promote the city as the *only* place to outfit for the Klondike. He devised a plan to finance the Bureau of Information by taxing Seattle merchants who stood to profit from the expected influx of population and increased trade. [7] Businesses that paid dues received lists of prospective customers. Brainerd devoted some of this money to advertising in newspapers and popular journals. He purchased a three-quarter-page ad in William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* for \$800, along with quarter-page advertisements in *Munsey*, *McClure's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Harper's Weekly*, *Scribner's*, and *Review of Reviews*. [8] One of these advertisements pointed out that as the "Queen City of the Northwest," Seattle served as the manufacturing, railroad, mining, and agricultural center of Washington state. "Look at your map!" the ad urged readers. "Seattle is a commercial city, and is to the Pacific Northwest as New York is to the Atlantic coast." [9]

Brainerd also encouraged the *Post-Intelligencer* to issue a special Klondike edition on October 13, 1897, which began with the headline, "Seattle Opens the Gate to the Klondike Gold Fields." Seattle, the lead article assured readers, "is not a mushroom, milk-and-water town with only crude frontier ways." Instead, "it is a city of from 65,000 to 70,000 population, with big brick and stone business blocks and mercantile establishments that would be a credit to Chicago, New York, or Boston." The issue featured a map of transcontinental railroad lines leading to Seattle, "the Gateway." [10]



This map, which appeared in *The Seattle Post Intelligencer* in October 1897, depicted "all the great rail lines" leading to Seattle. San Francisco, Vancouver, and other rival cities -- which also offered rail connections -- did not appear.

Routes to the Klondike

Seattle or Vancouver to Skagway

Steamships sailed 800 miles through the Inside Passage to Skagway. This trip took approximately three days. From Skagway, gold seekers crossed the White Pass or Chilkoot Trails, to reach the headwaters of the Yukon River, and from there they continued to Dawson City -- a distance of 500 miles. Most prospectors took this route.

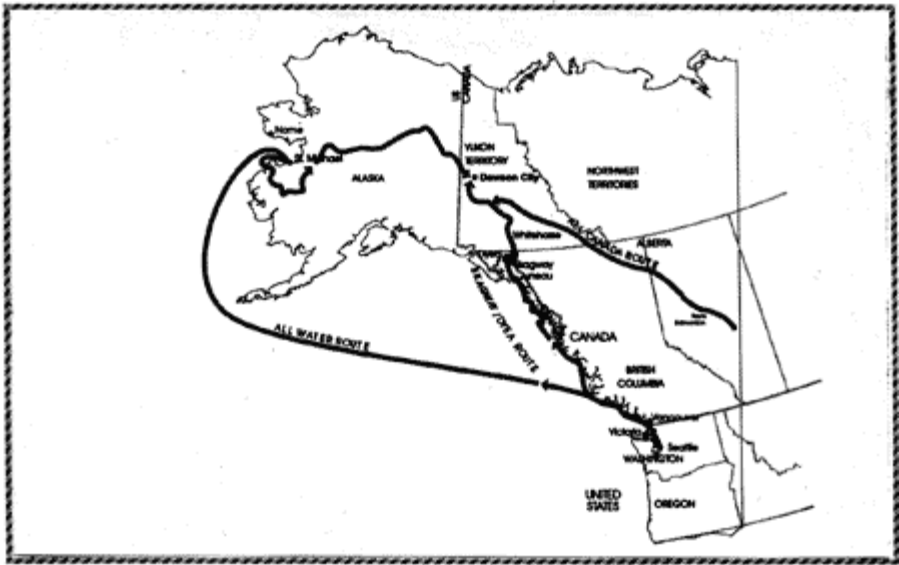
All-Water Route

Steamships sailed to the Bering Sea and the delta of the Yukon River. From St. Michael, gold seekers took a riverboat upstream to Dawson City -- a distance of 1,700 miles. This was the longest and most expensive route to the gold fields.

All-Canada Route

Gold seekers reached Edmonton on

the Canadian Pacific Railroad. From there, they traveled overland to the Athabasca River, where they caught a steamboat to the Mackenzie River. After traveling on the river, stampedeers still needed to surmount a mountain range to the west before reaching Dawson City. This was an extremely difficult route, due to the muskeg and willow thickets that covered the trail.

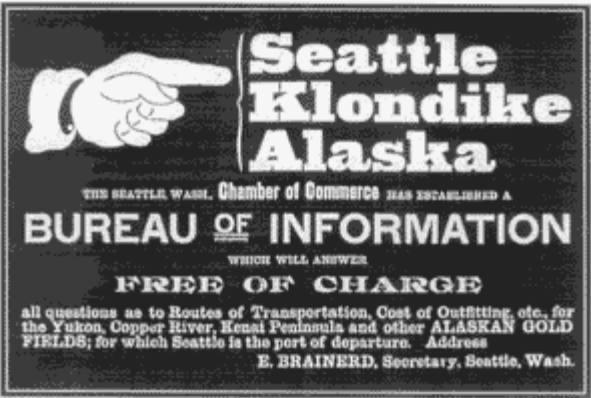


Routes to the Klondike
(Courtesy National Park Service)

The special Klondike edition offered advice to prospectors on what to bring to the gold fields, how to obtain an outfit, and which route to select. It provided much of the same information as the guidebooks produced throughout the nation during the late nineteenth century, while promoting Seattle.

[Source: Erastus Brainerd Scrapbook, University of Washington]

For a week preceding the publication of the special Klondike edition, Brainerd placed advertisements announcing the upcoming issue and urging readers to send copies to friends and relatives in the East. The *Post-Intelligencer* printed 212,000 copies, making it the largest newspaper run that had been produced west of Chicago. Brainerd sent more than 70,000 to postmasters across the nation, requesting that they distribute them.



Various newspaper editors received 20,000 copies, while 10,000 copies went to librarians, mayors, and members of town councils. The Great Northern Railway and Northern Pacific received 10,000 and 5,000 copies respectively. [11]

In addition, Brainerd wrote feature stories on Seattle's virtues, which he distributed to publications throughout the nation. "The 'Seattle Spirit' has accomplished wonders," he assured readers of *The Argus* in 1897. "My impression is that wonders are yet to come." He claimed that observers in the East were convinced "Seattle is a remarkable place" and "something remarkable is sure to occur here." Relentlessly upbeat in tone, Brainerd's writing, like most booster literature, was given to hyperbole: "everybody in the East says Seattle is an extraordinary place." [12]

A subscription to a clippings service helped Brainerd keep track of his efforts as well as those of competing cities. Always vigilant, when he encountered a negative or misinformed article, he wrote to the editors, demanding a retraction. [13] Often Brainerd's letters employed a deceptively innocent tone, as though the publicity for his city had erupted spontaneously, and was not the result of his calculated efforts. "Seattle is not advertising the Klondike," he argued in one letter-to-the-editor. "The Klondike is advertising Seattle, and we are taking advantage of the Klondike excitement to let the world know about Seattle." [14]

Also effective was Brainerd's correspondence campaign, which employed tactics similar to those of modern political lobbyists. He sent a confidential letter to employers, organizational leaders, ministers, and teachers, encouraging them to ask the large numbers of people with whom they came in contact to write letters about Seattle to out-of-town friends and newspapers. The more spontaneous these letters could appear, the greater their impact. Brainerd thus generated what looked like a groundswell of unsolicited support. The Bureau of Information offered to furnish the details about Seattle as well as the postage to those who agreed to write letters. [15] "It is very important," Brainerd explained, "that Seattle should be first to catch the eye of the reading public and of the intending Klondiker." [16]

Another masterful public relations effort was the production of circulars that promoted Seattle as the gateway to the Klondike. Brainerd designed and wrote one of these to look like an official government publication -- and he convinced Will D. Jenkins, Washington's Secretary of State, to sign it. The circular reassured gold seekers of the safety of the trip to the Yukon, "making it sound like no more than an invigorating outing." The publication also cautioned that no person should embark on the journey with less than \$500. [17] A number of European countries -- including France, Belgium, Italy, and Switzerland -- found the circular so appealing that they reprinted it and had it distributed. Encouraged by this success, Brainerd sent pictures and information about Seattle and the Klondike as Christmas presents to the heads of European nations. When Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany refused the gift, fearing it was a bomb, Brainerd used his distrust to gain further publicity. [18]

The Bureau of Information sent additional circulars to every governor and mayor in the United States. These included a series of questions about

prospective gold seekers and where they planned to be outfitted. Ostensibly, the purpose of the information acquired was to help Seattle businesses prepare for the stampede of prospectors. The circulars served to advertise Seattle, however, and most recipients turned them over to local newspapers, which printed them. Also, Brainerd provided the information he received from the circulars to Seattle's merchants. [19]

Brainerd's questions elicited some humorous responses. An official of the city of Plymouth, Connecticut, for instance, informed the Bureau of Information that "the 'fever' has had but one victim here as far as we can learn. The young man having married since....has recovered. Think there is no danger from this point." [20] Similarly, a Detroit official indicated that he could not answer Brainerd's questions, reporting as follows: "How many women there are who intend to go; where people would secure their outfits if they did go; when they expect to go, I respectfully submit is a matter probably known only to Providence himself, and I doubt that if you could communicate with Providence that he would give you reliable data." [21] Omaha responded with some boosterism of its own: "'Klondike fever' has not reached us nor is it likely to do so. This species of disease is apt to strike Cities where business is stagnated and people have lost their faith in the return of prosperity. In Omaha however prosperity is no longer a prophecy but a grand reality." [22]

One of the most celebrated of Brainerd's publicity schemes was a traveling exhibit of \$6,000 of Klondike gold. Although it cost the Bureau of Information only \$275, the Great Northern Express Company carried this display all over the nation, providing exposure to thousands of spectators and prospective stampeders. [23]

In March of 1898, the Bureau of Information's charter expired. At that time, the Chamber of Commerce's finance committee reported that \$9,546.50 had been collected for the advertising campaign -- and Brainerd had "made the most of every penny." [24] As a result of his efforts, Seattle received five times the advertising exposure as other cities on the West Coast. [25] In early 1898, *The Seattle Daily Times* reported that Seattle had become the recognized center of Klondike trade. "There is probably no city in the Union today so much talked about as Seattle," the article informed readers, "and there is certainly none toward which more faces are at present turned. From every nook and corner of America and from even the uttermost parts of the earth, a ceaseless, restless throng is moving -- moving toward the land of the midnight sun and precious gold, and moving through its natural gateway -- the far-famed City of Seattle." [26]

For six months, Brainerd had promoted Seattle at a furious pace. By March of 1898, the work had become "wearing." [27] The next month, he took a new job for the Chamber of Commerce: lobbying in Washington, D.C. for an assay office in Seattle, which would convert the prospectors' gold into cash. An assay office in Seattle would provide returning miners with money that they could spend in the city, allowing merchants to prosper from their business not only on their way to the Klondike but also on their return. While Seattle boosters had advocated this measure from the outset of the gold rush, delegations from San Francisco to Philadelphia opposed the idea, fearing a loss of business in their assay

offices. Even so, Brainerd's efforts were successful -- and in June of 1898 Congress passed a bill establishing an assay office in Seattle. [28] The government selected a building owned by Thomas Prosch, a prominent city resident. Located at 613 Ninth Avenue, it was a two-story concrete structure featuring a spectacular view of Puget Sound and the busy harbor. [29]



Erastus Brainerd in the Yukon, 1898
(Courtesy Special Collection Division, University of Washington)

The assay office opened in mid-July of 1898 to a long line of miners recently returned from the Klondike. They received money for their "glittering piles," which employees melted into bars and shipped to Philadelphia to be coined. [30] "It was a sight not quickly to be forgotten," noted one observer. "The looks of anxiety depicted upon the faces of those in waiting, the furrows caused by the rough touch of the north wind, and the general unkempt appearance of the miners, told the bystander that these were men who had escaped none of the hardships incident to life in the wilds of the [Far North]." [31] The first day it opened, the assay office took in \$1 million in gold, and for the next six months the average receipts totaled one million dollars per month -- far exceeding expectations. [32] By 1902, the assay office had cleared \$174 million in gold. [33]

After helping Seattle obtain the assay office in 1898, Brainerd himself headed for the Klondike, perhaps succumbing to his own "gold-rush propaganda." Like many prospectors, Brainerd did not strike it rich in the Far North. He returned to Seattle the following year, becoming involved in numerous professional ventures. He served as "an irrepressible editor" of *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, for instance, from 1904 to 1911. During the early twentieth century, he argued for harbor improvements, public health measures, and civic beautification. He also became vice chairman of the Republican City Committee of Seattle. Given the extent of

Brainerd's contributions, his final years seem especially tragic. By 1920, he had become mentally ill -- and the next year he entered Western State Hospital at Steilacoom. He died there on Christmas Day of 1922. [34]

Strangely, Brainerd's obituary in *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer* mentions very little about the Klondike -- and nothing about his role in promoting Seattle. [35] This omission could suggest that the gold rush represented a minor event in Brainerd's expansive career -- yet later biographers would note that if Brainerd is remembered at all it is for publicizing the link between Seattle and the Far North. [36] It would be difficult to credit Brainerd with single-handedly securing Seattle's place as the outfitting center, since the city's press and business leaders seized the opportunity to advertise weeks before he assumed responsibility for the publicity campaign. Still, Brainerd's efforts to promote the city proved to be enthusiastic and inventive -- even for a booster.

CHAPTER TWO

[Erastus Brainerd and the Seattle Chamber of Commerce](#)
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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
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CHAPTER TWO Selling Seattle

Competition Among Cities

Although it is difficult to evaluate Brainerd's precise impact on the Klondike Gold Rush or on the growth of Seattle, it is certain that the objective of his advertising campaign was reached: Seattle indeed became the gateway to the Klondike. As noted, of the approximately 100,000 prospectors who set out for the Far North, 70,000 selected this city as the place for outfitting and transportation. To some extent, this development was dictated by location. San Francisco and Portland did not enjoy the relative proximity to the gold fields that cities on Puget Sound offered. Meanwhile, smaller cities such as Everett, Bellingham, and Port Townsend did not sustain a population base sufficient to support large-scale businesses that could easily outfit tens of thousands of miners.

Still, the question of why Tacoma did not benefit more from the Klondike trade remains an interesting one, as does the question of why an American city should profit more than Victoria and Vancouver from a gold strike located on Canadian soil. The efforts of Erastus Brainerd help explain how Seattle emerged the victor in the battle for gold-rush business. No other city mounted an advertising campaign that could rival his. Part booster and part huckster, Brainerd was "an optimist and an enthusiast" who had the vision necessary to sell Seattle to the public. [37]

At the outset of the Klondike Gold Rush, it was not clear that Seattle would emerge as the point of departure. Like Seattle, other cities also advertised their merits. It was a measure of Brainerd's success that as the competition for the Yukon trade progressed, other towns agreed on only one thing -- that Seattle was not the place for outfitting and transportation. [38]

Next> [San Francisco](#)

CHAPTER TWO

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**HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE:
PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD
RUSH**



**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park**

CHAPTER THREE
Reaping the Profits of the Klondike Trade

Advertising

During the gold rush businesses on the West Coast used the word "Klondike" to sell everything from opera glasses to evaporated food. The following Web pages include examples of advertising that appeared in newspapers and city directories from San Francisco to Vancouver, British Columbia, during the years 1897-1898.

Sources for these advertisements include the following: *The Seattle Daily Times*, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, *The Tacoma Daily News*, *The Morning Leader* (Port Townsend), and *Vancouver News-Advertiser*, 1897-1898.

**How to Get a
Good Outfit Cheap**

It's what puzzles most everybody.
We can furnish you with the
best outfit at less cost than you
could obtain it elsewhere.

Winship Bros. Co., Inc.
Men's Outfitters.
222-22 Western Ave., cor. Madison St.
Phone 2444

**Yukon
Gold Fields,
Alaska.**

Clondyke!

THE NORTH AMERICAN TRANS-
PORTATION & TRADING
COMPANY'S

Steamer Cleveland

Leaves Seattle Aug. 5,

connecting at St. Michael's with elegant
over steamers direct for the mines. For
rates and further information apply at
the company's office, 418 First Avenue,
Seattle.

**Alaska
Supplies.**

The Best for the Least.

Winship Bros. Co. Inc.,

Cor. Western Ave. and
Madison St.
Two Blocks North of Depot.



**If You
Are Going
To Get
An Outfit**

What's the use of putting it off till
the last minute and then rush
around excited and forget a great
many important things.

Although we are busy day and
night, and selling more ALASKA
OUTFITS than any firm in this city,
we are prepared to put up the large-
est orders on a few minutes' notice.

However, we advise everybody in-
tending to favor us with their or-
ders to leave them with us as early
as possible.

**COOPER
& LEVY,**

ALASKA OUTFITTERS,
104 and 104 1/2 First Avenue South,
Seattle, Wash.

Next> [Equipment and Services](#)

HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



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CHAPTER THREE

Reaping the Profits of the Klondike Trade

Outfitters

Seattle offered numerous companies that could outfit miners -- sometimes in a single stop. Some of the city's retailers captured Klondike trade by marketing complete outfits that included food, equipment, and clothing. The Columbia Grocery Company, Seattle Trading Company, and Fischer Brothers, for example, offered this service. While gold seekers in other cities had to locate and visit a variety of stores, Seattle businesses developed a reputation for providing outfits quickly and efficiently. The Seattle Trading Company, established in 1893, printed special forms listing supplies, and miners could check the items they wished to purchase. [22]

(Courtesy National Park Service)

Cooper and Levy was among the largest and most heavily advertised of the city's outfitters. Isaac Cooper and his wife's brother, Louis Levy, formed a partnership in 1892, providing retail and mail-order groceries, hardware, and woodenware. Their business was located in Seattle's commercial center, at the southeast corner of First Avenue and Yesler (photo, above). During the gold rush, large stacks of goods outside this store became a common sight -- and it remains an enduring image of Seattle street scenes from the period. In 1903, Cooper and Levy sold their business to the Bon Marche. [23]



Schwabacher Brothers and Company was another prominent

merchandising business. Established in Seattle in 1869, it was also one of the city's oldest. In 1888, Schwabacher Hardware Company incorporated as a separate business. Schwabacher Brothers and Company sold groceries, clothing, and building materials. The store was located in Seattle's commercial district, and the company also maintained a wharf. These facilities, along with the Schwabachers' longstanding presence in Seattle, placed the company in an advantageous position when the gold rush began. Schwabacher's wharf received considerable publicity in July of 1897, when the *Portland*, laden with Klondike gold, docked there and set off the rush to the Yukon. [24]

Some Seattle companies that prospered during the stampede continue to serve customers today. These include the Bon Marche, which frequently advertised arctic clothing as well as a mail order business, in Seattle newspapers in 1897 and 1898. Its wares included blankets, shoes, bedding, and general furnishings. Edward Nordhoff, a German immigrant, founded this company, naming it after the famous store in Paris. "*Le Bon Marche*" translates into "The Good Bargain." During the gold rush, the Bon Marche operated at Second Avenue and Pike Street. [25]

Additional outfitting stores that remained in business a century after the gold rush era included the Clinton C. Filson Company, which operated the Pioneer Alaska Clothing and Blanket Manufacturer, and continues to provide outdoor wear. [26] Similarly, the Bartell Drug Company continues to maintain a chain of stores throughout Puget Sound.

Nordstrom Department Store remains one of the best-known businesses still in operation. John W. Nordstrom, a Swedish immigrant, arrived in the Klondike gold fields in 1897. He struggled there for two years, supporting himself by taking odd jobs. When Nordstrom finally hit pay dirt, another miner challenged his claim, and he sold it. In 1899, he arrived in Seattle with \$13,000, which "looked like a lot of money" to him. Two years later Nordstrom invested \$4,000 of his newfound wealth in a shoe store, which he opened with his partner, Carl F. Wallin. Located at Fourth Avenue and Pike Street, the business prospered for nearly 30 years -- and Nordstrom and Wallin bought another store on Second Avenue. By the late 1920s, the partnership had soured, and Nordstrom bought Wallin's shares. Nordstrom's sons bought the shoe store during the 1930s, expanding it into a retail business with multiple locations. [27]

Although Nordstrom's was not founded during the stampede of 1897-1898, it benefited from the vigorous economy that the Klondike Gold Rush encouraged in Seattle. Subsequent gold strikes in Alaska at the turn of the century continued the momentum, bringing additional customers to Seattle outfitters as well as other businesses, described below.

**William B. Haskell listed the items in his outfit
as follows:**

Equipment

1 Handsaw	2 Hatchets	2 Shovels	1 Whip Saw
2 Handled	2 Draw	1 Jack	30 lbs. Nails
1 Axes	2 Knives	1 Plane	(assorted
2 Gold Scale	2 Compasses	2 Chalk	1 sizes)
1 Butcher	1 Hunting	2 Line	3 Set Awls &
2 Knives	1 Knives	2 Pocket	2 Tools
1 Measuring	2 Brace and 4	2 Knives	1 Gold Dust
6 Tape	2 Bits	Money	150 Bags
2 Cartridge	Caulking	2 Belts	1 (buckskin)
15 Belts	1 Iron	2 Gold	4 Medicine
2 Whetsone	4 Prospector's	2 Pans	Case
2 Towels	20 Picks	Picks &	ft. of 5/8-
Grub Bags	Pairs Snow	Handles	inch Rope
lbs. Pitch	Glasses	Coffee	Stove
Bread Pans	Camp	pots	(Yukon)
Scissors	Kettle	Frying	Granite
Fish Lines	Galvanized	Pans	Buckets
& Hooks	Pails	Large	Granite
	lbs. Oakum	Spoons	Plates
	Pack Straps	Knives &	Granite
		Forks	Cups
		Table &	
		Teaspoons	

Clothing

3 Suits, Underwear, extra heavy	2 Pairs Leopard Seal Waterproof Mittens	1 Pair Hip Boots
2 Extra heavy double-breasted Flannel Overshirts	2 Pair Overalls	2 Pair Rubber Shoes
1 Extra heavy Mackinaw Overshirt	1 Fur Cap	2 Pairs Blankets
4 Pairs All-Wool Mittens	1 Pair Mackinaw Pants	1 Wool Scarf
1 Pair Leather Suspenders	1 Extra heavy all-wool double Sweater	1 Mackinaw Coat, extra heavy
6 Pairs long German knit Socks	1 Suit Oil Clothing and Hat	1 Waterproof, Blanket-Lined Coat
1 Extra Heavy Packing Bag	1 Canvas Sleeping Bag	
2 Pairs German knit and shrunk Stockings, leather heels	1 Doz., Bandana Handkerchiefs	

Provisions

Flour	800 lbs.	Bacon	300 lbs.	Evarporated	20
Corn Meal	50 lbs.	Dried Beef	60 lbs.	Onions	lbs.
Rolled	80 lbs.	Dried Salt	50 lbs.	Beef Extract	3
Oats	50 lbs.	Pork	50 lbs.	Evaporated	lbs.
Pilot Bread	20 lbs.	Roast	25 lbs.	Apples	50
Baking	6 lbs.	Coffee	50 lbs.	Evaporated	lbs.
Powder	6 lbs.	Tea	40 lbs.	Peaches	50
Yeast	100 lbs.	Condensed		Evaporated	lbs.

Cakes	200 lbs.	Milk	40 lbs.	Apricots	50
Baking	50 lbs.	Butter,	3 lbs.	Ginger	lbs.
Soda	50 lbs.	hermetically	3 lbs.	Jamaica	2
Rice		sealed		Ginger	lbs.
Beans		Salt		Evaporated	3
Split Peas		Ground		Vinegar	lbs.
Evaporated		Pepper		Matches	12
Potatoes		Ground		Candles, 2	lbs.
		Mustard		boxes	25
				containing 240 lbs.	
				candles	80
				lbs.	
Total Weight				2,327 lbs.	

Source: William B. Haskell, *Two Years in the Klondike Gold-Fields, 1896-1898* (Fairbanks, University of Alaska Press, 1998).



Miners and their supplies enroute to the Klondike gold fields.
(Courtesy Selid-Bassoc Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Archives,
Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks)

CHAPTER THREE

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["A Hot Town" and "A Very Wicked City"](#) | [Population and Economic Growth](#)
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CHAPTER THREE Reaping the Profits of the Klondike Trade

Transportation

Seattle's transportation facilities proved crucial to its success in securing Klondike trade. As noted, at the outset of the gold rush the city already had rail and marine connections in place. Miners could take a train to the city, where they could then obtain passage on a steamship to the Far North.



Stampeder of '98.
(Courtesy Selid-Bassoc Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Archives,
Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks)

Railroads

Rail links were especially significant. Seattle served as the terminus for the Great Northern Railway, completed in 1893. By the early 1890s, the city had also developed an extensive local railroad network. The Columbia and Puget Sound Railroad (originally the Seattle and Walla Walla), linked the city with the coal fields at Newcastle, Renton, Franklin, and Black Diamond. The Seattle Lake Shore and Eastern

transported produce from the east side of Lake Washington to the city, while its northern branch connected Seattle with Snohomish, Skagit, and Whatcom counties. Moreover, Seattle could be reached through spur lines via the Canadian Pacific in Vancouver, British Columbia, and the Union Pacific in Portland, Oregon. In addition to carrying passengers, railroads shipped lumber, coal, fish, and agricultural products from Seattle. [28]

While bringing stampeders to the city, these rail connections also delivered goods to merchants who supplied the miners. Rail shipments in Washington state increased dramatically -- as much as 50 percent per year -- during the late nineteenth century. Seattle became the "central point" of rail traffic, in part due to the "Alaskan trade." [29]

Shipping

By the time of the Klondike Gold Rush, Seattle also functioned as the central point for water traffic of freight and passengers to Alaska. Before the 1890s, San Francisco controlled trade with the Far North. During that decade, however, Seattle merchants gained a strong foothold. In 1892, the Pacific Coast Steamship Company of San Francisco shifted its center of operations from Portland to Seattle, which was closer and could offer an ample supply of coal. [30] As noted, the Alaska Steamship Company formed in Seattle in the mid-1890s -- and the North American Transportation and Trading Company also operated there. [31]

Gold seekers in Seattle board the *Portland*, bound for the Klondike.
(Courtesy National Park Service)

The Klondike stampede boosted Seattle's shipping to the Far North considerably. According to a newspaper report, Seattle's fleet tripled in size between 1897 and 1898, in part due to the "Alaskan business." [32] So pressing was the demand for steamships in the late 1890s that some vessels of marginal quality were placed in service. Seattle's shipping "never was so entirely engaged," explained one reporter in 1897. "Not a single vessel seaworthy and capable of use" was overlooked. [33]



During the late nineteenth century, shippers filled these vessels to capacity. The Alaska Steamship Company, for instance, operated vessels that carried as many as 700 passengers apiece. In general, each ship ran between Seattle and the Far North one and one-half times per month. [34] To prospector Martha Louise Black, it seemed that steamships left Seattle for Alaska "almost every hour." [35] The historian Clarence B. Bagley noted that all this activity resulted in a "scene of confusion" on the Seattle waterfront that "has never been equaled by any other American port." The docks were piled high with outfits, and crowds of

impatient miners "anxiously sought for some floating carrier to take them to the land of gold." [36]

Shipping continued to expand in Seattle during the subsequent gold rush to Nome in 1899-1900. By that time, according to Bagley, the city's fleet had become a "great armada." He detected an interesting trend: at the end of the nineteenth century, only 10 percent of the ships sailing from Seattle to Alaska were owned and operated by people based in Seattle. In 1905, however, more than 90 percent of the vessels sailing from Seattle to Alaska were controlled by Seattle residents and businesses based in the city. [37]

Shipbuilding

The increase in shipping stimulated the boatbuilding industry during this era. At the end of the nineteenth century, many shipbuilders in Seattle tripled their output as well as their number of employees. [38] Prior to this point, most ships constructed in the city included small fishing vessels or boats for local trade. During the decade 1880 to 1890, Seattle shipbuilders produced approximately 75 vessels, the average weight of each totaling 33 tons. In 1898, Seattle shipyards built 57 steamers, 17 steam barges and scows, and 13 tugs. [39] Wood Brothers of West Seattle constructed and launched the first steamer built "wholly for Yukon trade." This vessel measured 75 feet long and 20 feet wide. [40] Moran Brothers Shipbuilding Company produced many of the vessels constructed during the gold rush era. In early August of 1897, the North American Transportation and Trading Company ordered a fleet of 15 ships from this business. "A stroll through the extensive works of Moran Bros. discloses a varitable [sic] hive of industry," observed one reporter. "About 400 men are employed and separate forces are at work day and night." The "immediate cause" of this activity was the Alaska trade. [41] Gold strikes in western Alaska at the turn of the nineteenth century -- which required ocean-going vessels that could sail the Bering Sea -- further stimulated the shipbuilding industry in Seattle. [42]

Animals for the Yukon

In addition to encouraging the development of rail and marine transportation in Seattle, the Klondike Gold Rush also fostered businesses that assisted miners in getting around once they arrived in the Yukon. The stampede increased the market for dogs, horses, goats, and oxen -- all of which moved people and supplies to the gold fields.

(Courtesy Special Collections Division, Washington State Historical Society)

Dogs became the most heavily publicized animals for sale. The use of these animals in the Far North dated back centuries. By the turn of the century, Tappan Adney, a correspondent for *Harper's Weekly*, had



observed an "extraordinary demand" for dogs to carry sleds and saddlebags. Yukon miners had "raked and scraped" the Canadian Northwest in search of dogs, resulting in a shortage. [43] A single dog could draw 200 pounds on a sled, and six of these animals could carry a year's worth of supplies for a miner. [44]

Adney described a variety of breeds, including Eskimo, husky, malamute, and siwash. So similar were these dogs in physical appearance that he had difficulty distinguishing them. He did, however, detect differences in characteristics among the various animals. The Eskimo dog, for instance, featured a "wolf-like muzzle," but lacked the "wild wolf's hard, sinister expression." The malamute, on the other hand, was a dog "without moral sense," often approaching "the lowest depths of turpitude." [45] The Klondike trade in canines was not limited to these large animals; Seattle dealers also sold "little dogs not much larger than pugs." [46]

The scarcity of dogs made sale of these animals a lucrative business. Miners, according to Adney, were "willing to pay almost any price," and dogs brought "fabulous" sums in the Yukon during the winter of 1897-1898. The best dogs sold for \$300-400 apiece. By the summer of 1898, approximately 5,000 dogs had arrived at Dawson City, indicating the size of the market. [47] Teams of dogs waiting for transport remained a common sight throughout the commercial district in Seattle during the gold rush. [48]

Businesses such as the Seattle-Yukon Dog Company imported "all kinds of canines" from as far away as Chicago and St. Paul. In addition to transporting the animals, the company trained them in preparation for their service in the Yukon. "Dog drivers" placed the animals two at a time in a harness attached to a sled, compelling them to pull it for half an hour. "At first it is hard work," noted one observer, "but nearly all of the dogs soon understand what is wanted and pull the sled without trouble." [49] As Adney pointed out, however, not all dogs that reached the Yukon were trained. [50]

The vast number of dogs brought into Seattle for the Klondike trade created problems for merchants as well as for the animals. Some dog yards held as many as 400 animals at once -- all waiting to be shipped to the Yukon. One November morning in 1897, 200 canines, held together in a single yard, engaged in "one big dog fight." The noise was "deafening," prompting *The Seattle Daily Times* to dispatch a reporter to investigate the event. He described the animals as "snarling, biting, fighting canines who were doing their best to annihilate each other." Not surprisingly, nearly every dog was wounded in the brawl. [51]

The Klondike stampede also created a demand for horses. A Yukon horse market operated on Second Avenue and Yesler -- and the commercial district also offered horses "at every corner" for \$10 to \$25. By early October of 1897, within three months of the onset of the gold rush, 5,000 horses had been shipped to the Far North from Seattle. Encouraged by the volume of sales, one Seattle firm ordered 4,000 burros from the Southwest. Merchants selling tack and horseshoes also benefited from the trade. Many of these animals died, however, killed by exposure, lack of food, and overwork. Their carcasses littered the trails to the gold fields, serving as a grim reminder of the consequences of hasty marketing and ignorance of northern conditions. [52] Even so, the trade in horses, burros, and dogs remained active, prompting the Seattle newspapers to carry a special section devoted to this topic in the want ads.

Gold seekers not inclined to buy dogs, horses, or burros had another choice: goats. While merchants advertised dogs as faithful, hard-working animals, businesses trading in goats pointed out that their animals were less expensive to purchase and maintain -- and they could furnish milk, butter, food, and clothing. [53] Goats, they argued, also proved to be sure-footed on steep, icy inclines, and they could "gather their feed on the trail." [54] Miners also purchased oxen in Seattle, which they shipped to the gold fields. [55]

Wheels on Ice

One of the most colorful, whimsical means of getting around the Yukon was by bicycle -- and Seattle merchants advertised them during the stampede. [56] The gold rush coincided with the worldwide bicycle craze of the 1890s, when riding "wheels" became a fashionable pastime. One New York Company considered producing a "Klondike Bicycle," which representatives claimed could carry gold seekers across Chilkoot Pass to Dawson City. For all the impracticality of that particular idea, numerous miners brought bikes to Alaska -- and they were available for purchase in Seattle. Spelger & Hurlbut, dealers operating on Second Avenue, sold bicycles that they obtained from the Western Wheel Works factory in Chicago. By 1900, one Seattle newspaper had reported that "scarcely a steamer leaves for the North that does not carry bicycles." [57]



This mode of transportation offered several advantages: cyclists could follow the tracks in the snow left by dogsleds with relative ease; they could travel faster than dog teams and horses; and "iron steeds" were less expensive and easier to maintain than animals. Cycling in the Far North was not without hazards, which included snowblindness and eyestrain from attempting to follow a narrow track through the ice, and frequent breakdowns due to frozen bearings and stiff tires. [58]



White Horse to Dawson in 5 Days
Overland Bicycle Record, Winter of 1903
(Courtesy Selid-Bassoc Collection, Alaska and Polar Regions Archives,
Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska, Fairbanks)

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**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
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CHAPTER THREE

Reaping the Profits of the Klondike Trade

"A Hot Town" and "A Very Wicked City"

By day, Seattle bustled with activities associated with outfitting and transportation. By night, according to one newspaper headline, it became "A Hot Town" that catered to the needs of a largely transient population. The influx of people during the Klondike stampede included dock workers, ship crews, and various merchants, as well as miners -- most of whom were passing through. They increased the demand for accommodations, food and drink, entertainment, and other services. "The town is overrun with strangers," marveled one observer, "the hotels are crowded; the restaurants are jammed;" and "a number of theaters are running full blast." [60] The large number of people pouring into the city created a need for hotels, rooming houses, and other service industries. [61] As a result, downtown Seattle was a lively place -- "a great carnival of the senses" -- at all hours. [62]

The hotel business thrived in Seattle during the gold rush. Accommodations at the high end included the Hotel Seattle (originally the Occidental) at First Avenue and Yesler, the Butler Hotel at Second Avenue and James, and the Grand Pacific and Northern hotels on First Avenue. These were elegant buildings that offered a variety of amenities, including suites and dining rooms. [63] Less expensive rooming houses were also available throughout the commercial district. These featured small units arranged along a narrow corridor, providing very little privacy. [64]



The Hotel Seattle.

(Courtesy Special Collections Division, University of Washington)

The supply of rooms, however, could not always meet the demand. "More Klondykers than ever were in town last night," noted one newspaper article from August of 1897. "For the first time since the fire men were walking the streets in the lower part of the city unable to get a bed, although they had money in plenty. The parlors in many of the hotels were filled with cots." [65]

In addition to searching for accommodations, a "great number" of people spent their evenings "out doing the town." Much of their activity centered around the Tenderloin -- an area bordered by Yesler Way, Jackson Street, Railroad Avenue, and Fifth Avenue. Here, gold seekers could enjoy "all kinds" of activities, not all of which were legal. [66] So lively was this district that in the fall of 1897 Seattle's City Council increased the size of the police force by approximately 40 percent. The town grew 500 percent "in rogues and rascals," one newspaper article explained. [67] Robberies and assaults became especially common crimes in this area. By November of 1897, Seattle had become "the greatest petty larceny town on the Coast." [68] As one reporter summarized, it is "a very wicked city just now." [69]

The excitement in the Tenderloin was encouraged by the sales of alcohol and the openings of numerous saloons. New drinking establishments in 1897 included the Torino and People's Café on Second Avenue South, and the Dawson Saloon on Washington Street. Typically, these businesses served beer, whiskey, and even champagne. They attracted "the Klondikers going and coming, for the majority of them get drunk at both stages of the game." [70] One visitor claimed that Seattle boasted one saloon for every 50 citizens, and he published these observations in *The New York Times*. Accordingly, the Tenderloin acquired a reputation like that of the Barbary Coast in San Francisco. [71]

Seattle newspapers were filled with stories illustrating the consequences of widespread drinking. In August of 1897, one gold seeker reported to city police that he had been robbed of \$300 while "doing" Washington Street during the evening. The police could locate no suspects. Just as

they were about to give up the search, the man sheepishly informed the authorities that he had apparently deposited the missing \$300 at his hotel while intoxicated -- an act of good sense that he could not remember. [72]

Captain Bensely Collenette of Boston was not so fortunate. He had come to Seattle to lead a party of miners to the Yukon. Upon arriving in the city, he "went on a glorious drunk," spending "his money like wind." On Washington Street, he was robbed of \$185. Even so, Collenette was later observed "riding around the city in the finest hack in town," and he left for the Yukon on the steamer *Cleveland*. [73]

Along with the problems that alcohol presented, the police contended with morphine and opium "fiends" in the Tenderloin. Many drug stores sold these substances, often remaining open at night for that purpose. Newspapers credited morphine and opium with murder, robbery, and leading women to a "life of shame." [74]

During the late nineteenth century, Seattle featured a variety of brothels, including the Klondike House. Located on the corner of Main Street and Second Avenue South, this establishment functioned as the "stopping place for the worst of Seattle's fallen women," and it gained the reputation of being one of the "worst dives in the city." [75] Newspaper reports of the Tenderloin focused on prostitutes -- known as "soiled doves." Prostitution had existed in the city long before the late 1890s, but the gold rush increased its visibility. Women also worked as comedienues, singers, dancers, and actors in the district's theaters -- and they dealt cards in the gambling houses that sprang up during the gold rush. [76]

Gambling was a lucrative business that caught gold seekers before and after their trip to the Klondike. By the turn of the century, the Standard Gambling House, for example, had averaged more than \$120,000 per year. [77] In addition to card games, customers could try their luck with the "Klondike dice game." [78]

In summary, vice became a prominent industry in Seattle during the stampede -- one that attracted as much immediate attention as outfitting and transporting miners. Newspapers focused on this topic from 1897 through 1910 -- in part because sensational and scandalous stories increased sales. *The Seattle Daily Times* condemned Mayor J. Thomas Humes for his failure to suppress gambling and other "social evils" in Seattle, likening his supporters to an army of "besotted drunks." In 1902, voters approved a reform measure that controlled vice through saloon license fees of \$1,000 and evening and Sunday closings. [79]

The excesses of the Tenderloin during the Klondike stampede link the gold seekers to other figures in western history. During the early nineteenth century, mountain men and trappers emerged once a year from the remote, far-flung areas where they hunted beaver. They met at a rendezvous -- a caravan that purchased their beaver pelts and sold them supplies. After transacting their business, many trappers drank and gambled away their annual earnings, turning the rendezvous into a "scene of roaring debauchery." The caravan's owners, on the other hand, profited handsomely from this arrangement, often enjoying returns that reached

2,000 percent. [80] For the most part, those who made fortunes from the fur trade, like those who reaped profits from the gold rush, were not the people directly involved in extracting the resource; they were the ones that sold the goods and services.

Labor Employed in Seattle Factories, 1900

<u>Industry</u>	<u>Employees</u>	<u>Industry</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Bicycles	25	Jewelry	40
Boots and Shoes	60	Lumber	4,000
Breweries	250	Packers and canners	300
Brick and tiles	400	Paints	50
Candles and crackers	250	Paper boxes	25
Cigars	75	Power plants	100
Cloaks and suits	25	Printing and publishing	400
Coopers	25	Saws	50
Drugs	25	Ship carpenters & caulkers	360
Electric plants	200	Spices, baking powder, etc.	30
Evaporating plants	150	Soda water bottling	50
Flour	100	Tailoring	200
Furniture	300	Tents and awnings	150
Gas	30	Tin, cornices, etc.	100
Hats and Caps	30	Vinegar and pickles	50
Iron (including machinery)	650		
Total:		8,600	

Source: *The Seattle Daily Times*, December 22,1900.

Occupation of Seattle Work Force

	1880	1890	1900	1910
	Number	Number	%	Number %
Agriculture		350	625	1.4 2,025 1.6

Fishing		250	478	1.1	1,097	0.9
Logging		350	664	1.5	1,338	1.1
Mining		1,900	3,595	8.1	1,915	1.6
Manufacture	138	2,750	5,190	11.6	14,014	11.5
Hand Trades		2,850	5,383	12.0	25,625	20.9
Trade & Transportation		6,900	13,102	29.2	47,635	38.8
Domestic & Personal Service		6,800	12,802	28.5	19,874	16.3
Professional		1,600	3,029	6.7	8,762	7.2
Total Employment		23,750	44,868		122,285	
Total Population	3,533	42,837	80,671		237,194	

Source: Alexander Norbert McDonald, "Seattle's Economic Development, 1880-1910," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1959.

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**HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE:
PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD
RUSH**



**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
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**Population and Economic Growth During the Gold-Rush
Era**

It was during the late 1890s that Seattle eclipsed other Puget Sound communities as the state's most populous city. By 1890, Tacoma's population had reached 36,006 -- which was fairly close to Seattle's 42,837 residents. During the decade of the 1890s, however, Tacoma gained only 1,708 residents, while Seattle's population rose by 37,834, to a total of 80,671. [81]

Most of this growth -- approximately two-thirds -- occurred between 1897 and 1900, when the city increased from 56,842 to 80,671. [82] This development suggests the influence of the Klondike Gold Rush. By 1910, Seattle had developed into a city of 237,194 residents. Seattle's growth exceeded that of many other comparable cities in other regions of the country during this period.

Growth of Selected American Cities

City	Population		%
	1880	1910	Increase
Washington, D.C.	177,624	331,069	86
Los Angeles	11,183	319,198	2,700
Minneapolis	46,887	301,408	504
Jersey City	120,722	267,799	122
Kansas City	55,785	248,381	345
Seattle	3,533	237,194	6,600
Indianapolis	75,056	233,650	210
Providence	104,847	234,326	116
Louisville	123,785	223,928	81
Rochester	89,366	218,149	145

St. Paul	41,473	214,744	417
Source: Alexander Norbert McDonald, "Seattle's Economic Development, 1880-1910," Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1959.			

For all this dramatic growth, the ethnic composition of Seattle's population did not change appreciably during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1880, native-born whites comprised approximately 69 percent of the population, while in 1910 they accounted for 70 percent. The percentage of foreign-born whites also remained stable, at around 26-27 percent. Between 1890 and 1910, African-Americans made up one percent of the city's population, while Asians comprised around 3 percent. [83]

Most native-born residents in Seattle came from somewhere else -- particularly the Midwest and East Coast. In 1910 only 16 percent of the city's residents were from Washington. Seattle's foreign-born population was comprised of migrants from Canada, Sweden, Norway, Great Britain, and Germany in 1880. Immigration from Japan, Italy, and Russia had become more common by 1910. [84]

Rapid population growth could be viewed as an indication of economic prosperity. Seattle's population figures reveal that the late 1890s and early twentieth century -- the era of the Klondike stampede -- was a period of vigorous expansion. [85] Even so, an examination of population figures for other western cities during the 1890s demonstrates comparable growth. Although Portland and Vancouver, British Columbia, did not attract the Klondike trade to the extent that Seattle enjoyed, they both expanded at a faster rate than Seattle, perhaps due to momentum gained early in the decade, before the gold strike. This trend suggests that the continuing movement west of the population of the two nations proved to be a significant influence on growth. [86]

Population Composition of Selected American Cities

Percentage Distribution				
City	Native-born White	Foreign-born White	African-American	Asian & Others
Washington, D.C.	64.0	7.4	28.5	0.1
Los Angeles	76.7	19.0	2.4	2.0
Minneapolis	70.6	19.0	2.4	0.1
Jersey City	68.7	29.0	2.2	0.1
Kansas City	80.3	10.2	9.5	0.1
Seattle	70.4	25.6	1.0	3.0

Indianapolis	82.2	8.5	9.3	0.1
Providence	63.4	34.0	2.4	0.2
Louisville	74.1	7.8	18.1	0.1
Rochester	72.5	27.0	0.4	0.1
St. Paul	72.2	26.3	1.5	0.1

Source: Alexander Norbert McDonald, "Seattle's Economic Development, 1880-1910,"
Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1959.

By 1910, Seattle's position as the state's commercial center was assured. The region's rail and water transportation network also concentrated in the city. Foreign trade grew during the early twentieth century as well, shifting from British Columbia to Asia. On the surface, Seattle's manufacturing base seemed sound, as the city produced an array of products ranging from shoes to beer to bicycles. Yet, according to historian Alexander Norbert MacDonald, Seattle continued to rely mostly on extractive industries, including lumbering, fishing, and agriculture. Although the gold rush helped ensure Seattle's position as a commercial center for the region, it did not provide a broad, diversified manufacturing base that could rival the industrial cities of the eastern seaboard. [87]

Composition of Seattle's Population

	1880		1890		1900		1910	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Native-born White	2,450	69	28,906	67.5	58,159	72.1	166,918	70.4
Foreign-born White	950	27	13,150	30.7	18,656	23.2	60,835	25.6
African-American	25	1	286	0.7	406	0.5	2,296	1.0
Asian and Other	108	3	495	1.2	3,450	4.3	7,145	3.0
Total Population	3,533		42,837		80,671		237,194	

Source: Alexander Norbert McDonald, "Seattle's Economic Development, 1880-1910,"
Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Washington, 1959.

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The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition

In May of 1898, *The New York Times* announced that the Klondike excitement was "fizzling out." [88] Although this assertion proved to be premature, it signaled that the frenetic pace of the stampede was slowing down and that the media's interest was waning. The outbreak of the Spanish American War in April provided a new arena for the nation's reporters, and that topic pushed the Klondike out of the headlines. [89] By late 1898, the rush to the Klondike had subsided considerably. The following year new gold discoveries in Nome deflected attention from the Yukon to western Alaska, and Seattle continued to function as an outfitting center. [90] In April and May of 1900, approximately 8,000 gold seekers passed through Seattle on their way to Nome. [91] During the early twentieth century, miners continued to travel through Seattle on their way to subsequent gold rushes to Fairbanks, Kantishna, Iditarod, Ruby, Chisana, and Livengood. [92]

The trade to the Far North never regained the excitement of the Klondike Gold Rush. Seattle, however, retained its dominant connection to this region -- and it continued to supply Alaska with lumber, coal, food, clothing, and other goods. By 1900, Alaska's population had reached 63,592 residents, many of whom remained "heavily dependent" on Seattle for trade. [93] This link between Seattle and the Far North endured throughout the twentieth century.



To celebrate its ties to the Far North and to commemorate the Klondike Gold Rush, Seattle hosted the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in 1909. This world's fair represented a "coming-of-age party" for the city, signaling the end of its pioneer era. In 1905, Portland similarly hosted the Lewis and Clark Exposition to commemorate the centennial of the 1805 expedition to the Pacific. Its fair attracted three million visitors -- a point Seattle boosters noted with interest. Four years

later, Seattle's exposition drew nearly four million people, focusing national attention on the city and the region. [94]

Organizers wanted to hold the event in 1907, to honor the 10-year anniversary of the Klondike Gold Rush. Jamestown, Virginia, however, also planned to celebrate its 300-year anniversary with a fair in 1907. In any case, the Panic of 1907, a nationwide depression that slowed the economy in Seattle, would have reduced the scale of festivities and the visitation -- so it was a fortuitous turn of events that delayed the exposition until June of 1909. [95] On that date, President William H. Taft at the national capitol pressed the gold nugget Alaska key, setting the fair's operations in motion. Railroad magnate James J. Hill greeted 80,000 spectators in the commencement celebration, which included a parade in downtown Seattle. [96]

The Olmsted Brothers served as landscape architects of the fair, while John Galen Howard became its principal architect. Held on the grounds of the University of Washington campus, the exposition featured pools, fountains, gardens, and statuary that opened on a vista of Mount Rainier. A variety of ornate buildings designed in the French Renaissance style housed exhibits from all over the world. [97]



The Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition included an amusement park called the "Paystreak;" a term for the richest deposit of gold in placer mining. The Paystreak featured an attraction called "Gold Camps of Alaska."

(Courtesy Special Collections Division, University of Washington)

The exposition included an amusement park with carnival rides and other entertainment. It was called the "Paystreak" -- a term for the richest deposit of gold in a placer claim and an allusion to the importance of gold mining to Seattle. The Paystreak featured an attraction called "Gold Camps of Alaska" as well as an Eskimo village. Additional references to the Far North at the exposition included a large gold nugget, on display from the Yukon. Especially visible was the Alaska monument, a column measuring 80 feet high. Covered in pieces of gold from Alaska and the

Yukon, it stood in front of the U.S. Government Building, reminding visitors of the ties between Seattle and the Far North. [98]

While reflecting on the past, the exposition also looked to the future -- and organizers hoped to boost interest in Seattle and the Northwest. "This summer's show is essentially a bid to settlers," noted one reporter, "and an advertisement for Eastern capital to come West and help develop the natural resources which offer wealth on every hand." The exposition featured numerous promotional booths from cities such as Tacoma and Yakima. Washington and other western states financed construction of buildings that featured their products and resources. The exposition also celebrated the Pacific Rim, promoting increased trade with Asia. Japan, China, Hawaii, and the Philippines provided exhibits, and a Japanese battleship docked in Seattle's port in honor of the fair. [99]

Seattle merchants and residents hoped that the economy would boom as a result of the Alaska-Yukon Exposition. Irene and Zacharias Woodson, for example, expected the demand for housing to expand in the summer of 1909. This African-American couple operated a cigar store and rooming houses in downtown Seattle, using the profits to purchase new properties. The Woodson Apartments, constructed in 1908 at 1820 24th Avenue, represented these hopes. [100]

The exposition ended in October of 1909, marking the end of an era. Although most of the infrastructure was removed, several buildings remained, including Cunningham and Architecture halls. Today, they stand on the University of Washington campus as testaments to a significant point in Seattle's history.

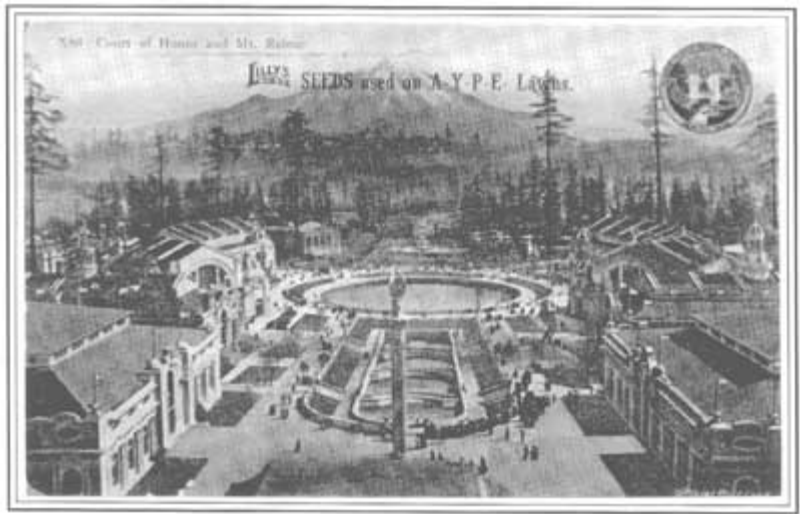
The Great Northern Railway advertised the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.
(Courtesy Special Collections Division, University of Washington)

Another legacy of the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition was that it strengthened the link between Seattle and the Far North in the public mind. Seattle had developed a significant connection to Alaska before the Klondike Gold Rush, and promoters such as Erastus Brainerd had used the stampede as an occasion to publicize that tie in the late 1890s. The exposition similarly advertised it in 1909. As historian Clarence B. Bagley summarized, the fair successfully met the city's objectives: it demonstrated "the enormous value of Alaska to the United States and the greatness of its entry port, Seattle. The city's guests left the fair with the knowledge that Alaska was a golden possession and Seattle a growing metropolis." [101]



It is difficult to measure the precise impact of the fair and the worldwide exposure it provided to Seattle. As noted, by 1910, the city's population had jumped to 237,194 residents. According to MacDonald, however, the dramatic growth in the city's economy occurred *before* 1910. After that point, the city "settled down to the moderate growth of the region,"

abandoning the "independent, enthusiastic" mood of the previous era. [102] Seattle's foreign trade had grown rapidly during the first decade of the twentieth century, but for all the hopes of exposition promoters, there was no immediate increase in trade with Asia after the fair. [103] Not until the late twentieth century would Seattle again experience the vibrance and energy exhibited during the gold-rush era.



Post Cards from the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition.
(Courtesy Office of Urban Conservation, Seattle)

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CHAPTER THREE

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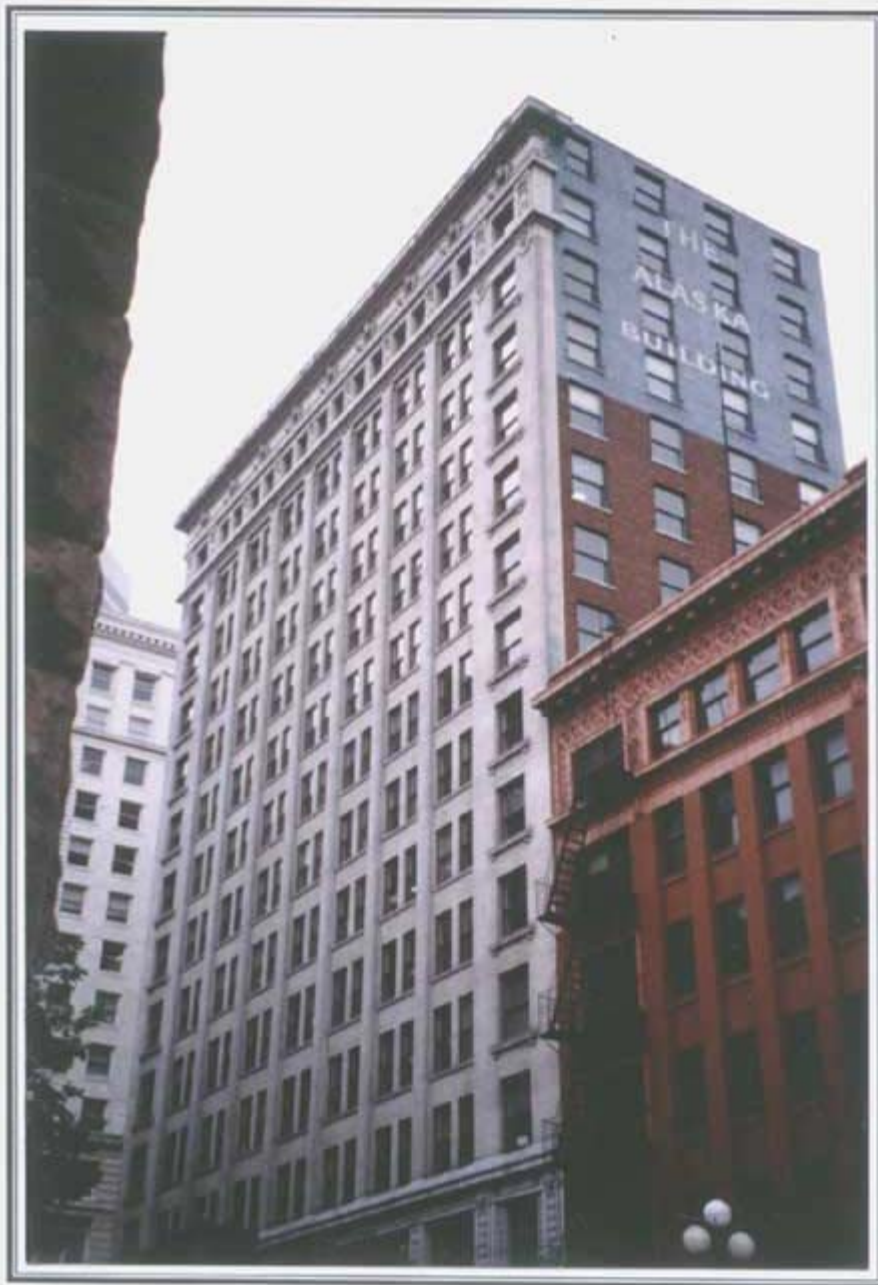
**HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE:
PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD
RUSH**



**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park**

CHAPTER FOUR
Building the City

Alaska Building



Seattle's connection with the Far North is reflected in a variety of structures, including the Alaska Building (pictured above), located at Second and Cherry, and the [Arctic Building](#), located at Third and Cherry.
(HRA photo)

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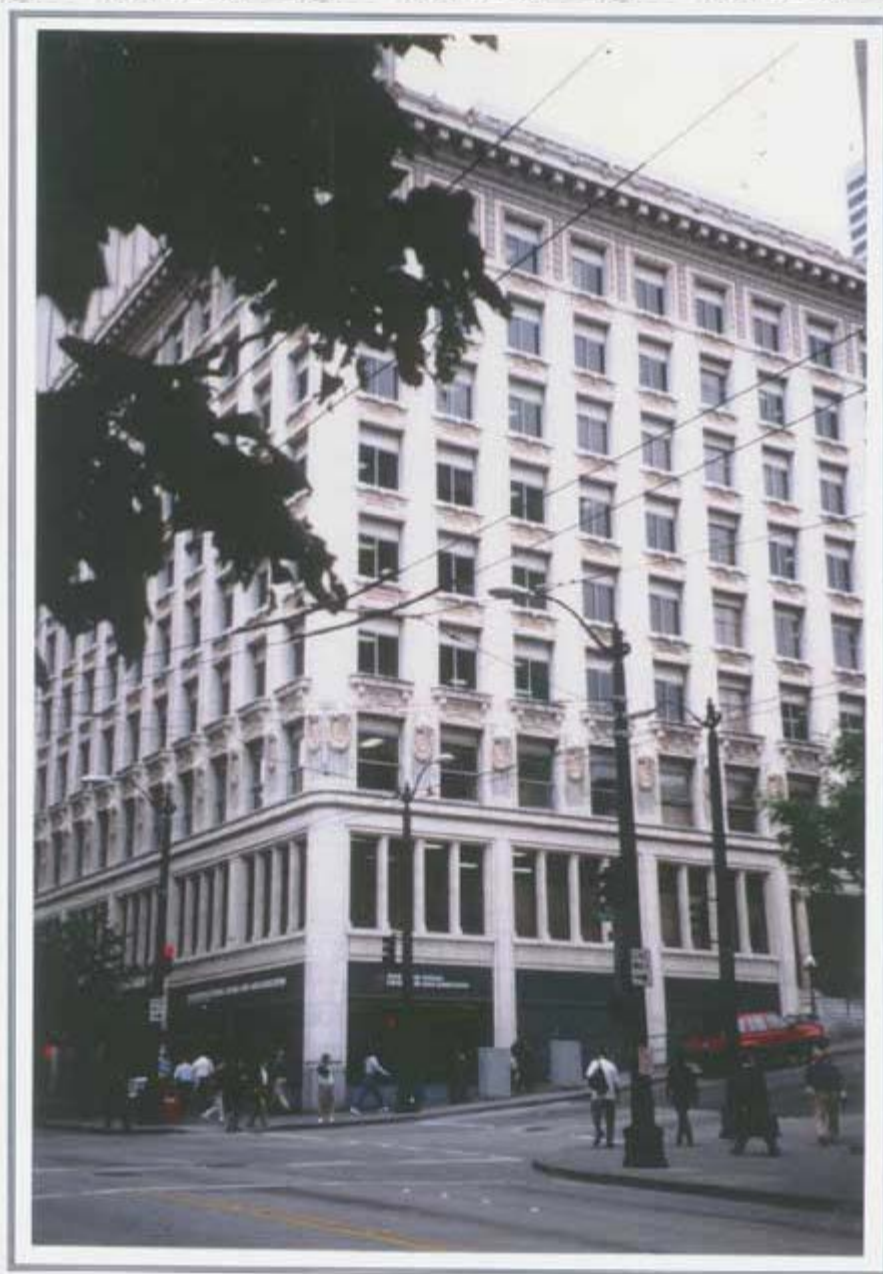
**HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE:
PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD
RUSH**



**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
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Arctic Building



Arctic Building, constructed in 1914.
(HRA photo)



Twenty-seven walruses ring the third-floor exterior of the Arctic Building.
(HRA photo)

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
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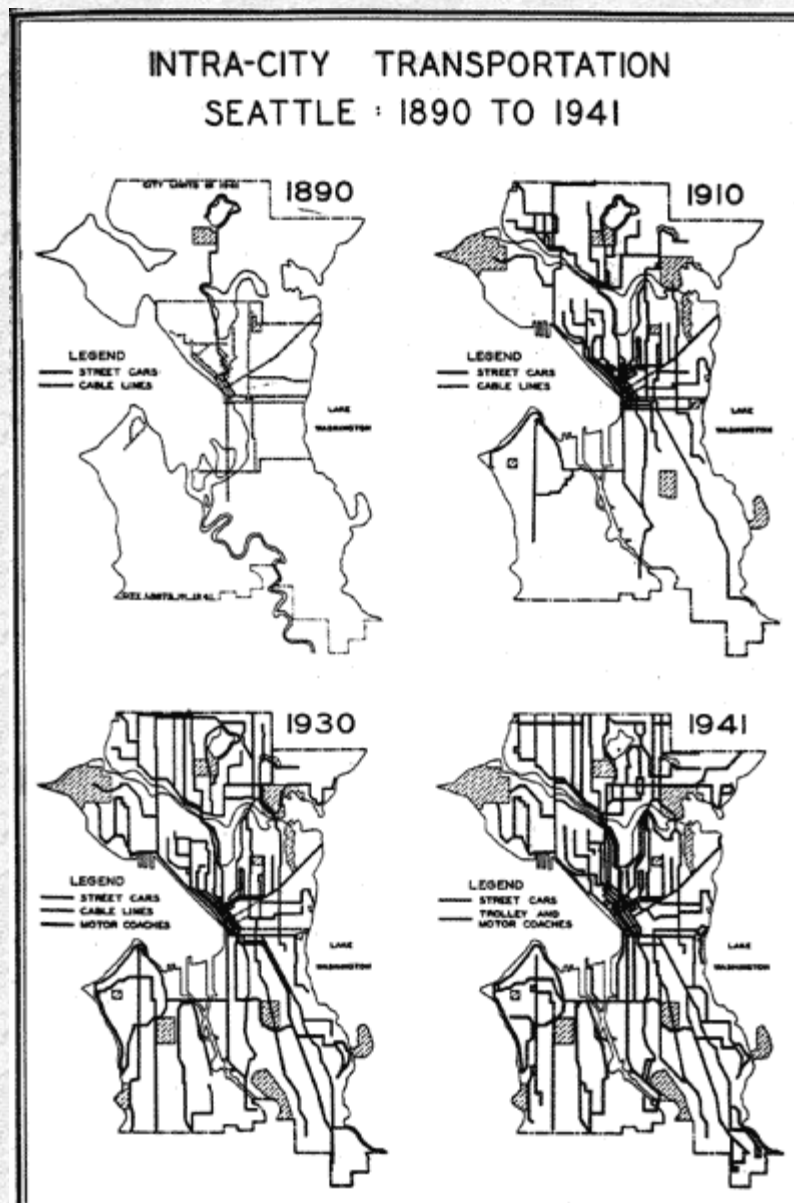
Street and Transportation Improvements

The influx of people during the late nineteenth century increased the need to provide access to the city's commercial district, requiring street improvements within the downtown area. During the 1880s, many streets had been covered with wood planking. This material had its drawbacks: it did not last long and engineers feared it was unsanitary. By the early 1890s, gravel was used to pave some Seattle roads, but hauling the quantities required proved expensive and difficult. By that time, brick had become another favored material. [4]

In 1898, engineers at Smart and Company leveled First Avenue from Pine Street to Denny Way, using the earth to fill Western and Railroad avenues, located along the waterfront. [5] That year, the city also laid new planking and paving from First Avenue to Fourth Avenue, between Yesler Way and Pine Street. One article in *The Seattle Daily Times* cited 1898 as a record-breaking year for improvements, noting that contractors "flourished as they have not done before." [6]

Streetcars also facilitated movement in the downtown area. The first street railway appeared in 1884, offering nickel-a-fare service. Operated by the Seattle Street Railway Company, it used horses to pull the cars. Five years later an electric streetcar began operating in Seattle -- and even the fire did not interrupt its service. During the 1880s, Seattle's downtown area also featured a cable railway, which ran along Yesler Way and First and Second avenues. By the early 1890s, passengers could travel to Lake Union along Westlake Avenue and to points farther north. [7] Promoters praised these developments, noting how they had transformed the city during the gold-rush era. An article in *The Pacific Monthly*, published in 1905, informed readers that "Seattle has well-paved streets, a thorough and satisfactory street car system, large and handsome business blocks, and residence districts adorned by palatial homes and green and velvety lawns." [8]

Electric rail lines also connected Seattle to communities to the north and south of the city. An interurban train ran between Seattle and Tacoma, and the completion in 1910 of a line from Seattle to Everett further opened opportunities for growth, encouraging development in new communities such as Alderwood Manor. [9]



Intra-city Transportation, Seattle, 1890-1941.

[Source: Calvin F. Schmid, *Social Trends in Seattle* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1944)]

City Parks

Another development in early twentieth-century Seattle was the creation of the city's park system. As early as 1884, the Denny Family had donated a five-acre tract located at the foot of what is now Battery Street. Although first used as a cemetery, this parcel became Denny Park, a "verdant oasis" that featured the headquarters building of the board of park commissioners. The park commissioners also developed Volunteer Park, at the north end of Capitol Hill, and Woodland Park, east of Green Lake. Located outside the city limits, these reserves became accessible by streetcar lines. Additional acquisitions included Washington Park -- which is now the Arboretum -- Ravenna Park, and Leschi Park. [10]

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A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

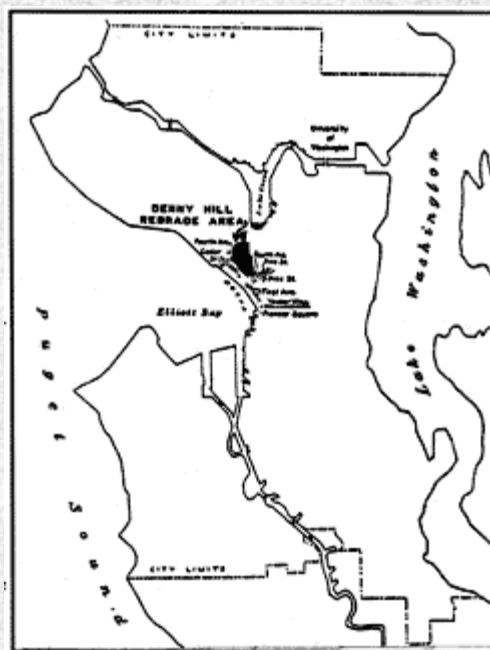
CHAPTER FOUR Building the City

Regrading

From the 1880s through 1910, the city limits grew dramatically, extending northward past Green Lake and southward to West Roxbury and Juniper streets. The commercial district expanded eastward away from the waterfront, as the shoreline became increasingly devoted to shipping and manufacturing. It also moved northward, toward Denny Hill. During the early twentieth century, Seattle's hills blocked further expansion of the city. In some places, the grades on streets over the hills measured 20 per cent, making transportation, as well as construction, difficult. [11]

[Source: V.V. Tarbill, "Mountain-Moving in Seattle," *Harvard Business Review*, July, 1930.]

City engineers addressed this problem with extensive regrading projects, radically altering the topography of the city. As historian Clarence B. Bagley pointed out, during the early twentieth century the business section of Seattle became "one vast reclamation project." As he defined it, this area extended from Denny Way and the foot of Queen Anne Hill on the north to the Duwamish River toward the south. [12] Two of the most noteworthy reclamation projects included the Denny and Jackson Street regrades.



Reginald H. Thomson supervised much of this work. He was a civic-minded visionary -- a leader reminiscent of Arthur Denny. Born in Indiana, Thomson arrived in Seattle in 1881 at the age of 26. He dreamed of building a large city on Puget Sound, and investigated a number of possibilities, including Bellingham, Everett, and Tacoma, before settling on Seattle. He became City Engineer in 1892, quickly developing a

reputation for dedication. "Thompson is a man who loves work," noted one observer, who further characterized him as "the greatest influence in Seattle." [13] Within two years he garnered support for the project to level Denny Hill, which presented a considerable barrier to northward expansion of the city. [14]

This leveling -- called the Denny Regrade -- proceeded in two stages: 1902-1910 and 1929-1930. By 1905, engineers had removed the west side of the hill, leaving the Washington Hotel precariously perched 100 feet above Second Avenue. This massive amount of earth was moved by hydraulics. Engineers used sluicing techniques similar to those used in gold mining, drawing water from Lake Union by large electric pumps through woodstave pipes. The water sprayed from hoses that featured a pressure of approximately 125 pounds at the nozzle, washing clay and rocks down into flumes and a central tunnel. Heralded as a monumental engineering feat, the Denny Regrade created more than 30 blocks of level land for new construction. [15]

Between 1900 and 1914, Thomson also transformed the southern end of the city. Called the Jackson Street Regrade, this project resurfaced and cut down approximately fifty blocks between Main Street on the north and Judkins Street on the south, and Twelfth Avenue on the east and Fourth Avenue on the west. The Jackson Street Regrade resulted in the removal of approximately five million cubic yards of earth at a cost of \$471,547.10. A smaller regrade at Dearborn Street also removed more than one million cubic yards of earth, leveling areas for new construction. These projects improved access to the waterfront, Rainier Valley, and Lake Washington. According to Bagley, the regrade projects were among Thomson's most notable achievements -- and they dramatically changed the look of the city. [16]

Engineers used much of the earth removed from the regrades to fill the tideflats, a process that changed the appearance of the waterfront. The filled tideflats encouraged further development of rail yards and terminals -- and this expansion forced the relocation of ethnic groups, including Japanese and Chinese, that had resided and worked around Washington and King streets. The growth of an industrial complex in this area pushed them east of Fifth Avenue, where they formed a new community, now called the International District. [17]

As a result of the regrades, the city was level enough by 1910 to accommodate automobiles, which greatly increased the volume and speed of land transportation. Most land traffic in the Puget Sound area flowed through Seattle, further securing its status as the metropolis of the region. [18]



Engineers used sluicing methods drawn from placer mining to level the hills of Seattle.

Pictured here is the Denny Regrade, early twentieth century.

(Courtesy Special Collections Division, University of Washington)

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A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

CHAPTER FOUR Building the City

Sewage, Water, and Electricity

As City Engineer, Thomson's chief concerns were sewage, water, and electricity. He was alarmed by the longstanding practice of individuals and businesses dumping waste into Lake Washington, which had no natural outlet. He suggested that sewage be discharged at West Point, at the edge of Fort Lawton on Magnolia Bluff, since the deep and constant current there could carry waste into Puget Sound. After lengthy negotiations with the U.S. Army, Thomson won approval to run sewer lines out to West Point. [19]

Providing for the expanding city was a major issue in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Before Thomson became City Engineer, Seattle had relied on a number of early water systems, included the operations of the Spring Hill Water Company. This firm secured its supply of water from the west slope of First Hill, storing it in wooden tanks in the south end of the city. In 1886, the company also constructed a pumping station at Lake Washington and a reservoir at Beacon Hill. Four years later, the city purchased the Spring Hill Water Company's system. By that time, city officials had already looked to the Cedar River, which flowed out of the Cascade Mountains, as the ultimate source of water supply. One of his first tasks as City Engineer was to design a plan for its development. A citywide fight over public versus private construction and management delayed the project until the late 1890s. [20]

In 1899, the city contracted with the Pacific Bridge Company to construct the headworks, dam, and pipeline. It also hired Smith, Wakefield & David to build the reservoirs in Lincoln and Volunteer parks. In 1901, the system went into commission, delivering 22 million gallons of water per day. By the end of the decade, however, city officials realized that this amount was not sufficient for the needs of the growing metropolis, and a second pipeline was constructed in 1909. By 1916, the expanded system had delivered 66 million gallons per day. [21]

Thomson also tackled the issue of electricity. In the early twentieth century, Seattle Electric -- a predecessor company of Puget Sound Energy -- enjoyed a near monopoly on electric power as well as public transportation. Thomson, however, wanted the city to build a

hydroelectric plant at Cedar River, and he garnered support among city officials and residents. In 1902, voters decided in favor of the city power plant. [22]

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Harbor and Waterway Improvements

During the early twentieth century, construction of the Panama Canal encouraged cities along the West Coast to plan for increased maritime traffic. Seattle promoters, including local newspapers and the Chamber of Commerce, advocated setting up a municipal corporation to own, expand, and manage Seattle's harbor. This enthusiasm inspired Virgil Bogue, a civil engineer, to draw up the city's first comprehensive plan for harbor improvement in 1910. Bogue had enjoyed an impressive career, designing Prospect Park in Brooklyn with Frederick Law Olmsted. He also constructed a trans-Andean railroad in Peru, and had identified Stampede Pass in the Cascade Mountains for the passage of the railroad. [23]

Bogue's plan for Seattle's harbor included two large marinas on the central waterfront, one for ferries and Alaska steamers and the other for Seattle's "mosquito fleet" (a fleet of small ships). He further envisioned 1,500-foot coal docks and the addition of piers and slips at Lake Union, which would be transformed into an industrial waterway. His plan also included a 3,000-foot waterway between Shilshole and Salmon Bays in Ballard -- a project for which Erastus Brainerd had lobbied in 1902. Bogue's most ambitious idea was to develop seven 1,400-foot piers at Harbor Island, which could increase Seattle's annual marine commerce by seven times. "Seattle's *harbor* is Seattle's *opportunity*," he wrote. "With cheap power in abundance, and an inexhaustible supply of coal at her very gates and the vast resources of its hinterland, all that remains to be done by Seattle, the gateway to Alaska and the Orient, is to adopt a comprehensive scheme for its development." [24]

In 1910, Congress authorized construction of the Lake Washington Canal connecting Lake Washington and Lake Union to Puget Sound. The following year, voters in King County created the Port of Seattle and passed Bogue's plan. [25] These improvements to navigation and harbor facilities helped Seattle become a major port, ensuring the city's continued connections to the Far North and Asia.

In general, the expansion of Seattle's infrastructure during the early twentieth century accommodated the population growth spurred by the Klondike stampede and subsequent gold rushes in Alaska. As historian

Murray Morgan explained, "without Brainerd, Seattle might not have tripled its population in a decade; ... without Thomson, it could not have handled the newcomers." [26]

Next> [Seattle Map, 1888](#)

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
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CHAPTER FIVE

Interpreting the Klondike Gold Rush

Mid-Twentieth Century Interpretations

Various anniversaries of the gold rush prompted popular examinations of what it meant to Seattle. At the 40-year mark, for example, an article by Irving Sayford in *Travel* reflected on how the stampede increased the city's prosperity. Written in an enthusiastic, hyperbolic tone that would have won Brainerd's approval, the article portrayed the Klondike Gold Rush as "the greatest treasure hunt in the annals of the western world." Sayford portrayed the importance of the gold strike in the Yukon as follows:

[Seattle], founded on the Northern fisheries industry and its commerce, overnight shot up through municipal adolescence and became a gangling, boisterous, delighted, bawdy and infelonious landlord to transients twice the number of its permanent inhabitants. It was faced with the job of feeding the hordes, bedding them, entertaining them, while they were outfitting themselves in the town and shouting for ships to take them away from there to the Northland to hunt gold!

With a heavy dose of exclamation points, Sayford's article conveyed the excitement of the stampede, depicting it as a romantic, colorful event that profoundly affected the city. "No municipality ever changed more suddenly than Seattle," he concluded. Moreover, in his estimation, it was the Klondike Gold Rush that "put Seattle on the map." [7]

Two years later, Archie Binns's history of the Port of Seattle echoed these sentiments. His book, *Northwest Gateway*, published in 1941, celebrated Seattle as the "Gateway to Gold" during the Klondike stampede. Unlike Bagley, he devoted an entire chapter to the topic. "The city roared, and the waterfront roared," he wrote. With embellished prose reminiscent of nineteenth-century accounts, Binns informed readers that "in dull streets all over the United States, and farther away, men heard the blaring of the master calliope and the roll of golden chariots. The great parade was happening at last and it was forming in Seattle." [8] In addition to leaving the impression that the gold rush was a noisy event, Binns's book portrayed it as being significant to the city's development.

The 50-year anniversary further rekindled interest in the gold rush. At

that time, *The Seattle Times Magazine* carried a series of articles describing how "the city went mad" during the gold rush. Although the author acknowledged the hardships of mining, for the most part the stampede was portrayed as a great adventure that began in Seattle. [9]

Like Binns, Murray Morgan devoted an entire chapter to the stampede in his well-known history of Seattle, *Skid Road*. First published in 1951, this book credited Brainerd with "making Seattle the main port of the Klondike and Nome gold rushes." Morgan, alert to interesting and colorful details, conveyed the story in a manner that appealed to a wide audience -- and his book underwent numerous printings. In an exaggerated style, he portrayed the economic benefits that the stampede brought to Seattle: "Every business prospered. Real-estate values boomed. Papers increased their circulation. Anyone who owned or could lease a ship, no matter how old, no matter how unseaworthy, could find passengers." Significantly, Morgan's chapter on the gold rush ends with Seattle's transformation to a metropolis. "The city's dominance of the region was secure," he concluded. [10]

Even scholarly examinations assumed a tone of enthusiasm that was missing from works produced 20 and 30 years earlier. In 1944, Calvin F. Schmid, a professor of sociology at the University of Washington, described the Klondike gold strike (which he placed in Alaska) as "momentous." [11] Alexander Norbert MacDonald's lengthy dissertation on Seattle's economic development, completed in 1959, also included the stampede as an event important to the prosperity of the city. "The impact of the gold rush in the Klondike was quickly apparent in Seattle," he wrote. "Everything boomed." MacDonald cited Seattle newspaper articles to support this expansive statement. [12]

Yet nineteenth-century newspapers also included information to the contrary. Buried in reports on Seattle businesses, for example, were peevish statements from merchants who did not realize the profits that they had been led to expect during the gold rush. By 1898, one business that lost \$5,000 had become "sore on Seattle." [13] Although this kind of information appeared only occasionally in newspapers bent on promoting the city, it provided a broader perspective, indicating that "everything" did not "boom." Many mid twentieth-century interpretations avoided this point, choosing to emphasize the more successful, glamorous stories of the gold rush. In any case, in an article in 1968, MacDonald approached the topic more cautiously, writing "it seems reasonable to conclude that the rush of the 1890s helped establish Seattle as the dominant city on Puget Sound." [14]

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CHAPTER FIVE Interpreting the Klondike Gold Rush

Modern Interpretations

During the last 30 years, historians have continued to emphasize the economic growth that the gold rush sparked. Many contrasted the success of Seattle businesses with the relative failure of most miners. Some commentators took an additional step, analyzing what it was about Seattle that positioned the city to take advantage of the opportunities that the stampede presented.

Earl Pomeroy offered one of the most intriguing interpretations, drawing on longstanding descriptions of the "Seattle spirit." In *The Pacific Slope*, published in the mid-1960s, Pomeroy presented the gold rush as Seattle's "most colorful experience" -- one that set it apart from other western cities. He argued that Seattle lacked the complacency of Portland, which remained economically secure in its "reliable traffic with the farmers of the Columbia Basin." Seattle businesses were "free in their imaginations to seek after new visions of fortune overseas," which motivated them to "improve themselves by developing and advertising their city." To achieve economic prosperity, Seattle merchants had to cultivate ambition and acumen. When gold arrived in Seattle in 1897, the city perfected these qualities, cultivating a "speculative excitement" that "remained for a long time," fueling a continuing interest in the Far North and Asia. In Pomeroy's estimation, the success of the gold rush represented "a triumph for generations of frontier optimists who had dreamed of a thriving city rising out of the wilderness to traffic in silk and gold as well as in salmon and lumber." [15]

In their classic book, *Empire of the Columbia*, Dorothy O. Johansen and Charles M. Gates offered a similar analysis. Published in 1967, this work claimed that partly through its "energetic promotion" during the gold rush, "Seattle helped establish itself as the fastest growing city in the Northwest." [16] As noted, MacDonald demonstrated that Portland actually grew at a faster rate during that period.

William C. Speidel put a different spin on this interpretation. A popular historian who reached thousands of readers through his books, Speidel also launched the well visited tours of underground Seattle. These tours continue to feature what remained of the city's infrastructure before the fire of 1889 had raised the level of construction, and they include

numerous stories of the gold-rush era. While historians like Morgan and Pomeroy presented the drive and pluck of Seattle promoters in a positive light, Speidel adopted the cynical view that the city's leaders were simply consumed by one longstanding pursuit: the desire for monetary gain.

His book, *Sons of the Profits*, published in 1967, applied this thesis to most of the major events in Seattle's history. In keeping with his theme, Speidel titled his chapter on the gold rush "This Little Piggy Stayed Home." Like other observers, Speidel noted that the merchants in Seattle benefited far more from the stampede than did most prospectors who traveled to the Yukon. "By the time the big strike came along in 1897," he wrote, "we had the business of mining the miners honed to a fine edge.... We got the miners coming and going." [1]

Despite Speidel's relentlessly flip tone, he did place the gold rush in the larger context of Seattle's longstanding cultivation of the Alaskan trade and the development of shipping and rail connections. In essence, Speidel's interpretation was not radically different from that of Binns or Morgan. It was his style of expression and his desire to shock readers that distinguished his writing.

For all the discussion of the economic impact of the gold rush on Seattle, popular historians also continued to focus on the flamboyant details of the stampede. As a journalist and former editor of the *Post-Intelligencer*, Nard Jones depicted the gold rush as a raucous event that rocked "Seattle to its foundations." According to his book, *Seattle*, published in 1972, "virtually all of Seattle crowded the waterfront" to greet the *Portland* in July of 1897. Jones regaled his readers with stories of Diamond-tooth Lil, a leading madame who sported a large gem embedded in her front tooth, along with descriptions of brothels featuring "plush red velvet interiors hung with oil paintings of provocative nudes." [18] Such vivid images made for more interesting reading than did discussions of the number of grocers and shoe makers that prospered during the gold rush. In part, the colorful aspects of the stampede seemed to attract attention from historians because they provided appealing anecdotes. As historian Pierre Berton noted, "the Klondike odyssey has been subject in the past to some fantastic misstatements, errors, half-truths, garblings, over-romanticizations, and out-and-out fabrications." [19]

Yet most modern historians continued to present the Klondike Gold Rush as a pivotal event essential to the city's development. David and Judith Clarridge, for example, claimed in 1972 that the stampede was "more than just an interesting story." To them, "It was *the* major turning point in the city's history." [20]

Not everyone agreed with this view. Roger Sale, an English professor at the University of Washington turned historian, conceded in 1976 that the gold rush "was exciting and of course it did help." Even so, he concluded that "the boost Seattle received from the gold rush was not a major contributor to its essential economic development." According to his reasoning, "if it had been the crucial event it often has been taken to be, we would expect a falling off in Seattle when the gold ran out, as it quickly did." Nor did Sale place much stock in the value of Seattle advertising. In his analysis, Bellingham, Port Townsend, and Tacoma

"could have had five Brainerds and would have gained little from them." Seattle already possessed the transportation facilities and the manufacturing goods to supply the gold seekers. [21]

This interpretation is noteworthy mostly because it presented a novel perspective in the modern era. Sale himself acknowledged that historians have "often" depicted the gold rush to be a "crucial event"; his book in fact refuted half a century of commentators. In any case, Sale's narrative skirted the point that the gold rush might have stimulated business that could be sustained after "the gold ran out."

His assessment of Tacoma also seems off the mark. As noted, Tacoma had transportation connections and access to manufactured goods that could rival those of Seattle -- and it was comparable in size. While it is simplistic to credit Brainerd with single-handedly focusing national attention on Seattle, the point that advertising of the city increased dramatically during the Klondike Gold Rush -- and that the publicity benefited city businesses -- is difficult to deny. And historians have demonstrated that the gold rushes of the late nineteenth century proved essential to Seattle's continuing trade links to Alaska, which in turn represented an important component of the city's economy. [22] Moreover, the Klondike Gold Rush and the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition were specific events that strengthened the link between Seattle and the Far North in the public mind -- a point supported by the sheer numbers of people that participated, as well as the pervasive nature of the advertising.

Furthermore, Sale's interpretation implies that the Klondike Gold Rush was an isolated event, when in fact placer production continued in the Far North into the early twentieth century. The Alaska trade was an ongoing process for Seattle, and it did not end abruptly in 1898. Sale was mistaken in assuming that there should be a spike in the city's growth in 1897-1898, followed by a collapse. Such an assumption misses the significance of the Klondike as the first in a series of northern gold rushes, followed by stampedes to Nome, Fairbanks, Kantishna, Iditarod, Ruby, Chisana, Livengood, and others. [23]

Although Sale's estimation of the Klondike Gold Rush differed from those of many modern historians, it could help explain why scholars and academics have not devoted more effort to this topic. The volume of books and articles on the California Gold Rush of 1849 far exceeds that pertaining to the Klondike stampede. That the California rush occurred 50 years earlier -- and it involved more people and a greater quantity of gold -- might help explain this discrepancy in attention. Even so, major books on western history, including Ray Allen Billington's *Westward Expansion* and Richard White's *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West*, barely mentioned the Klondike or its importance to Seattle. White devoted half a line to the gold rush -- which he placed in Alaska -- in his 600-page book, published in 1991. [24] Yet as Paula Mitchell Marks pointed out in 1994, the Klondike fever exhibited numerous similarities to the California rush, including "the international scope of the response and the high level of interest exhibited by the American populace." [25]

Analyzing the significance of the stampede in Seattle's history prompts the question of what the city might be like today had the event not occurred. Would Seattle be the same place? As Sale pointed out, the city had already established transportation connections, trade with the Far North, and thriving businesses. Kathryn Taylor Morse noted a similar point in her dissertation on the Klondike stampede, completed in 1997. She observed that it was during the gold rush that Seattle became the gateway to the Far North, replacing San Francisco as the principal link between Alaska and the "outside" world. The Klondike Gold Rush assured Seattle's position as "the urban marketplace which funneled people and supplies to and from the north." In Morse's estimation, however, this point does not explain Seattle's development. "The gold certainly boomed the Alaska trade," she wrote, "but it was not, in and of itself, the only cause of Seattle's subsequent emergence as the Northwest's leading metropolis. The initial 1897-1900 boom was accompanied by, and then followed by, a prolonged economic expansion, beyond the Alaska trade, into world-wide markets in wheat, flour, fruit, forest products, salmon, and general merchandise. Those markets included Alaska, but the expansion was fueled as much by rail and steamer connections to the eastern United States, California, Europe, Hawaii, and South America." [26]

If it was not a pivotal event, however, the gold rush can at least be viewed as a striking and colorful manifestation of the larger forces that shaped the city. Although the railroad arrived in Seattle long before the stampede, the story of special "Klondike cars" that displayed gold nuggets reveal the general importance of railroads in late nineteenth-century America. Promotions by steamship companies similarly indicated Seattle's longstanding association with the Far North and its importance to the city's commerce. Similarly, the advertisements that pervaded local newspapers and national publications reveal the range of businesses operating in Seattle during the era.

The story of the gold rush also offers a glimpse of the city in a major period of transition, since the event occurred during the era that transformed it from a town to a metropolis. The event has become an important symbol of this development; as one reporter recently observed, "in a sense, Seattle itself arrived on the steamer *Portland*." [27] The gold rush also makes an interesting story. As historians throughout the century have demonstrated, the Klondike story has high drama (bringing hope to a nation reeling from a depression); spectacle (the image of gold seekers crowding the waterfront); tragedy (the wreck of the *Clara Nevada*, to name just one); and whimsy (marketing and design of Klondike opera glasses, bicycles, and other products of ingenuity and questionable utility).

The gold rush further provides an interesting look at the character of the city. As Pomeroy pointed out, Seattle exhibited distinctive qualities during the gold-rush era that pushed it ahead of other communities, expanding its economy and population. Similarly, an article in *The Economist* reported in 1997 that Seattle "is remarkable for its golden touch." The metropolitan area serves as a base for Bill Gates, America's richest man, along with several thousand Microsoft millionaires -- and the city supports numerous companies recognized as "standard-setters in

their businesses." According to this article, what sets Seattle apart from other successful cities is a series of traits, including energy and risk-taking entrepreneurship, that resulted from the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-1898. Today, these qualities remain a "recipe for business achievement," fueling sales of everything from coffee to computer software. [28] Bill Gates, the personification of a quality called "hard drive," exemplifies the commercial spirit that was also evident during the stampede -- and he has observed the parallels between the industry that he helped build and the business of outfitting gold seekers. [29]

As noted, this interpretation is a product of its time. The parallels between the late 1890s and the late 1990s are striking: both were periods of rapid growth, high energy, and national attention. What makes this analysis intriguing is that it explains the significance of the gold rush in terms that are relevant to Seattle today. As the city's history continues to evolve, historians will continue to reassess the legacy of the Klondike Gold Rush.

End of Chapter Five

CHAPTER FIVE

[Early Interpretations](#) | [Mid-Twentieth Century Interpretations](#)
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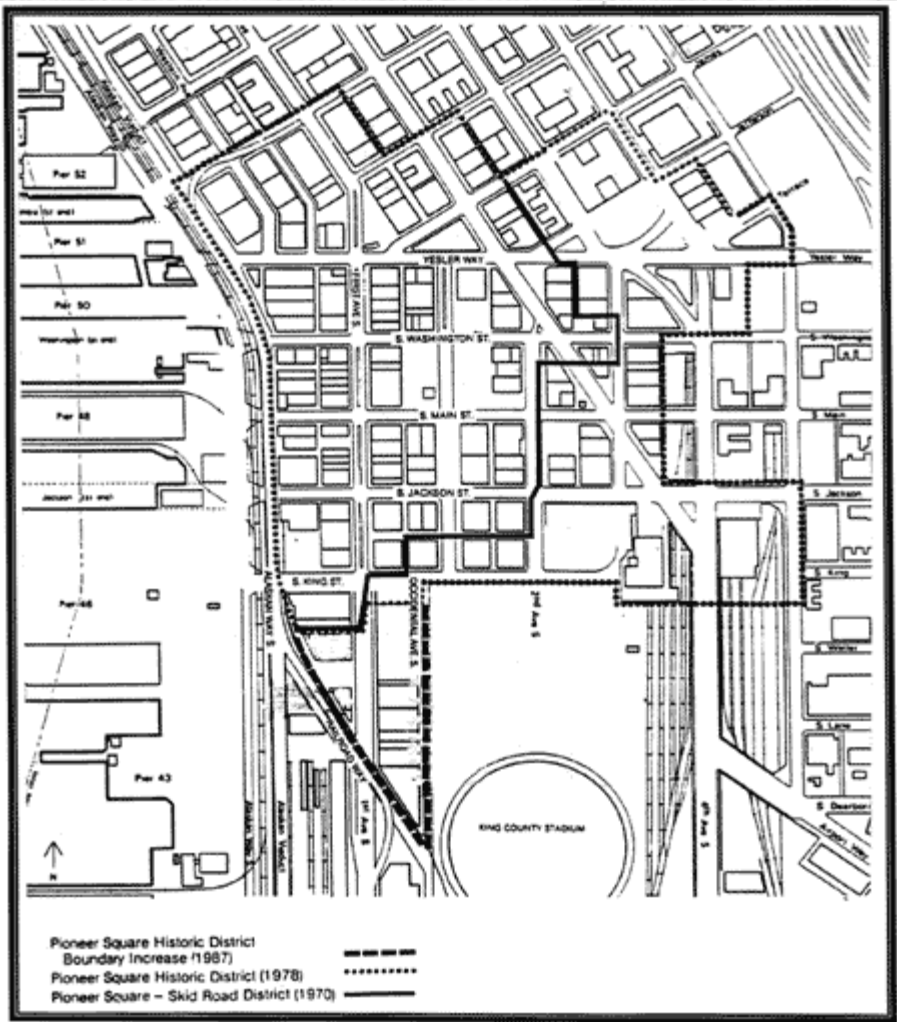
**HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE:
PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD
RUSH**



**A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park**

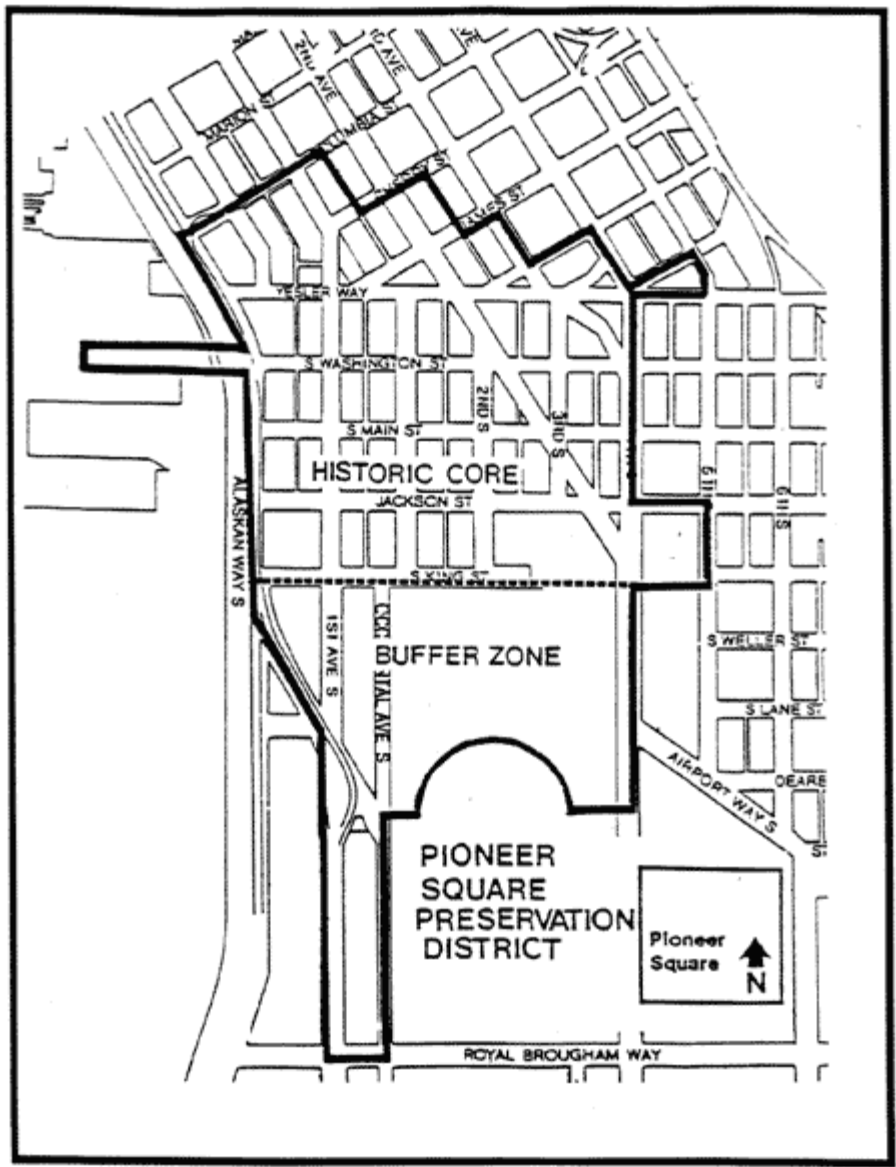
CHAPTER SIX
Historic Resources in the Modern Era

Pioneer Square Historic District



The Pioneer Square Historic District Boundaries.
(Pioneer Square National Registration Nomination, 1987)

Pioneer Square Preservation District



The City of Seattle's Pioneer Square Preservation District Boundaries.
(Courtesy Office of Urban Conservation, Seattle)

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<http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/klse/hrs6-1.htm>

HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

CHAPTER SIX

Historic Resources in the Modern Era

Seattle's Gold-Rush Era Properties Located Outside the Pioneer Square Historic District

Although most buildings associated with the gold rush in Seattle are located within the Pioneer Square Historic District, some properties lie outside the district's boundaries. This study involved the identification of gold-rush era resources that are located outside the district and which date from after the Seattle fire in 1889 until the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (AYP) in 1909. Seattle expanded rapidly during this period, in part due to the influx of miners and mining-related businesses. The study also includes properties associated with the AYP because it represents the culmination of Seattle's fascination with the Far North. The already familiar AYP properties located at the original fairgrounds on the University of Washington campus, however, have not been included in this study.

Historical Research Associates, Inc. (HRA) initiated the research for this project by contacting historical preservation agencies and organizations to inquire about their knowledge of gold rush resources located outside the Pioneer Square Historic District. Those contacted include the Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, Allied Arts, and Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority. The latter assisted in identifying the house of George Carmack, who filed the first claim for Klondike gold.

HRA historians obtained the addresses of additional properties through research in Seattle City Directories. Using key words such as "Alaska, Klondike, Miner, and Yukon," HRA identified addresses of businesses located outside the Pioneer Square Historic District. A similar process was used to go through Klondike guidebooks, which advertised businesses associated with the gold rush. The National Park Service (NPS) is currently developing a database, which includes scanned gold-rush images from historic newspaper articles, advertisements, and photographs. HRA used the database to help identify the addresses of gold rush businesses.

HRA also used Seattle City Directories to determine the addresses of individuals who played an important role in the gold rush. HRA

researched the residences of Seattle promoter Erastus Brainerd, Mayor William Wood, and miners Tom Lippy and George Carmack. Information relating to the architectural characteristics and history of the Wood and Carmack residences is included later in this chapter. HRA determined that the Brainerd and Lippy homes had been demolished. During the early 1900s, Brainerd lived in downtown Seattle at 1116 Fifth Avenue and in 1909 he moved to Richmond Beach. The YMCA building replaced Brainerd's downtown address in 1913. [6] From 1900 until 1931, Thomas Lippy lived in a grand house located at 1019 James Street. Constructed by Seattle Pioneer James Scurry in 1890, the house was demolished in 1966. [7]

HRA conducted further research on identified buildings by looking at their specific addresses in Sanborn Fire Insurance maps and obtaining King County Assessor's historic property cards for each building. Historians obtained information about the historic use of some properties by accessing articles and advertisements listed in the NPS database of gold mining businesses. HRA obtained available records associated with the early history of buildings from the Seattle Department of Construction and Land Use. HRA also consulted historic preservation records filed at the Seattle Office of Urban Conservation and Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. These records included National Register and City landmark nominations.

The nine gold-rush era buildings that HRA identified outside the Pioneer Square Historic District include the U.S. Assay Office (613 9th Avenue), the Colman Building (801-821 First Avenue), the Grand Pacific Hotel (1117 First Avenue), the Holyoke Building (1018 First Avenue), the Globe Building (1007 First Avenue), the Moore Theatre and Hotel (1932 Second Avenue), the George Carmack House (1522 East Jefferson Street), the William Wood House (816 35th Avenue) and the Woodson Apartments (1820 24th Street). Six of these buildings are listed in the National Register and as Seattle Landmarks. The nomination for each National Register property is included in the Appendix. The unlisted Carmack and Wood houses appear eligible for the National Register. Although the Woodson Apartment building possesses an association with the AYP as an example of residential development that occurred prior to the event, physical alterations have compromised its integrity making it ineligible for the National Register. A catalog at the end of this section provides current and historic photographs, along with a summary of each property's architectural characteristics, past uses, and potential eligibility for the National Register.

While the Pioneer Square Historic District's gold rush resources are located within a cohesive group of properties built soon after Seattle's 1889 fire, most of the buildings identified outside the district were constructed later. Six of the properties outside Pioneer Square are associated with two phases of development: the northward expansion of downtown along First Avenue (1889-1909) and Seattle's preparation for the AYP (1907-1909). The development of a commercial district along First Avenue began as early as 1889 with the construction of the Holyoke Building at the southeast corner of First Avenue and Spring Street. [8] It was not until the turn of the century, however, that a considerable amount of development occurred in this area. Construction associated with the

AYP was limited to the years just prior to the event. Three properties, notably the U.S. Assay Office and the houses of George Carmack and William Wood, do not correspond to the above listed phases.

HRA determined that the Holyoke Building, the Grand Pacific Hotel, the Globe Building, and the Colman Building are associated with both the northward expansion of Seattle's retail district and the gold rush. During the 1970s, the Seattle Office of Urban

Conservation recognized the historic significance of buildings along First Avenue and worked to establish a First Avenue Historic District stretching from Pioneer Square (Columbia Street) north to the Pike Place Market (Union Street). The Office of Urban Conservation determined after numerous public hearings and the demolition of an entire block of these buildings that the historic First Avenue properties should be nominated individually rather than as a district. Several of the historic First Avenue properties, including the Holyoke and the Colman buildings, had already been listed in the National Register. Consequently, in 1980, the Office of Urban Conservation prepared a National Register nomination for the following seven buildings, referring to them as the First Avenue Groups: the Globe Building (1001-1011 First Avenue), the Beebe Building (1013 First Avenue), the Cecil Hotel (1019-1023 First Avenue), the Coleman Building (94-96 Spring Street), the Grand Pacific Hotel (1115-1117 First Avenue), the Colonial Hotel (1119-1123 First Avenue), and the National Building (1006-1024 Western Avenue). The Coleman Building is the only property from this group that was not listed in the National Register. A copy of the First Avenue Groups' National Register nomination is included in the Appendix.



According to the First Avenue Groups' National Register nomination, the Grand Pacific Hotel, the Globe Building, the Beebe Building, the Cecil Hotel, and the Colonial Hotel were constructed to house Seattle's large transient labor population, which had grown as a result of the Klondike Gold Rush. [9] Research indicated the Grand Pacific Hotel and the Globe Building also housed businesses associated with the gold rush. The Seattle Woolen Mill, which outfitted miners with clothing and blankets, was located in the street-level commercial space of the Grand Pacific Hotel from 1899 until 1914. From 1903 until 1912, the Globe Building housed the offices of the Alaska Gold Standard Mining Co., and from 1908 until 1909 the Treasurer's Office for the AYP was also located in the Globe Building. [10] Because HRA did not find additional information connecting the gold rush and the Beebe, Cecil, and Colonial hotels, these buildings were not included in the catalog.

SEATTLE CITY DIRECTORY1177

T. E. EYANSON, PRESIDENTE. W. EYANSON, SECRETARY

...SEATTLE WOOLEN MILL...

MANUFACTURERS OF

Pure Wool Blankets, Indian Robes, Flannels
Cassimeres and Dress Goods



PIONEER MANUFACTURERS OF

Llama Underwear, Heavy Mackinaw Clothing and
Double Woven Blankets for the
Arctic Regions

...WHOLESALE AND RETAIL...

Office and Salesroom 1119 First Ave. SEATTLE, WASH.

The Holyoke Building, located at the southeast corner of Spring Street and First Avenue, is also part of the commercial district's northward expansion. In 1976, the Office of Urban Conservation nominated the Holyoke Building as a fine example of the Victorian Style. The nomination also noted that the Holyoke was the "first office building to be completed after

Seattle's disastrous fire of 1889." [11] HRA determined that during the gold rush the Northwest Fixture Company, a supplier of lighting equipment for Klondike miners, occupied the Holyoke from 1894 until 1900. [12]

Advertisement for Rochester Clothing Co., 1897, located in the Colman Building at 805 First Avenue.

The Colman Building, located on the west side of First Avenue between Columbia and Marion streets, was constructed in 1889 as Seattle's commercial district

spread northward. Architect Stephen Meany originally designed the Colman Building as a two-story Romanesque Revival building. In 1904, architect August Tidemand redesigned it into a six-story Chicago Style building. [13] It has been listed in the National Register as a fine example of the Chicago Style of architecture and for its association with James Colman an influential businessman in Seattle. [14] The Colman Building housed two businesses that catered to gold seekers. The grocer Louch, Augustine & Co. occupied the Colman Building from 1894 until 1907, and the Klondike clothing outfitter, Rochester Clothing Co. was located in the building from 1897 until 1899. HRA also determined that during the AYP years, the Colman Building housed the offices of the exposition's publisher and legal counsel. [15]



The Moore Theatre and Hotel and the Woodson Apartments were constructed in direct response to the AYP. Anticipating the event, land developer James A. Moore constructed his namesake Theatre and Hotel in downtown Seattle. When the theatre opened on December 28, 1907, its connection to the AYP was stressed by featuring a comic opera entitled *The Alaskan*. [16] The Moore is listed in the National Register because of its unique design, association with the AYP, and its role as a "leading cultural house in the city." [17]

Expecting an increased need for housing due to the AYP, Irene and Zacharais Woodson constructed the Woodson Apartments in the Central District. Although the Woodson Apartment building possesses an important tie to the AYP, it is not eligible for the National Register because physical changes have compromised its integrity.

The U.S. Assay Office and the houses of miner George Carmack and Mayor William Wood are not associated with either the commercial district's northward expansion along First Avenue or the AYP. Among the properties included in this study, the U.S. Assay Office is the most directly related to the gold rush. Although it was not originally constructed as an assay office, public demand for a federal assayist required that this entertainment hall be converted for government use as an assay office in 1897. According to this property's 1969 National Register nomination, it continued to be used for this purpose until 1932. [18]

When George Carmack first returned from the Far North, he lived in hotels in the Pioneer Square area. From 1905 until 1909, he lived in a house at 3007 East Denny, which no longer remains standing. [19] The house Carmack lived in from 1910 until his death in 1922 is still standing in Seattle's Central District. This property appears eligible for the National Register for its association with Carmack, who filed the first claim for Klondike gold.

As the mayor who left his post to try his hand at mining in the Yukon, William Wood played a significant role in Seattle's gold rush history. Prior to the gold rush Wood owned a large amount of land east of Greenlake, which he was responsible for platting. According to Seattle City Directories, from 1892 until 1900 he lived at the intersection of Woodlawn and Greenlake. Because historical maps do not show that Woodlawn and Greenlake intersect, HRA could not identify the location of Wood's house during this period. Between 1900 and 1904, Wood lived at two different addresses and from 1905 until 1915, he lived at 816 35th Avenue. [20] The latter property appears to be eligible for the National Register because of its association with him.

The following catalog includes the six National Register-listed and three unlisted properties that HRA identified as associated with the Klondike Gold Rush. For each building, the catalog includes a description of the property's design and its association with the Klondike Gold Rush. The map shows the [location of each property](#).

Historic Buildings

[U.S. Assay Office](#) | [Colman Building](#) | [Grand Pacific Hotel](#)
[Holyoke Building](#) | [Globe Building](#) | [Moore Theatre and Hotel](#)
[George Carmack House](#) | [Woodson Apartments](#) | [William Wood House](#)

CHAPTER SIX

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HARD DRIVE TO THE KLONDIKE: PROMOTING SEATTLE DURING THE GOLD RUSH



A Historic Resource Study for the Seattle Unit of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

CHAPTER SIX

Historic Resources in the Modern Era

Recommendations

Research

An examination of the papers of the Alaska Commercial Company and Northern Commercial Company could reveal much about the development of transportation facilities in Seattle. As noted in Chapter 3, historian Clarence B. Bagley observed that an increasing number of Seattle-owned shipping companies emerged during the early twentieth century. Further analysis of the records of the Alaska Commercial Company -- based in San Francisco -- could help explain this trend. Also, these documents could yield additional information about San Francisco's interest in the Klondike Gold Rush. They are located at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley and Stanford Library in Palo Alto, California. Further research could be conducted to compile a more complete list of gold-rush era businesses, their activities, and their current status. The Appendix includes a list of such businesses compiled by the Centennial Committee of Washington State. To enhance this list, the names and locations of additional businesses may be obtained through turn-of-the-century newspapers (listed in the bibliography) and Seattle City Directories. To determine the current status of the companies, the Articles of Incorporation for each company could then be obtained from Secretary of State records at the Washington State Archives in Olympia. New information obtained from this research could be added to the NPS database and used for interpretive purposes.

Interpretation

In coordination with the City of Seattle, the NPS could develop signs to interpret historic buildings within the Pioneer Square area. The Pioneer Square Historic District has been chosen as one of Seattle's 37 urban villages, where intensive planning occurs to accommodate growth and commercial development that is neighborhood friendly. In March 1998, the City of Seattle released the "Draft Pioneer Square Neighborhood Plan." One of the top seven projects proposed in the Plan was to "facilitate strong coordination and partnering among projects to strengthen the neighborhood's unique historic character and arts identity." [51] The City proposed the development of a "comprehensive public art and history program" through the creation of legends and public art gateways. Utilizing information provided in this report and the NPS's

database of gold-rush era businesses, the NPS could contribute valuable information to the interpretation of historic resources for use in public exhibits.

National Register Nominations

This project identified the house of George Carmack, the discoverer of the Klondike gold, and gold-rush era Mayor William Wood. Both houses appear eligible for the National Register under National Register criteria A and B, due to their association with the Klondike Gold Rush and significant individuals from that period. HRA recommends that a determination of eligibility for both properties be requested from the Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. If the properties are determined eligible for the National Register, the property owner, the Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, and or a non-profit dedicated to historical preservation, could nominate both properties to the National Register, using the information provided in this historic resource study. Local historic preservation organizations that could nominate the properties include, Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, Allied Arts, and the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

The NPS, in collaboration with the Seattle Office of Urban Conservation, could consider conducting additional research on historic properties located within the Pioneer Square Historic District. Because National Register requirements have changed over the years, important historical and architectural descriptions are missing from the original 1969 nomination, which listed the majority of Seattle's oldest post-fire commercial architecture in the National Register.

Today, new National Register historic district nominations are required to provide detailed information about individual structures within a proposed district. Revising the Pioneer Square National Register nomination would provide an opportunity to both bring the nomination up to current standards and conduct research on the historic use of properties included in the original nomination. Such research is not necessary for the buildings included in the 1978 and 1987 amendments to the nomination, because individual descriptions of the historical use and architectural characteristics of these buildings were included in the boundary extension nominations. The new information could be consolidated into a document that would be a more useful planning tool for both the City and preservation organizations. Furthermore, historical research on the buildings included in the original district nomination would provide the NPS with valuable interpretive information about gold-rush era structures. Utilizing preservation and planning studies created since the designation of the historic district in 1969, the NPS could consolidate information about the current status of the district and its resources. The NPS database could provide information about the historic use of many of the district's buildings and new information obtained in the course of preparing the nomination could be added to the database. This new research material could enhance the Park's interpretive and educational programs, which present the legacy of the Klondike Gold Rush to the public.

End of Chapter Six

CHAPTER SIX

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