

# **Alaska Study Guide**

**Alaska by James A. Michener**

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## Plot Summary

Approximately a billion years ago there was a protuberance in the northwest corner of what was to become North America. This landmass would become the future Alaska. A half billion years ago, this landmass had no mountains or trees or other growth. In winter, the sun remained low in the sky for six months while summer temperatures could reach 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Some sea life was moving onto land at this time.

Thus begins the novel, *Alaska*, by James Michener. Written in the typical Michener style, the book begins with the geological formation of the Alaskan land mass. Michener describes how animal and plant life occurred in the area and how the three basic groups of natives arrived. Conditions were harsh but the people survived, as did the animals.

Michener examines how the Russians expanded into Alaska in response to the lucrative fur trade. The Russians imposed harsh conditions on the natives, often slaughtering many of them in order to obtain the expensive pelts. Ships from other nations began to arrive and trade with the natives as the Russians began to establish cities on Alaska. The ships visited the various native settlements.

In 1867, the Russians sold Alaska to the United States for over seven million dollars. The discovery of gold in the Yukon resulted in an influx of people, among them, young Tom Venn and his foster mother, Missy Peckham. They had to survive, and teenage Tom negotiated a deal with a Seattle general store, Ross and Raglan, to open a branch in Alaska. This was the beginning of a business empire which Tom would inherit through his marriage to Lydia Ross.

The establishment of the store branches followed the gold rush, and Venn eventually established the first salmon cannery at Pleisaides Glaciers. The growth of business clashed with the culture of the natives, as there were limitations on hunting and fishing, which was the native way of life. After Alaska became a state, thirteen native corporations were established with the shares distributed to the natives. Other events affecting the natives was the discovery at Prudhoe Bay. All of these events had economic and social consequences, as the corporations were grossly mismanaged and eventually under investigation by the federal government.

The story of Alaska is basically the result of the greed of businessmen and those who had a genuine love for the land and wanted what was best for the Alaskans, including allowing them to preserve their culture. This is the exciting story, told in true Michener style.



# Chapter 1

## Chapter 1 Summary

Approximately a billion years ago, there was a protuberance in the northwest corner of what was to become North America. This landmass would become the future Alaska. A half billion years ago, this landmass had no mountains or trees or other growth. In winter, the sun remained low in the sky for six months while summer temperatures could reach 120 degrees Fahrenheit. Some sea life was moving onto land at this time.

At this time, geological plates were shifting and Alaska could have ended up attached to any of three continents. Eventually, a great peninsula was formed and there was a land bridge from Alaska to Asia. The land bridge eventually disappeared, covered by water. Alaska was now separated from Asia. The Pacific Plate collided with the continental plate and the result was the formation of mountains and lakes. Animals were appearing. The Alaska Range formed, younger than the already formed Brooks Range.

The plates continued to collide, creating the Aleutians. There were also many earthquakes and volcanoes. Some of the most powerful earthquakes in the world were in this area. There were also many tsunamis.

Since the plates are still shifting, it is possible that Alaska could break from North America and become part of Asia in some future millennium.

## Chapter 1 Analysis

This chapter begins, as many of Michener's books do, with the geological formation of Alaska. Michener described the shifting, plates, earthquakes and tsunamis that characterized the region and how the rough terrain was difficult for settlers.



# Chapter 2

## Chapter 2 Summary

Over time, there were layers of ice and snow that formed. These huge bodies of ice began to move slowly, due to the forces of gravity. As these glaciers melted, rivers formed. Great chunks of ice would break away and float in the ocean. The water from the ocean would feed the snow that fell upon the land. This snow then fed the glaciers. This was the ice age.

At this time there was no ice cap at the North Pole, even though there was one at the South Pole. The ice moved to the south, blanketing many parts of Europe and South America. Life returned to these regions when the ice melted. These ice ages occurred about seven hundred million years ago. There were shorter ice ages about two hundred million years ago. The last one ended about fourteen thousand years ago. Another ice age may occur further south in North America in another twenty thousand years, leaving Alaska ice free.

Many land masses were joined at this time, such as Alaska to Siberia. The area was known as Beringia and was approximately six hundred miles wide. This resulted in the migration of animals between the two areas. One of these animals was the mastodon, which resembled an elephant. They avoided the harsher areas of the north and went where the food was, basically the tundra. There were many animals resembling large lions and tigers which fed on the mastodon. The mastodon learned to avoid areas where the cats were.

Other animal life included beavers and steppe bison. There were also wolves and sheep, and many of these animals made their way to North America when the barriers were removed. The migration of animals was in both directions between North America and Asia.

Over the years, the mastodon changed as it acclimated itself to the environment and evolved into the mammoth.

## Chapter 2 Analysis

This chapter continues discussing the geological formation of Alaska and describes the ages and the formation of glaciers. These ice sheets covered many areas of North America and Europe. As they melted over thousands of years, life returned to the areas.

A land bridge between Alaska and Siberia, known as Beringia, explained the migration of animals from Siberia to Alaska. One of the animals that migrated was the mastodon, which eventually evolved into the mammoth.



Michener tells of the life of the mammoth in a story about Matriarch and her family and how they roamed the land and survived. One day they met a strange looking two foot animal that hunted and killed Matriarch's granddaughter. This new animal was man.



# Chapter 3

## Chapter 3 Summary

Varnak, the hunter, lived in Nurik, a village in Siberia. His woman was Tevuk and they had two sons. Living with them was Marnak's mother, known as the Ancient One. The Ancient One would tell stories to the younger ones of how they came to live in the cold north. Because of the lack of food, the people talked about moving. They decided to cross the bridge. Three families, in addition to Varnak, begin the journey. They brought the supplies they needed with them.

It took them five days to reach Alaska. On the sixth day, they came to a river, where they camped. They spotted Matriarch and her herd of mammoth. It took them several days to kill one of the young females. All parts of the animal were utilized for various things, in addition to food.

Varnak and his people never returned to Asia. They became Alaskans. Descendants of Varnak would wander south as far as Arizona and become Navajo Indians. They were known as the Athapascans.

The Eskimos also originated in Siberia. Oogruk was one of these Eskimos. He and his wife were from the village of Pelek. Oogruk and the others from the seaside village hunted whales and other sea animals.

One day Oogruk went out in his umiak. He found a whale and trailed it until the time came for him to try to alert the other hunters. The six hunters set out after the whale. Oogruk, who was inexperienced in whale hunting, caused them to lose the whale. They finally went to shore in a strange place because of lack of food and water. They were at Shishmarek on the eastern shore of the Bering Sea. When they returned to Pelek, the man wanted Oogruk's wife, Nukleet, for himself. They soon left Pelek and went to Alaska. They stayed in the western-most strip where there was an abundance of animals.

A boy named Azazruk became leader of Varnak's people. He became shaman. When the time came for them to leave, they went southwest and spent nineteen years wandering. They crossed to the islands and settled on an island called Lopak and became what was known as the Aleutians.

## Chapter 3 Analysis

This chapter introduces the Indians, the Eskimos and the Aleuts and how these three groups came to be in the parts of Alaska that they inhabited. They all migrated for various reasons and had their roots in Asia. Each group laid roots in different parts of Alaska. The Athapascans were the Indians who settled in the center part of Alaska. They were hunters who moved where the animals were abundant. Their descendants



eventually reached Arizona and became the Navajo Indians. Ogruk's people from Pelek were the Eskimos, who settled in the north and lived off the sea. Azazruk's people became the Aleutians, who settled in the islands.





# Chapter 4

## Chapter 4 Summary

Trofin Zhdanko was a Cossack in the town of Yakula in Eastern Siberia. He killed the governor and was imprisoned and taken to a prison in Vologda, where Tsar Peter Romanov came to see him. The Tsar had known him for a long time and trusted him and said he needed his help. They talked over beer and the Tsar wanted to know about the groups in Siberia, particularly the Chjkchis. Trofin found his friend, a woman named Maria, to whom he had entrusted something of value that he sent from Siberia. He had promised this to the Tsar. The Tsar opened the package to reveal two sea otter fur pelts.

Peter wanted Trofin to go to Okhotsk with a team of carpenters to build a big ship. Trofin had to learn to read and to learn how things worked on the docks. He reported what he learned to the Tsar. Trofin found four good men; two were Germans, one was a Swede and the other a Dane. Peter selected Vitus Bering to be the captain of the ship he wanted built in Siberia. After Peter's death, Bering received his commission from Catherine the Great. He was to travel to Siberia, build a ship, and see if there was a land bridge.

They began their long journey, recruiting men along the way, reaching Okhotsk a year later. In the fourth year, they decided to build the ships at Boksheretsk. Here they built their ship in ninety-eight days. They waited out the winter of 1728-29. Then they sailed the designated route and returned to St. Petersburg.

Since they didn't find a land bridge, they were sent back on another expedition in 1733. They built the St. Peter and the St. Paul and sailed in 1740 to explore the northern waters. The two ships became separated in a storm but both continued toward North America. Bering's ship reached Alaska on July 6 . They did a little light exploring and established the basis for traveling with the native Chirikovs. St. Paul also reached Alaska. Two of their small boats and fifteen men vanished.

Zhdanko went ashore and exchanged gifts with an Aleut. He learned the name of the island was Lapak. On the return trip, many of the men became sick and died of scurvy. They decided to spend the winter on land. Many of the men, including Bering, died. Zhdanko and forty-five others survived and rejoined the St. Paul. He decided to remain in Okhotsk.

Zhdanko found a job with the Poznikovs, who were in the fur trading business. When they had a load of pelts, there were attacked by six Siberian guards and Poznikov was killed. The widow Marina talked Zhdanko into staying in business with her. Her son Innokonti killed several of the natives at the island village. By the time they left in mid July 1746, sixty-three Aleuts had been slain.

Madame Poznikov built a house in Petropavlousk and soon married Zhdanko.



In 1776-79, Captain James Cook explored the area, in addition to the South Pacific. In 1780, another explorer, Nok Pym, is in the area.

## Chapter 4 Analysis

This chapter describes how the Russians, under Peter the Great, began the exploration of the northern waters off of Siberia. The first expedition was commissioned by Catherine the Great and sent Zhdanko and Bering to Siberia. After the second expedition, he decided to remain in Siberia. He met the Poznikovs and became involved in the fur trade. When Poznikov died, he married the widow, Marina, and together with Marina's son, they established a lucrative fur trading business.

This chapter looks at the cruelty involved in the fur trade business, not only at the animals, but also to the Alaskan natives, many of whom were killed in the Russian's pursuit of the lucrative pelts.



# Chapter 5

## Chapter 5 Summary

In 1789, a group of Russian hunters removed all of the males over the age of two from the island of Lapak, leaving the women to fend for themselves. The eldest woman on the island, known as the Old One, was ninety-one years old. She assembled a group of women to hunt a whale. They managed to catch a small whale and survive for a year.

When the ship, Tsar Ivan, arrived, the Old One sold her granddaughter, Cidaq, who was taken to Kodiak Island. The released Russian prisoners on the ship were being taken to the Seal Islands to work in the fur trade. One day a shaman named Lunmasaq arrived. He took an interest in Cidaq, who told him she planned to get her revenge against the Russians.

The man who purchased Cidaq, Yermak Rudenko, was being sent to Seal Island. He told the trading officials that he had a wife from Lapak Island. When Cidaq was told of this, she saw it as a way to exact her revenge. She planned to lead Rudenko to believe she would marry him, then say she couldn't accept Christianity. Then he would be returned to Seal Island.

Marina Zhdanko hired Aleksandr Baranov to be her company's representative in the Aleutian Islands. Going with him to the islands was her newly ordained grandnephew, Vasili Voronov. Voronov arrived several months before Baranov and was told about having to instruct Cidaq. She told him her story, beginning with her life at Lapak Island and her plan to deceive Rudenko so he would be returned to Seal Island. When Voronov felt that he had converted Cidaq, he gave her the Christian name of Sofia Kuchovskaya. In the end, he convinced her to save Rudenko and she married him.

Voronov found that Rudenko beat his wife.

Baranov arrived in Kodiak. He decided he would build an onion dome church for Voronov. Voronov told Baranov about Rudenko beating Sofia and Baranov sent for Rudenko. He told his aide to shoot Rudenko if he hit Sofia or the priest again. Rudenko got himself back into Baranov's good graces by taking him to hunt a polar bear.

When the shaman tried to help Sofia after Rudenko beat her again, Rudenko killed the shaman. Baranov wanted the marriage to Sofia annulled, but the priest says he couldn't do it. As they argued, there was an underwater earthquake and a tsunami, in which Rudenko was killed. Baranov founded an orphanage for the homeless children and put Sofia in charge of it.

Voronov wanted a dispensation from his vows to marry Sofia. They had a common-law marriage while awaiting his dispensation, just as Baranov had with Anna.



## Chapter 5 Analysis

Cidaq, who was so abused by the Russians, was motivated by revenge. She was told by Shaman Lunasaq's mother that three men would be arriving. The first, Yermak Rudenko, was the man who purchased her on Lapak Island and raped and abused her. He needed her to be his wife to keep from being returned to Seal Island. She decided to play along, giving him hope, then saying she couldn't accept Christianity so that he would be sent back to Seal Island.

The second person who entered Cidaq's life was Father Vasili Voronov. He converted Cidaq to Christianity, gave her the Christian name of Sofia, and convinced her to marry Rudenko.

When Rudenko was killed in a tsunami, Voronov asked for a release from his vows so he could marry Sofia, who was then running the orphanage established by Baranov. Since communications meant this could take many years, they established a common-law marriage.



# Chapter 6

## Chapter 6 Summary

Raven-heart was the prime slave serving the Great Toion of the Tlingit Indians. Since his master was dying, he knew he would be killed, since it was the Tlingit custom. Along the way, he was stopped by Captain Corey and First Mate Kane of the Evening Star, who knew him. They went to the Tlingits to trade rifles and rum for pelts.

On July 8, 1799, Baranov arrived on Sitka Island, proclaiming it the capital of Russian America. Raven-heart was sent to scout the Armada. Eventually, Baranov came to see the Tlingits and showed them an old musket, not knowing that they had five hundred American muskets. The Russians built a fort at Redoubt St. Michael at the other end of the island.

When he married Kakeena and built a house, they gave it to the leader Kot-le-an to be used as a fort after they attack and killed the Russians at the settlement. Two years later, the Russian boats returned, finding the settlement destroyed. Baranov found the Tlingits were all at their new fort. Baranov met with the Tlingits and presented his demands for peace, which the Tlingits rejected. After a siege of the fort, the Tlingits fled rather than surrender.

In the next fifteen years, Baranov's reputation as head of Russia's empire in North America grew. Raven-heart's house was expanded and became known as Baranov's Castle. After the dedication of a church with an onion dome, the Indians reappeared.

The ship Muscovy appeared with Lieutenant Ermelov and his wife, Natasha. Ermelov was very critical of Baranov and his use of government funds in letters to his superiors.

When the Evening Star returned, Baranov told Corey that he didn't want them supplying guns and rum to the natives. Corey replied that they had the right to trade whatever they want. Ermelov returned with orders to investigate Baranov's use of funds, while at the same time, Baranov received a promotion. Baranov was seventy at the time of Ermelov's investigation. In 1819, Ermelov arrested Baranov and was in the midst of taking him back to St. Petersburg when Baranov died.

In 1829, Arkady Voronov, son of Sofia and Vasili, returned to Sitka Island after completing his studies. His father, Voronov, was being made Bishop of Irkutsk and had to resume the black robes, which meant he had to dissolve his marriage to Sofia, who would remain in New Archangel with her son Arkady and his wife. Arkady became General Manager of the Company.

Raven-heart staged an attack on the Russians at New Archangel. Raven-heart and over one hundred Tlingits were killed. Kakeena and her son left for a distant island. Sofia decided to rejoin the Indians but died in 1831.



On a trip to Hawaii and California, Arkady learned of Russia's plans to sell Alaska to the Americans. The Voronovs attended the ceremony when Alaska was transferred to America.

## Chapter 6 Analysis

This chapter discusses Sitka Island and how it was colonized. The Tlingit Indians and other natives eventually learned to live in peace with the Russians. Baranov colonized the various islands, which became known as Russian America. Even though there were interracial marriages, the natives were still considered inferior by many of the Russians. In spite of this, the establishments prospered and grew.

Vasili returned to black robes to take a position as Bishop of Irkusk. This meant he had to dissolve his marriage to Sofia, who died soon after he left. There were two levels in the Russian church, white robes and black robes. A priest could advance in the church only if he had black robes, in which case he couldn't be married.

This chapter also saw the sale of Alaska to America. The people were under the American government and not the Russian government.



# Chapter 7

## Chapter 7 Summary

Custom House revenues on Sitka dropped after the Americans took control of Alaska. Oauplain Emil Schransky piloted the Erebus to the area. He was part of the lucrative fur trade. When he left Desolation Points, the Eskimo Agulaak plotted revenge against Father Fyodor, the local priest. He killed the priest, leaving the wife, Esther, with two small children, Dmitri and Lena.

In 1877, the Tlingit Indians watched as the army troops departed from Alaska. The Indians went to see Big Ears, who had taken the name of Ivan. They made plans to attack the American settlement on Sitka. The Indians slowly infiltrated the area.

The Caldwells, from Oregon, lived in Sitka. Mrs. Caldwell became a school teacher. Mr. Caldwell could not open a law office, so he worked at whatever jobs he can find. The Caldwells discovered that the Tlingits were coming at night to the boarding house where they lived. They knew there was some kind of conspiracy, but there were no authorities to report the problem to. A group of men went to Canada to ask for help and returned with the Canadian warship, Osprey. When the ship arrived, the Tlingits left the area.

Captain Healy's ship arrived in the area and stopped at various points on the Alaskan coast. At various villages, he found most of the population dead. There were no signs of food, just the kegs of rum they had obtained from Schransky. In 1885, Healy received a new command, the Bear.

Sheldon Jackson, a missionary, was sent to Deadhorse, Montana to start a Presbyterian Church. From Montana, he went to Alaska. He would spend six months of the year in Alaska and the other six in the states, lobbying and lecturing. His lobbying led to the passage of the Organic Act, which established a rudimentary government in Alaska.

When the Bear arrived in Sitka, Jackson signed on as the first mate. Jackson and Healy went after Schransky to stop him from providing rum to the natives. At Desolation Point, they anchored and tried to convert the natives, including Dimitri, who functioned as a Russian Catholic priest. Healy had Jackson returned to the Bear.

## Chapter 7 Analysis

The problems on Sitka continued, due to the clash of cultures. The Indians wanted to be free to live according to their own customs and traditions. The Tlingits didn't want to slaughter the white people at Sitka. They just wanted their own land, a guaranteed food supply, salmon fishing rights and participation in the law making process. But the white settlers feared a rebellion and brought a Canadian warship to Sitka to prevent it.



Captain Schransky supplied the natives with rum. As a result of their drinking, they stopped hunting and began dying from starvation. Captain Healy and Jackson began to oppose Schransky and eventually brought him to trial. Healy was relieved of his command for drunkenness and died a year later.





# Chapter 8

## Chapter 8 Summary

George Washington Carmack found gold in the Yukon in 1896. His gold field was known as Bonanza and was located in the Klondike. His claim was known as Eldorado. This began the Gold Rush in Alaska. John Klope of Idaho was one of the men who made the trip to Alaska and the journey to the Klondike. During the walk in the Yukon, many of the men died. Along the way, they met Sanquq, a native with a sled. He took as many of them as he could, including Klope, to Fort Yukon, and then they sent a team to rescue the next of the men.

Klope had Sanquq take him to Dawson, from where he could reach the gold fields. He found a spot and filed a claim.

In Seattle, a man calling himself Klondike Kernel and his wife arrived. They and their companion, Tom, were fugitives from the Chicago police. They found jobs and begin gathering what they need for gold prospecting. When the Venns had enough money, they went to Alaska. They had to guard their possessions on the beach when they arrived. One day, as they were leaving their camp, there was an avalanche. The Venns helped rescue the survivors.

When the Venns reached the mining area, they were told the rules. They were hard workers, and the others were impressed by the fact. The father Ben, who called himself Klondike Kernel, was killed in a sledding accident. Tom took his mother, Missy, to the tent city at Lake Bennett. They gathered wood and the material necessary to make a boat. After they finished the boat, they took it out of the river and then on to Dawson City. They opened a tent restaurant and lived on the boat. John Klope came in one day and introduced himself to Missy, promising to bring her some sourdough. Their tent restaurant was destroyed in a fire.

The Venns went to Klope's claim site and moved into his cabin with him. Missy soon shared Klope's bed.

Tom opened a branch of a general store in the area.

## Chapter 8 Analysis

This chapter describes the beginning of the Gold Rush in Alaska. The big claim at Eldorado caused a massive influx of people who wanted to strike it rich in the Klondike. This chapter also introduces the characters of John Klope and Tom Venn, both of whom came in search of gold. They survived the harsh conditions by their own ingenuity. After Benn Venn's death, Missy and Tom worked hard to build a boat and reach Dawson City. Once there, they survived by opening a tent restaurant, which provided them with a good living until a fire destroyed it. This was how they met John Klope and eventually

moved in with him to work his claim. Tom, who was only fifteen, saw the need for a general store and made arrangements with a Seattle store to open a branch. The people had to survive while they prospected for gold.



# Chapter 9

## Chapter 9 Summary

Reindeer were shipped to parts of Alaska to provide food for the population. The three men who herded the reindeer were Skellerop, Arkikov and Sana. The men decided to remain in Alaska and prospect for gold. They filed their claims and found gold. There was opposition to them in the area. The group managed to take Arkikov's claim. There were no taxes or juries in Alaska, which meant crime flourished. After the body of one of the thieves was found, the men recovered their claims. There was trouble again and Arkikov lost his claim.

The men explored the area around Nome and found it teeming with gold. When word reached Dawson City, the miners began to head for Nome. They booked passage to Nome and bought their supplies at Tom Venn's store. Venn decided to move the store to Nome. Missy worked for a doctor in the hospital tent, where many men were robbed of their gold.

A man named Matt Murphy arrived in Nome. He eventually bought a bicycle and brought newspapers to Fort Yukon. He began his own mail service. Soon, Congress would enact an Alaskan code and two judges would arrive. Malcolm Ross, senior partner of Ross and Raglan in Seattle, opposed Alaskan home rule. At a legal convention in Chicago, Marvin Huxley supported Alaskan self-rule. The Alaskan Code was enacted in 1900.

When Judge Grant arrived, he reviewed Arkikov's case. He was corrupt and defrauded the man out of his claim. Missy had worked for the judge and kept records. When a detective named Snyder arrived, she gave him all the information and he arrested Grant.

Klope returned to Seattle after two years in Alaska.

## Chapter 9 Analysis

Three men found gold near Nome, which caused a large migration of people into the area. Tom Venn, who had a good head for business, moved his store to Nome, knowing that business would be good in the area. Nome was rich in gold but also high in crime. Arkikov was one of the three men deprived of his claim because he was Russian. The man who took his claim was found dead. When he got his claim back, he lost it again. When a judge arrived, the judge was corrupt and wouldn't restore the claim to Arkikov. The judge was eventually arrested for all of this corruption. There were chances to achieve great wealth in Alaska, but the risks were high.



## Chapter 10, pgs. 525 - 578

### Chapter 10, pgs. 525 - 578 Summary

In 1902, Tom Venn opened a Ross and Raglan store in Juneau. Juneau was being proposed as the new capitol of Alaska. An Indian girl named Nancy introduced herself to Tom. She took Tom to the cave where she lived and showed him a totem pole that her father, Bigears, made. Tom and Nancy went on a picnic.

A few days later, many Indians and their families began to arrive. Bigears, who had been gone for several days, arrived with paint, and they painted the totem pole. They then had a celebration, part of an ancient custom. They had a potlatch, which consisted of the pole being dragged to a pre-dug hole and erected.

In 1903, Malcolm Ross came to visit Tom in Juneau. He wanted Tom to build a salmon cannery. They looked for a location on Taku Inlet and talked to Sam Bigears about a site. Ross obtained the rights to the mouth of the cove. The land had belonged to Sam Bigears. They named the business Totem Cannery. They began construction and brought Chinese workers from San Francisco to work in the cannery. Because of this, Sam Bigears refused to do any work for them. By May, the cannery was operational.

When Sam went to fish on the river, the warden told him that he couldn't. When one of the Chinese workers was murdered in the cannery, Ross said he didn't want anymore Chinese workers.

In January 1904, Venn went to Seattle. He met with Ross and other company people about new equipment for the cannery.

### Chapter 10, pgs. 525 - 578 Analysis

This chapter looks at the beginning of the canning industry in Alaska. The salmon were plentiful in the rivers and Ross decided to expand. He and Tom Venn had a salmon cannery operation built at Pleiades Glacier. Instead of providing jobs for the local Tlingit workers, they hired Chinese workers from San Francisco, which angered Sam Bigears. The discrimination against the natives continued. The Tlingits were hired to move around boxes. Because of this, Sam viewed Tom as being with Seattle and not with Alaska.



## Chapter 10, pgs. 578 - 628

### Chapter 10, pgs. 578 - 628 Summary

When the salmon season began, Tom found that the new trapping equipment and machines worked better than expected. Venn had some management problems with the Chinese and Filipino workers. The Chinese manager, Ah Ting, disappeared, and they thought he had been killed.

Ah Ting saw the new machine and knew it would mean the end of his job. He wanted to stay in Alaska, so he went to see Bigears. Bigears helped him reach Juneau, where he quickly found work.

Tom Venn would be moving around opening other canneries and 1905 would be his last summer at Pleiades Glacier. When there were mechanical problems with the equipment, he hired Ah Ting to fix the equipment.

Missy Peckham and her companion Matt Murphy moved to Juneau and had dinner with Tom. Back at the cannery, a Canadian government investigation team arrived to study the effects of the cannery on the salmon population in other places.

Tom spent the Christmas holidays in Seattle with the Rosses and then returned to prepare for his move to Ketchikan. His relationship with Lydia, the Rosses daughter, had eroded since she had another suitor. Tom began to see Nancy Bigears again. Tom, Ah Ting and Sam Bigears worked on the Ketchikan Cannery and got it ready on time. He received word that Lydia and her mother would be arriving. He showed them around Ketchikan. At Pleiades Glacier, Tom introduced Nancy to the Rosses.

Mrs. Ross sailed for Juneau on the Montreal Queen. She and the other passengers were killed when the boat sank in a storm. Tom and Lydia eventually married, with Nancy attending the wedding. Nancy eventually quit the university and married Ah Ting.

### Chapter 10, pgs. 578 - 628 Analysis

The salmon canning factory was a threat to the salmon population. The professors who designed the trapping equipment felt that enough salmon would escape the traps to maintain the salmon population. The saga of Nerka the salmon basically told the story of the salmon population in Alaska.

The effects of automation meant that Chinese workers were not needed in the canneries. Ah Ting saw this coming, made his decision to stay in Alaska, and established himself as a repairman. If he hadn't had the foresight to do this, he would have been returned to China.

Tom Venn had relationships with both Lydia Ross and Nancy Bigears. He eventually opted to marry Lydia. Nancy soon left the university and married Ah Ting, probably on the rebound.



## Chapter 11, pgs. 629 - 683

### Chapter 11, pgs. 629 - 683 Summary

By 1919, Ross and Raglan had facilities in most of the Alaskan cities, including maritime services. Ross was in his seventies and ill, but he told Tom and Lydia that he was concerned with what was called cabotage. Cabotage was when a ship that delivered cargo and passengers to one port could not pick up passengers and cargo to be delivered to other ports. This benefited firms like Ross and Raglan.

Malcolm would not allow Tom to take over the company unless he hired Marvin Hoxey, who Tom hated. They eventually called the lobbyist, who came to Seattle to lobby in favor of pro-American legislation. The Jones Act of 1920 was enacted after Malcolm's death, and it resulted in higher shipping costs for users. Oliver Rowntree noticed the higher costs and started to travel on Ross and Raglan ships and sabotage them. From the dates, the staff suspected a student.

Oliver enlisted Tammy Ting to do the acts of sabotage. While she was on board, she met Malcolm Venn. He told Tammy that he was on board as a detective to catch someone who was committing acts of sabotage.

In 1935, in the Great Depression, 295 people from Minnesota set out for Matanuska, Alaska on a government program. They arrived at tent city where Melissa Peckham was working. Life was very harsh for the Matanuska settlers as they worked their farm.

When Matt Murphy died, he left everything to Missy except for five hundred dollars each to LeRoy and Flossie Flatch, two of the settlers. LeRoy used some of his money to buy an old Cessna airplane.

Tom Venn hired LeRoy to fly to Denali. The Venns soon helped him secure a four-seater plane so he could fly them around. He also flew Malcolm and Tammy Venn to the lodge called Venn's Lode.

In 1940, as World War II approached, Captain Leonidas Shaffer of the Army Air Corps and other men discussed the world situation. Shaffer said they had to build a road across Canada. LeRoy now had two planes and ignored the war in Europe.

### Chapter 11, pgs. 629 - 683 Analysis

In the early twentieth century, Tom Venn took over Ross and Raglan. They supported cabotage, which were pro-American rules of shipping that prevented foreign ships from picking up passengers and cargo after unloading theirs. The result of everything having to be American meant higher costs for the customers of Ross and Raglan. The higher shipping costs meant many businesses were forced to close.

The Venn and Ting families became more inter-meshed through marriage as Malcolm Venn married Tammy Ting.

As a result of a depression-era program, more settlers arrive in Alaska. These settlers were farmers and worked the land they received through low interest government loans.

There were now airplanes, World War II and talk of building a road across Canada for the war effort.





## Chapter 11, pgs. 683-737

### Chapter 11, pgs. 683-737 Summary

More airstrips were appearing in Alaska in anticipation of United States' entry into the war. Flatch flew Shaffer around to the different air strips. LeRoy entered the Air Corps as a second lieutenant after the attack at Pearl Harbor. Lieutenant Maxim Voronov from Russia arrived and talked to Shaffer. He flew around seeing some of the sites where his ancestors had been.

All of the male Flatches contributed to the war effort. LeRoy was in aviation, his brother-in-law Nate Coop was a foot soldier, and Elmer, the father, was involved in building highways. The highway was called the Alcan Highway. Elmer was injured in a construction accident.

In June 1942, Japanese war ships were spotted near the Aleutians. They withdrew when they learn there were a significant number of planes. Captain Shaffer was proved right about the possibility of an Asian invasion. Nate scouted islands and was sent on an expedition to Amchitka, one of the Aleutian Islands, and was there when American troops land. He took part in the American reconquest of Attu in May 1943. After Attu, they went on to Kiska, which was held by the Japanese. LeRoy rose to the rank of captain by the end of the war. He went back to being a bush pilot and bought a plane with both skis and wheels. He married Sandy Krickel.

Tammy announced she was in favor of Alaskan statehood, which made her an immediate friend of Missy. Tom Venn announced that Tammy's views did not represent the family. The debate for statehood continued. Tom Venn was seventy-five in 1958 when he appeared at a Congressional hearing. He was opposed to statehood. Missy spoke in favor of statehood.

Alaska became the forty-ninth state of the union.

### Chapter 11, pgs. 683-737 Analysis

The infrastructure of Alaska was developed during World War II. Airstrips were built, as well as the Alcan Highway. LeRoy Flatch had his own flying service and secured a second plane with the help of the Venns. LeRoy liked flying and was a good pilot, and after Pearl Harbor, he enlisted in the Air Corps. His father Elmer was one of the few people who could drive a car, and he was put to work constructing the Alcan Highway until he was injured in a construction accident.

After the war, Alaskan statehood became the issue. Tom Venn opposed statehood. Missy and Tammy worked in support of statehood. The debate raged on for several years, until Alaska became the forty-ninth state of the union. Even though Missy and

Tom had opposing views, they still respected one another. Missy had raised Tom, so they always remained close.



## Chapter 12, pgs. 738-803

### Chapter 12, pgs. 738-803 Summary

The United States government began to pay attention to the rights of native Alaskans in 1969. Melody Murphy, the granddaughter of Missy, testified at the hearing. In 1971, legislation, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was enacted. It set up twelve regional corporations with the shares owned by natives. A thirteenth corporation was for Alaskans living outside the state. There were provisions regarding sales and taxes.

Jeb Keeler was a Yale law school graduate who went on a hunting trip to Baflin Island. The group he was with wanted him to stay in Alaska and work with the native corporations. They told him about the Prudhoe Bay oil. Jeb went to Juneau and registered his credentials.

Jeb and Poley Markham went walrus hunting. Jeb wanted to keep the head but found it was again the law. As Jeb spent more time hunting with the group, they threw more bonuses his way.

The oil discovery at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 brought an influx of people to the region. So did the 1973 pipeline project. Le Roy, who had cracked up his plane, borrowed money for a new one.

Kendra Scott was twenty-five years old when she arrived in Alaska. She secured a teaching job in Desolation Point. She was to work for Vladimir Afansi. He greeted her and showed her her quarters and the school. In the days before the school opened, she spent her time meeting the families. The women showed her how to prepare for the Alaska winter. She was appalled by the prices but found the locals had high incomes due to the oil.

Kendra began to date Jeb Keeler. She brought him to her class one day. The locals discussed whaling and the limits imposed on the village and took them on a whaling expedition. They caught a whale.

### Chapter 12, pgs. 738-803 Analysis

In this part of the chapter, the government was interested in the issue of native rights in Alaska. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 established thirteen corporations with the shares distributed to natives. There was vast wealth due to the oil discovery at Prudhoe Bay. Jeb Keeler, a Yale law school graduate, decided to practice in Alaska because there were so many new issues for which there were no precedents to deal with.

Kendra Scott came to Alaska to teach. She learned a new way of life to survive in Alaska. She began dating Jeb and they both learned together. They were taken on a whaling expedition and learned about the laws and customs regarding whales. They were both learning how native life was affected by white man's customs and laws.



## Chapter 12, pgs. 802 - 868

### Chapter 12, pgs. 802 - 868 Summary

Kendra accepted an offer to fly over the tundra. She was amazed at her students not wanting to go to the lower forty-eight states or wanting a college education. They said that they were Alaskan and wanted to do things the Alaskan way.

A group of Japanese arrived to climb Denali. One of them was a man named Takabuki, who was one of the world's best climbers. There were two other men and two women in the group. On the expedition, one of the women, Kimiko, fell into a crevasse. They managed to rescue her.

When Kendra returned to Desolation Point, she found she had a new neighbor named Rick Venn, the grandson of Malcolm and Tammy. They were introduced by Afanasi. Rick had opened Kensington Kennels and was planning to take part in a race called the Iditarod, a dog sled race of over one thousand miles. The people of Desolation monitored the progress of the race by use of Afanasi's short wave radio. Rich finished the race in thirteenth place.

At this time, the federal government became interested in the Arctic and research. Afansi and Rick, both college graduates, became part of the research group. Rick left his dogs with Kendra, sure that she would wait two years until he returned.

Kenju Oda, a member of a wealthy Japanese business family, and his wife, Kamiko, established the United Alaskan Pulp Company on Kagak, an island south of Katiak. He leased land in other parts of Alaska for the raw materials.

The Russians were also interested in Alaska at this time. A group interested in reclaiming Alaska met with Maxim Voronov, who had his family's records of the events dealing with the sale of Alaska to the Americans.

A group of Italian scientists studying tsunamis were also interested in Alaska. They studied earthquakes.

The United States also had military bases in Alaska, from where they monitored the Russians.

Kendra married Rick Venn in June and left Desolation Point to live on T-7, an ice island where the research project was based. The elder Venns became interested in the Alaska tourist trade.

The federal government began investigating the North Slope debt, and Jeb Keeler was called to Juneau to meet with the investigators. The thirteen corporations had been so badly mismanaged that, when the restrictions on the Settlement Act ended, the natives

would have to sell their shares to entities who could successfully manage the corporations. As Poley Markham and Jeb were talking, a massive tsunami began.

## **Chapter 12, pgs. 802 - 868 Analysis**

This chapter looks at Alaska into the mid-1980s, when the federal government was beginning to understand the value of Alaska as other governments became interested in the state. Alaska was rich in natural resources, but the thirteen native corporations have been mismanaged and were under federal investigation. A large Japanese company had opened a large paper plant on one of the islands and the Italians had a research team studying earthquakes and tsunamis. The federal government also began to study the area in terms of arctic scientific research and a federal investigation into mismanagement of the thirteen native corporations. Those motivated by greed, like Poley Markham, seem to have won over those who were motivated by love for the land.



# Characters

## Trofin Zhdanko

Trofin Zhdanko was a Cossack under Tsar Peter. In 1723, he was stationed in Takuitsk in eastern Siberia. He had killed the governor and was sentenced to be hanged. He was taken to Vologda and imprisoned. The Tsar came to the prison to see Trofin, whom he knew and trusted. He gave him his freedom. Trofin was twenty-two years of age at the time. The Tsar wanted him to find a good captain, travel to Siberia, build a ship and explore the northern waters. Trofin learned how to read and spent time on the docks in St. Petersburg. He recommended a Dane, Titus Bering, who the Tsar knew and wanted as captain for the ship. As they were making their preparations, Tsar Peter died and Bering received his commission from Catherine the Great. In 1725, Trofin went along as his aide. It was 1729 by the time they built the ship and sailed, then returned to St. Petersburg. Bering received a commission for a second journey in 1733. This time they built two ships, the St. Peter and St. Paul and sailed in 1740. Zhdanko survived the scurvy that killed many others by gathering and eating green grasses. He made the decision not to return to St. Petersburg or to his Ukrainian birthplace. In Okhotsk, he met the Poznikovas, who were in the fur trade business. He went to work for them. After Poznikov was killed, he married his widow and they lived in Petropavlousk. They continued on with their lucrative fur trade business, in spite of the atrocities committed against the Aleuts.

## Cidaq

Cidaq was the great-granddaughter of the Old One on Lopak Island. Her mother was Innuwuk. In 1789, the Russian fur traders removed all of the men from the island, leaving the women to fend for themselves. Cidaq was fourteen years of age at this time, and she helped the women kill a whale so they could survive. The following year, she was sold to a group of Russians who raped and abused her and then released her on Kodiak Island. She survived by staying with different families, but was still raped and abused by various Russian traders. The shaman Lumasaq found her and tried to help her. She vowed revenge on the Russians. When the man who purchased her, Yermak Rudenko, was facing a return to Seal Island, he told the officials that he was married to Cidaq, who, when informed of this, saw it as a way to achieve her revenge. She must convert to Christianity. The priest who converted her was Father Vasili Voronova, the grandnephew of Marina Zhdanko. Cidaq went through with the marriage and was given the Christian name of Sofia Kychovsjkaya. Rudenko continued to beat her after their marriage and was warned by Baranov about beating her. When the shaman tried to help Sofia after a beating, he was killed by Rudenko. Baranov wanted the marriage dissolved and Rudenko to be sent to Seal Island. An earthquake occurred, causing a tsunami in which Rudenko was killed. Sofia then ran the orphanage established by Baranov and became the wife of Voronov and had a child, Arkady. She died in 1837.



## Missy Peckham

Missy Peckham was from Chicago. She lived with Ben Venn and had raised Tom, who lived with them. She went to Alaska with Ben and Tom. After Ben's death, Missy and Tom went to Dawson City, where she operated a restaurant tent and then worked at a hospital in Nome. She eventually moved to Juneau with Matt Murphy. Missy supported Alaskan statehood and died at the age of eighty-three on the day Alaska became the forty-ninth state.

## Aleksandr Baraov

Aleksandr Baraov was an Irkutsk businessman in his early forties. He had a glass factory that he had closed. He became the representative of Marina Zhdanko's fur trading company in the Aleutian Island. He established the Russian colony on Sitka Island and in other places. As a result of a common law marriage to Anna, he had two children. In his seventies, he was accused of mishandling funds and died on April 16, 1819, on his way to St. Petersburg.

## Tom Venn

Tom Venn moved to Alaska with his parents, who were fugitives from Chicago. His father was killed while driving a sled. Tom was in his teens when he first moved to Alaska. He opened a general store for Ross and Raglan and eventually a series of salmon canneries. He married Lydia Ross and made Ross and Raglan one of the biggest business entities. The Venn family was prominent in both Seattle and Alaska.

## Sheldon Jackson

Sheldon Jackson was forty-three years of age. He was a missionary of the Presbyterian Church and a graduate of Princeton Theological. Jackson was sent to Deadhorse, Montana to start a church and then to Alaska. In the states, he lobbied for the establishment of a government in Alaska.

## Nancy Bigears

Nancy Bigears was the daughter of Sam Bigears. She obtained a good education. She attended university for a while in Seattle and married Ah Ting and had a daughter named Tammy. Their daughter Tammy married Malcolm Venn. Her grandson, Rick, married Kendra Scott.





## **Malcolm Ross**

Malcolm Ross was the senior partner of Ross and Raglan, a general goods store in Seattle. His daughter, Lydia, married Tom Venn after her mother was killed in a boating accident in Alaska. Malcolm died in 1919.

## **Raven-Heart**

Raven-Heart was a slave of the Great Toion of the Tlingit Indians. When freed, he married Kakeena. They had a son known as Bigears. He was killed in an attack on the colony of New Archangel in 1836.

## **Michael Healy**

Michael Healy was born in Georgia. He was a sea captain who had a running battle with the Erebus and Scheransky.



## **Objects/Places**

### **Beringia**

Beringia was a land bridge that connected Siberia and Alaska.

### **Vologda**

Vologda is a town in Eastern Russia where Peter the Great had a palace.

### **The Aleutian Islands**

The Aleutian Islands are located in the waters between Siberia and Alaska.

### **Kodiak**

Kodiak is an island in Three Saints Harbor located on the southern side of Alaska.

### **The Pribilof Islands**

The Pribilof Islands, known as the Seal Islands, are a small group islands located at the junction of the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean.

### **Sitka**

Sitka is an island in Three Saints Harbor and is home to the Tlingit Indians.

### **Irkutsk**

Irkutsk is a city in central Russia near the Lena River.

### **Desolation Point**

Desolation Point is on the norther coast of Alaska on the Arctic Ocean.

### **Bonanza**

Bonanza on the Klondike River was the site of a big gold find.



## **Nome**

Nome is the area of Alaska where the second big gold area was found. It is located on the Bering Sea.

## **Juneau**

Juneau is in southeastern Alaska near the Canadian border. It became the capitol of Alaska.

## **Ketchikan**

Ketchikan is in extreme southern Alaska near the Canadian border.

# Themes

## Greed

One of the biggest factors underlying the development of Alaska is greed. The big migration to Alaska came in response to the gold rush. The lure of fabulous wealth enticed many people to put up with the harsh environment. Many of them stayed on in Alaska and some became active in other businesses, like Tom Venn, who opened a branch store of Ross and Raglan. This was the beginning of a vast business empire, as Tom married the daughter of Malcolm Ross. At first, Tom was motivated by survival but after his marriage, he was interested in the company profits. He supported cabotage and legislation which basically resulted in huge profits for Ross and Raglan but made shipping costs so high that many businesses were forced to close. The Venns also did not support Alaskan statehood because it would subject them to United States law and endanger their monopoly profits.

After the oil discovery at Prudhoe Bay and Alaskan statehood, thirteen native corporations were established to manage the resource wealth in Alaska. The shares of these corporations were distributed to the natives. But the corporations were grossly mismanaged and those involved in the management became wealthy at the expense of the natives. The result was a federal investigation. The Japanese also saw the profit potential in Alaska and established a paper company there. The quest for profits by various groups basically shaped the development of Alaska.

## Clash of Cultures

Another theme of the book is the clash of cultures. The native Alaskans, who were the Eskimos, the Athapascans and the Aleuts, originally came from Russia and Asia and developed their own customs and cultures. They basically lived at the subsistence level based on hunting and fishing. Then the Russians arrived in quest of lucrative pelts. These Russians imposed harsh conditions on the natives and slaughtered many of them. This was the beginning of the clash of cultures that continued as the state developed. The white man tried to force his way of life on the natives. They infringed on their land and their hunting and fishing areas. For example, the establishment of the salmon cannery meant the local natives could no longer fish in the area. There were limits on the number of whales a settlement could catch. The land that was claimed by the business had been the natives and they received no compensation for their loss.

The clash between the cultures became very obvious when Kendra Scott was teaching at Desolation Point. She tried to motivate her students to learn and to continue their education to college. Most had no interest in going on to college and changing their lives. They said they were Alaskans and wanted to continue to do things the way their people had always done. They didn't want outsiders trying to impose their ways on them.



## Relationships

Relationships are another theme of the book, and with the number of characters in the book, there are numerous relationships that can be examined. One of the most notable factors is the relationship between the natives and the white settlers. The whites looked down on the natives, viewing them as inferior. This is evident in Tom Venn's treatment of the workers in the cannery. Instead of hiring local natives for the jobs, they bought in Chinese from San Francisco. They were made to live in deplorable conditions.

Other relationships are romantic, involving the white settlers and natives. Tom Venn was involved with native Nancy Bigears but chose to marry Lydia Ross rather than a native. Nancy then married Ah Ting, Venn's former Chinese foreman. Their daughter Tammy then married Malcolm Venn. There were more interracial marriages as the racial barriers dropped, and rich Venn, of mixed blood, married Kendra Scott.

Missy Peckham never married but had long term relationships with four different men. She had first arrived in Alaska with Benn Venn and Tom, who they were caring for. Missy basically raised Tom and had a special relationship with her throughout their lives, even though they disagreed on various important issues. The important thing is that the people were all happy in the romantic choices they made.

# Style

## Point of View

Alaska by James Michener is written in the third person point of view. The narrator is the author, James Michener. The use of the third person point of view allows the author to provide all of the background and historical information that is so important to a novel of this type. Michener's historical novels are mixtures of fact and fiction and the use of the third person allows him to provide the background information that is necessary. There is enough dialogue between the characters so that the reader is able to know the main characters. The reader can learn the major aspects of their personalities by looking at the way they interact. The use of the third person avoids the problems inherent in the use of a character as the narrator. In this situation, the knowledge of the reader is limited to the knowledge of the character narrator. The reader has no knowledge of events that occur away from the character which would not work for a novel of this kind. The use of the third person is appropriate for this kind of organization.

## Setting

There are various places that function as a setting for the novel. In the early part of the book, the setting is in different places in Russia as the people cross the Beringia land bridge to Alaska. Vologada and St. Petersburg were the homes of the tsar and where Baranov received his commission. Irkutsk is in central Russia in Siberia. The eastern Russian coast and the islands between the two continents are also scenes for the action. The Aleutian Islands are located between Siberia and Alaska. The Pribilof Islands were known as the Seal Island and where the hunters went to kill the animals for the pelts. There are also scenes on Kodiak and Sitka Islands, which are located in Three Saints Harbor. As Alaska became more settled, various cities were formed in addition to the native settlements in places like Desolation Point. Bonanza was the site of the first big gold find in the Yukon. Nome was the area of the second big gold strike. Juneau and Ketchikan are located along Canada on the extreme southern strip of Alaska.

## Language and Meaning

Michener writes Alaska at an understandable level, a step above everyday English. There are some long sentences and some words the reader may want to look up, but there are no hidden meanings in terms or phrases. The meaning of the text is clear and easy to understand. The book is written in such a way that the reader can maintain a steady pace of reading. Although the pace of reading is not as fast as some other books, there is very little to slow the reader down. The book is lengthy and quite descriptive, but in many cases, that's what makes it interesting for the reader. The only places where the reader may have to slow down is in places where there are broken



English sentences, which does not occur frequently in the novel. Although wordy in places where the author is providing background or descriptive information, the reader can wade through it, obtaining the information that he/she needs. Some parts are more exciting than others, but the reader should enjoy the book. It is worth the time spent reading it.

## Structure

The structure of the book is quite typical of a James Michener historical novel. The book is 868 pages in length, divided into twelve chapters. For the most part, each chapter deals with a different time period and introduces and emphasizes different time periods and are titled with the subject that is relevant to that time period.

There is an Acknowledgments section, in which the author mentions the people and entities that assisted him. There is also a Fact and Fiction, section in which the author explains which parts in the novel are based on fact and which are based on fiction. This is typical of the Michener historical novels. The Table of Contents lists the chapter numbers in Roman numerals and the titles and page numbers are given. There is no Index and no real need for one. There are also two maps in the book which are very useful to the reader, although they could be more strategically located for ease of access. The chosen structure works well for the novel.



## Quotes

"But because Alaska lay at the crossroads joining North America and Asia, it would always be important; and since it dominated these crossroads, it would enjoy a significance which only the brightest intellects of the region would appreciate. There would always be a few Russians who understood the unique value of Alaska, a few Americans who appreciated its enormous importance, and upon these knowing ones would depend the history of this strange, compelling land."

Chap. 1, pp. 9-10

"Alaska, its extremities girt in ice, served as a way station for all the travelers, regardless of the direction in which they headed. Its broad valleys free of ice and its invigorating climate provided a hospitable resting place. It really was an ice castle, and life within its frozen walls could be pleasant though demanding."

Chap. 2, p. 20

"But despite these limitations, had there been a muse of history recording this fateful day, she might have looked down from her Olympus and exulted: 'How majestic! Nineteen little people bundled in furs moving onto the doorstep of two empty continents.'"

Chap. 3, p. 40

"In the second month of this training, Zhdanko learned one other fact about his tsar: the Europeans, especially the French and Germans, might do the thinking, but Peter and a group of Russians much like him did the governing. They supplied the money and said where the army would go and what ships would be built, and it was they who ran Russia, make no mistake about that."

Chap. 4, p. 99

"In that memorable year 1789, when France launched the revolution which would bring its people freedom from excessive tyranny, and the former American Colonies ratified their revolution by initiating a new form of government under a remarkable constitution ensuring freedom, a group of vicious Russian fur traders committed a great atrocity against the Aleuts on Lapak Island."

Chap. 5, p. 175

"A minor offshoot from the powerful Athapascans who populated interior Alaska, northern Canada and much of the western United States, the Tlingits were a collection of about twelve thousand unique Indians who had moved far south into what would later be Canada and then fishhooked back north into Alaska, with their own language and customs. Divided into various clans, they occupied the southern littoral of Alaska and especially the big offshore islands, their principal location being the excellent land surrounding Sitka Sound on the island of that name."

Chap. 6, p. 231





"In 1884, spurred vigorously by Jackson, Senator Harrison finally maneuvered through Congress an Organic Act, giving Alaska a civil government of sorts, with one judge, one district attorney, one clerk of court, one marshal - four deputies to bring law and order to an area of more than five hundred thousand square miles. It was pathetically inadequate, but a step in the right direction."

Chap. 7, p. 345

"When man succeeded in exploring most of the surface of the earth, he would find deposits of gold in places as varied as Australia, California, South Africa and on the banks of a trivial snowbound stream on the Canada-Alaska border, close to the Arctic circle."

Chap. 8, p. 368

"However, when the Siberian Arkikov tried to move back onto Seven Above, the original protests were revived, and in a raucous miners' meeting it was again decreed that no Russian could hold a claim on Anvil Creek, and he was once more evicted."

Chap. 9, p. 479

"Not only would Bigears' land at the mouth of the Pleiades be taken from him, but his totem would also be appropriated, and there would be nothing he could do about either theft. Malcolm Ross in Seattle and his agent in Washington would see to that."

Chap. 10, p. 545

"The greed of Tom Venn and his masters in Seattle had doomed the Lake Pleiades sockeye, one of the noblest members of the animal kingdom, to eventual extinction."

Chap. 10, p. 628

"The Jones Act of 1920 passed with its three essential provisions in place: no ship of foreign ownership and registry could carry American goods from one American port to another; only ships owned and manned by Americans could do that; the ship itself, even if it was American-owned, had to have been built in the United States by American labor. The future of Seattle was ensured."

Chap. 11, p. 634

"The Alcan Highway it was officially dubbed, a roadway that had always been dreamed about by those in the north and one which might have come into being, under normal circumstances, sometime in the early twenty-first century, for the cost was horrendous and the obstacles terrifying. In wartime it would be built, incredible as it seemed, in eight months and twelve days."

Chap. 11, p. 690

"In 1969 the United States government began paying serious attention to the problem of how the ancient land rights of the Alaskan Natives could be honored and protected, and one honest principle motivated all decisions."

Chap. 12, p. 738



"Write again, I'm the new Eskimo. And with help from teachers like you, there'll soon be thousands like me."

Chap. 12, p. 803



## Topics for Discussion

How did the Eskimos, the Athapascans and the Aleutians come to be in Alaska? Where did they come from and why?

How were the islands in the northern waters settled? What were the effects of fur trading on the natives?

What happened in Sitka after Alaska was sold to America? How was a government established? Who was instrumental in obtaining a government for Alaska and why?

How did the discovery of gold affect Alaska? Where was the gold located? How was Tom Venn a part of the gold rush?

Explain the beginning of the salmon canning industry in Alaska? Why were Chinese workers hired?

What is the meaning of the story of Nerka the salmon? How does this relate to Tom Venn and the Alaskan salmon canning industry?

In what ways did greed shape the development of Alaska? What affect did this have on the natives?