

Popular Images of the North in Literature and Film

FRANK NORRIS

A central thesis of Walker Percy's novel, *The Moviegoer*, is that a place becomes real only when perceived on the silver screen.¹ If this is true, then the north country — meaning Alaska and the Yukon — is a frozen frontier populated by Klondike prospectors, outlaws, sled dogs and stout-hearted Mounted Policemen along with a smattering of Eskimos, dance-hall women, seal poachers, fishermen, and other hard-bitten characters who inhabit the fringes of life. Hollywood, in its search for a good story, has largely passed over many parts of North America. But while the north country has always been too vast, too remote, and too cold for comfort or belief, it has also been too dangerously exciting to ignore. Movie makers, therefore, have created more than 200 feature-length films about Alaska or the Yukon (see Alaska/Yukon Feature Films, following). Such an impressive output, of course, has had a major impact on creating public perceptions of Alaska and the Yukon, particularly between 1914 and 1955.² Recognizing the impact of those films, questions arise regarding why Hollywood has perceived the North the way it has, how those images have been modified over the years, and, how Hollywood's attitude toward the North differed from that of its literary predecessors.

Northern residents know that some of Hollywood's images of the North have been positively ludicrous; they are also aware that even the most far-fetched images have proven to be remarkably durable. One wonders how they developed. Into the middle of the nineteenth century, the region was *terra incognita*, and it was not until the Alaska Purchase debate that the lay public learned enough about the area to form much of an opinion. Off and on, for the next several months, newspapers and senators spoke out.³ But once the hubbub surrounding the purchase died down, most Americans were left with only vague notions about the new land. The fur-traders who exerted economic control over the new possession, moreover,

had little reason to publicize it, calling it “a land of snow and ice fit only for Eskimo and polar bears.” The north country, therefore, remained out of the public eye for almost 30 years.⁴

Those with an interest, however, travelled north. Government officials, for instance, became increasingly familiar with the place, and hundreds of tourists travelled the newly-accessible Inside Passage route each year. Self-appointed publicists emerged from each group. Frederick Whympfer, William Healey Dall and Rev. Sheldon Jackson enlightened outsiders to conditions along the Alaskan coast, while Frederick Schwatka and George M. Dawson wrote eloquently about the Yukon basin. Eliza Scidmore, Maturin Ballou and other “round-trippers” wrote glowing descriptions of the scenery and villages of southeastern Alaska.⁵ But it was John Muir, the California-based scientist and conservationist, who produced the first literature about Alaska that went beyond the merely descriptive. Muir visited Alaska six times between 1879 and 1899.⁶ In a series of articles written to a popular national audience, he extolled the area with such love and conviction that a critic later wrote that “whoever would know . . . Alaska . . . must know John Muir. [He] gave this region to the country — both to those who could not go to see and to those who, having eyes, saw not. That is his foremost achievement.”⁷

In July 1897, Alaska and the Yukon basin suddenly emerged from obscurity with the cry of “GOLD! GOLD! GOLD IN THE KLONDIKE!” During the next year the world was overwhelmed by the news of wealth in the new Eldorado. Americans, who were chafing under the constraints of the passing frontier, leaped at the chance to head north. Some 100,000 restless souls, most of them Americans, responded to the call, some to get wealthy, others merely for the adventure. Their migration brought forth a flood of guidebooks which described the new land, and before long, travel accounts found their way into scores of hometown papers.⁸

It wasn't long, either, before the Klondike became transformed from journalism and anecdote into literature. The first such literature was the dime novel. Nickel and dime novels had been around since 1860 and, by 1897, hundreds had already been published on a wide range of topics, including several on Alaska. Their stock in trade, however, was the Wild West yarn. So it was not surprising that pulp publishers cranked out over a hundred dime novels during the Klondike rush. These accounts

were penned by writers who had only the barest knowledge of northern life; they seized on whatever real or imagined dangers the north country had in store. Readers must certainly have known that these books were wildly inaccurate, but after all, they were never intended to be judged as literature.⁹

Before long, more sophisticated literature began to emerge from the Klondike experience. Jack London, a 21-year-old Californian, headed north in July 1897 and returned a year later. In 1899, he sold eight articles to the *Overland Monthly*, a respected Bay Area magazine, and before long he began to create a new type of frontier literature.¹⁰ The frontier, of course, had brought fame to generations of American writers, from Cooper to Wister and from Twain to Harte. London was merely sluicing through the same rich gravels in a land new to the world's consciousness.

The vehicle that propelled London to fame was a variation on the animal story, a popular turn-of-the-century literary genre.¹¹ An avowed Socialist, London found animal stories an excellent way to demonstrate his Social Darwinism and his belief that man, acting alone, was doomed to defeat. These ideas were expounded in *The Call of the Wild* (1903) and, soon afterward, in *White Fang* (1906).¹² Both books, which featured sled dogs, proved so successful that he became known as the "Kipling of the North." Key to his success was the way he portrayed the north country. As London himself recalled, "I'm giving the public what it likes to think Alaska is." His perception of "Alaska," as he dubbed the region on both sides of the 141st meridian, was a pitiless, ice-bound landscape where any sign of life was an affront.¹³ People familiar with the Yukon knew that the sinister, brooding, mysterious wilderness he described simply did not exist. His fiction, however, was so successful that his portrayals of the area took decades to overcome.¹⁴

Rex Beach was the other major writer to emerge from the gold rush period. Beach, who has been described as the "Victor Hugo of the North," tried to reach the Klondike in 1897 via the St. Michael route, but made it only as far as Rampart, along the Yukon River in central Alaska, where placer gold had been discovered.¹⁵ After temporarily returning to Seattle, he lived in Nome for a few years and later visited Bristol Bay and Copper River Valley. Beach's early stories, published in *McClure's Magazine*, sounded vaguely like those of Jack London.¹⁶ Publisher S.S. McClure, however, changed the course of his



Cast and crew of Alaska Moving Pictures Corp's "The Cbeechakos." B84.118.114, The Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Used with kind permission.



Eva Gordon and Alexis B. Luce with their dog team ready to follow the crowds over the pass. Photograph from "The Cheechakos," by The Alaska Moving Pictures Corp. B84.118.73, The Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Used with kind permission.

career when he suggested that the author write an exposé of wrongdoing in American corporate and political life. Beach responded by writing *The Spoilers*, a 1906 account based on the Noyes-McKenzie conspiracy to take over the richest gold mines in the Nome area.¹⁷ Encouraged by the public's enthusiastic response, Beach went on to write three other major Alaska novels: *The Barrier* (1908), about the wild ways of a gold-rush mining camp; *The Silver Horde* (1909), about the salmon industry, and *The Iron Trail* (1913), about the Alaska Syndicate's activities and the construction of the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad.¹⁸ Beach was more even-handed than London in his characterizations of the north country. In *The Spoilers*, for instance, the temperature is usually well above the freezing point. *The Barrier* provides an authentic look into life in Rampart in 1898, and in each of his volumes the landscape, though impressively described, is secondary to the story line.

Because most of what people knew about the north country was based on the gold rush period, outsiders perceived of the north country as a rough-and-tumble place. A 1905 account, for example, suggested that it was "a barren, ice-bound region, its sole inhabitants being savages and wild beasts." In 1908, an Alaska resident wailed that "everyone everywhere knows about Alaska's gold and glaciers and totem poles, but few know that there is anything more than this." According to Governor Thomas Riggs, who served in the late 'teens, outsiders thought the Territory was "peopled by desperadoes living in huts or dugouts; a country of Eskimo and eternal snows." And a travelogue writer suggested that "ideas of Alaska and the Yukon territory are usually associated with obscure visions of mucklucks [sic] and mushing, blizzards and bidarkas."¹⁹ Development groups, of course, tried to debunk those images. Tourism helped to a small extent, and exhibitions such as the St. Louis Fair (1904), the Lewis and Clark Exposition (Portland, 1905), and the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition (Seattle, 1909) also tried to emphasize the north country's economic potential. But these efforts had little long-term effect on the public perception of the north country.

While Americans in the early twentieth century had some fairly definite impressions about Alaska and commonly described the nearby Yukon as if it were an extension of American territory, Canadian attitudes toward the Yukon were more amorphous. American attitudes were based on the same

sense of manifest destiny which had helped them populate their western territories and their literature reflected that boasting aggressiveness. But Canadians were more tentative. Their population, less than a tenth that of their southern neighbor, was split linguistically and had only recently emerged from colonial status. Most Canadians, moreover, lived east of Lake Huron. To the west lay the Canadian Pacific Railroad and little else until the settlements of British Columbia were reached.

Because they were so overwhelmed with wilderness, Canadians had tentative feelings toward it. Ernest Thompson Seton and Charles G.D. Roberts wrote well-received nature stories, recognizing them as a way to demonstrate their Canadian distinctiveness. Meanwhile, Frederick Niven and Duncan Campbell Scott wrote frontier potboilers.²⁰ But most of these stories, derived from antecedents in England and the United States, were set not in western Canada, but on the frontier which surrounded the settled portions of Ontario and Quebec. At the time of the Klondike rush, Canadian nationalism and literature were both in their incipient stages;²¹ the boundaries of the frontier, moreover, were still hundreds if not thousands of miles from the Yukon. Not surprisingly, therefore, Canadians did not have a convenient context into which gold-rush literature could be placed.

On the eve of World War I, two decades of newspaper articles, short stories and novels had imbued Americans with the idea that Alaska and the Yukon were frontier provinces. Those most responsible for those perceptions were Jack London and Rex Beach. (Robert Service, the poet, was also widely read. His work, however, was done later and his perceptions of the North harmonized with those already propounded.) From the mid-teens through the mid-fifties, however, motion pictures were more important than articles, books, or any other form of communication in determining perceptions of place. This was true in many areas but was particularly true in the North, where tourist access was difficult and relatively few news articles surfaced in the nationwide press. Literature with a north-country setting continued to be published after 1914, of course, but none had the influence of either London or Beach. The two literary lions left a legacy of dime-novel plots, Horatio Alger heroes, Pollyanna heroines and glimpses into gold rush life. These were story elements with which movie audiences would become exceedingly familiar in the coming decades.²²

The motion picture became a recognized form of American entertainment about 1900. Almost immediately, Hollywood turned to the frontier in its search for exotic locations and dramatic situations. *The Great Train Robbery*, arguably the first western, was produced in 1903 and by the end of the decade audiences began seeing short films about the North. *Partners*, a two-reeler based on a Rex Beach story, was released in 1908;²³ shortly afterwards came *Code of the Yukon*, *Justice in the Far North*, *Kid from the Klondike*, and *North of 53*, the latter based on Rudyard Kipling's famous poem.²⁴ Most dwelt with the Klondike rush and appeared to stress the moral values in a northern setting. Authenticity was not their strong suit; a 1912 William Selig production, called *The Ace of Spades*, has been described as "a 'Klondike' picture in which the gold fields were set in the American southwest."²⁵

The North muscled its way into celluloid history in April 1914 when Rex Beach's novel, *The Spoilers*, reached the screen.²⁶ This eight-reeler, which has been called "America's first super picture," cost a whopping \$23,000 to make.²⁷ The show was an immediate hit, and film historians have placed it in the same lofty class as Cecil B. de Mille's *The Squaw Man*, which was released about the same time.²⁸ Four remakes have been produced of *The Spoilers* thus far. A compelling reason for the popularity of the 1914 production was the classic fight between William Farnum and Tom Santschi, which lasted for a full reel. A film historian called it "the bloodiest, most realistic barroom brawl ever created, and the standard to which every subsequent movie [fisticuffs] has been compared." The fight apparently started out as the usual staged scuffle, but one actor misjudged a punch and broke the other actor's nose. He, in turn, retaliated with a sharp blow that tore open his opponent's forehead. Astonished bystanders shouted to stop them because they were killing each other, but the cameras rolled on, capturing on film the falling furniture and breaking bones.²⁹

As motion pictures matured, feature-length productions became the norm. Audiences of the day had learned about the north country by reading London, Beach, and Service. Therefore, movies released during the next ten years included *The Call of the Wild* (1923), *The Silver Horde* (1920), *The Iron Trail* (1921), a remake of *The Spoilers* (1923), *The Law of the Yukon* (1920), and two versions of *The Shooting of Dan McGrew* (1915, 1924).

What got translated to the silver screen, however, was often an artistically mediocre product. *The Silver Horde*, for instance, was criticized as being hard to believe, with heroes too white and villains too black, “the kind of story that the films showed in the nickel days, and not much better done.” Critics likewise panned both the story and the acting in *The Iron Trail*. One of the few things they did like was the scenery — of salmon canneries or of a river’s breakup — both shot on location in Alaska.³⁰

Hollywood’s evisceration of literature, unfortunately, was far too common. Jim Hitt, a film historian, has noted that the industry sometimes turned literary works into credible fictional films. But in most cases, the studios just wanted the titles, and once they had purchased them, the books were dropped and fictional stories were substituted.³¹

Most northern movies were based on literature that was something less than distinguished. James Oliver Curwood was the major purveyor of northern movie material during the 1920s and, on the basis of sheer volume alone, he deserves heroic status. During his 49-year lifetime he managed to write 26 novels and contribute to over 100 motion pictures. No wonder a reviewer dubbed him “the prize literary hustler on the continent.”³² Most of his books and movies dealt with generic Canadian subjects, such as Mounties and fur traders. In 1923, however, he finally shifted his venue and wrote *The Alaskans*. The following year, he brought it to the screen. The results, however, were predictably tepid. Jim Hitt has concluded that “Curwood did not write any great or near-great novels . . . , and the films based on his work reflect his lack of talent.”³³

Alaskans, who watched movies as much as anyone, were distressed that audiences were receiving such unrealistic views of northern life. To rectify the situation, The Alaska Motion Picture Corporation³⁴ was formed in July 1922 and, before long, Austin E. “Cap” Lathrop, the Fairbanks business leader, was elected its president. The company solicited contributions from chambers of commerce all over Alaska but funds came mainly from Anchorage and Cordova. Before long the company decided to film a drama of gold rush days, with location shots taken, not surprisingly, in the two sponsoring towns. Filming also took place at Mt. McKinley National Park, where a wintertime dog mushing sequence took place, and the Girdwood area, where film crews re-created gold-rush Skagway.³⁵ The resulting story,

which opened to Alaska audiences in the fall of 1923, was *The Cheechakos*, described by a *Chicago Tribune* critic as a “whacking old time melodrama that ... portrays in a way you won’t forget the absorbing history of our great northwestern territory.”³⁶ Other critics discounted the story as “silly,” but praised the great scenery.³⁷ *The Cheechakos* turned out to be Lathrop’s last fling at moviemaking (the Anchorage set was soon converted into an exhibition hall), but other Alaskans have followed in his footsteps. The very next year, in fact, witnessed the production of *Rocking Moon*, based on the work of Alaskan author Barrett Willoughby.³⁸

As the era of the silent movies ran its course, Hollywood produced three surprisingly good movies about the north country. All hearkened back to the gold rush period. In 1925, Charlie Chaplin released *The Gold Rush*. *The Trail of ‘98*, produced four years later, was loosely based on Robert Service’s only northern novel. The romantic melodrama was praised for its authenticity; Pierre Berton has noted that it was one of the few northern pictures in which the stampedees looked the part.³⁹ And in 1930, Paramount released a well-received third version of *The Spoilers*, this one starring Gary Cooper and William Boyd.⁴⁰

The best of the three — indeed, many regard it as the best northern movie of all time — was *The Gold Rush*. Chaplin was the director and star in what has been hailed as one of the artistic triumphs of the silent film era. An international judging panel, meeting in the 1970s, named it the greatest comedy ever filmed, and Chaplin himself considered it the film by which he most wanted to be remembered. The film conveyed a notoriously poor sense of northern life. Most of the scenery is stereotypical, with plasterboard mountains, tame bears, and an eternally snowbound landscape. But the geography didn’t matter. What made the film so successful was its statement on the human condition; the epic of the Klondike gold rush merely served as a well-known vehicle on which that statement was based.⁴¹

As the 1920s faded away, silent movies were quickly overtaken by “talkies.”⁴² With the onset of the Great Depression, the studios were forced to cut costs. Many movies, therefore, began to be made cheaply and almost as quickly as today’s television shows. As a result, the quality of films inevitably began to suffer. While the decade produced some excellent, high-quality

Westerns (such as *Cimarron*, *Stagecoach*, or *The Plainsman*), it was also the golden age of the low-budget, "B" movie western.⁴³ Gene Autry, John Wayne, Roy Rogers and others turned out scores of such films; some studios specialized in them, while others produced both "A" and "B" movies.⁴⁴ "B" movies were commonly made into the late 1940s and a few continued to be produced as late as the mid-fifties.⁴⁵

The advent of the "B" movie was responsible for many of the less-than-memorable movies made about the north country. Rex Beach's book about Rampart, *Barrier*, was released as a "Klondike" movie in 1937 with dialogue that one critic called "truly laughable." The movie also had other errors "too numerous to mention."⁴⁶ Five years later came *North to the Klondike*, which featured "an unbelievable rehash of the same old stereotyped characters." A fight between Broderick Crawford and Lon Cheney enlivened the action for a while but otherwise critics panned the movie as dull and stilted.⁴⁷ In 1943 *Klondike Kate* was released, complete with a Yukon lynching scene.⁴⁸ The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, one of Hollywood's favorite subjects, got so annoyed at the way movies treated them that they sent a former officer, Bruce Carruthers, to serve as a technical advisor. Carruthers tried to correct the worst of the errors but, more often than not, he was told, "Ah, nobody'll ever know the difference."⁴⁹

The writing and acting could be bad but Hollywood's sense of geography could be even worse. *Call of the Yukon*, a 1938 production based on a James Oliver Curwood novel, was actually set on the Arctic coast of Alaska. In 1939, the incongruously named *North of the Yukon* was released; it featured a French-Canadian trapper whose name, not surprisingly, was Pierre. The 1936 Mae West hit, *Klondike Annie*, was set in and around Nome, Alaska, and the word "Klondike" was never mentioned in the film itself. Perhaps the worst attack on geography was *North of Nome*, a maritime movie released in 1936. It featured a vessel which foundered off Kodiak Island but the lifeboat holding its survivors soon washed up on a "Bering Sea Island" which was located "southwest of Sitka." The hero, a seal poacher, planned to walk to the mainland as soon as freeze-up occurred.⁵⁰

Purists blanched at such errors but Hollywood just went on making movies. When it came to northern movies, the title meant everything. Just as Western movies often had "Arizona,"

"Apache," "Texas," or "Montana" in the title, and Canadian shows spoke about "God's Country" or "Land of the Big Snows," movies about the north country also had to be identified with something that sounded exciting. Therefore, the four words which best described northern movies were "Alaska," "Arctic," "Klondike" and "Yukon." Of 42 north-country feature films released between 1930 and 1955, over two-thirds had one of those four words in the title.⁵¹

Two of the best movies released during the 1930s had nothing to do with the frontier. Instead, they dealt with Native life. *Nanook of the North*, a 1922 film from the Hudson Bay country of the Northwest Territories, had shown that a documentary of Eskimo life could be both an artistic and commercial success. In pursuit of a variation on that theme, a film crew headed up to Barrow, and followed a group of Eskimos in their search for food. The crew (and the Eskimos) soon became so isolated that search parties were called out, but the searchers eventually gave up and people presumed that the entire party had perished. A year later, however, the crew returned, exhausted but triumphant. The result of their efforts was *Igloo*, released in 1932. It proved so successful that a second film, *Eskimo*, was arranged.⁵² The stars and crew set off for Teller, near Nome, where they spent the winter on an ice-bound ship. The cast was entirely Native and all went well until the directors asked the local townspeople to build him picture-book snow houses, instead of their traditional *iglus*. The director, in fact, had to show them how it was done. When *Eskimo* was released in 1934, it was a financial success and it had sufficient artistic merit that it is still shown in Eskimo villages to demonstrate traditional lifeways.⁵³

A takeoff on the usual northern movie was the movie serial. These productions had been part of moviemaking since the silent film era and serials about the Mounties had been shown, off and on, since the early 1930s. The studios liked serials because, like "B" movies, they were produced quickly and cheaply. In 1945, Universal released *The Royal Mounted Rides Again*, which featured several episodes in a region called "Canaska," a mythical region perched somewhere along the 141st meridian. Three years later, another Mountie serial, *Dangers of the Royal Mounted*, was equal to that challenge; its episodes were set in the town of "Alcana."⁵⁴ Two other serials

followed; the most popular serial of all was *Sergeant Preston of the Yukon*, which played from 1955 to 1958.⁵⁵

Production companies knew that the most vivid way to show what the North looked like was to shoot films on location. Few, however, were so interested in authenticity that they filmed in Alaska or the Yukon. (The time and expense of a such a trip prevented most producers from actively considering such a step.) Once sound movies came into vogue, one of the few movies shot in the North was *Spawn of the North*, based on the Barrett Willoughby novel. Portions of the film were shot in Ketchikan in 1936. The director apparently thought that the downtown area didn't look very Alaskan, so he placed totem poles at a street intersection, hung polar bear skins on the wall of a theater, draped fish netting over some skiffs in front of a curio shop, and moved the "No Parking" signs out of camera range.⁵⁶

Other movies, of course, had to simulate Alaskan scenery as best they could. To the movie-going public, one of the most recognizable scenes depicting Alaska was the panoramic view of stampeders crossing the Chilkoot Pass in the spring of 1898. Because access is so difficult, this scene has never been replicated at the pass itself.⁵⁷ As an alternative, Charlie Chaplin shot the opening scenes of *The Gold Rush* in Nevada, just north of Lake Tahoe; "Cap" Lathrop chose Bartlett Glacier, south of Portage, Alaska, for *The Cheechakos*,⁵⁸ and the director of *The Far Country*, a 1954 release, used Athabasca Glacier, along the Icefield Parkway between Banff and Jasper, Alberta. Other popular locations for panoramic backdrops have been in Washington state (particularly the Mt. Baker area) and in Oregon. Most of the close-up wintertime shots have probably been filmed in the mountains of Southern California.⁵⁹

During the years following World War II, the face of Hollywood began to change. The "B" movie began to decline because of increased costs and, by the early 1950s, television was becoming a viable competitor to the local movie house. The postwar years in Alaska and Yukon were dramatic but different. In the half-century after the Klondike rush, the era of the lone prospector died out.⁶⁰ In Alaska a major agricultural experiment had taken root, military bases had been laid out, and the territory supported almost twice as many residents as it did during the height of the gold rush. In the Yukon, highways had been built and its government had matured; unlike Alaska,

however, its populariorion remained less than during the gold rush period.

The themes of northern movies, however, did not change. Hollywood continued to rely on gold rush-era westerns. The author has classified, by subject matter, approximately 70 northern feature films produced between 1910 and 1955. Some 50 of those films (over 70 percent) hearkened back to a gold rush setting. Hilton Wolfe, an authority on Alaskan fiction, found much the same reliance on gold rush themes; of 80 historical novels written about Alaska since 1913, he found that 60 of them (75 percent) dealt with the gold rush period.⁶¹

The gold rush films produced after World War II were the same dreary affairs cranked out during the 1930s and early 1940s. Monogram Pictures, a producer of second features, was apparently so pressed for cash that it released six almost identical gold-rush movies between 1949 and 1954. Monogram gave its potboilers dramatic if interchangeable titles such as *Call of the Klondike*, *Fangs of the Arctic*, *Trail of the Yukon* or *Yukon Vengeance*, but the movies really had nothing to do with the Klondike, the Yukon or the Arctic. Kirby Grant, on contract to Monogram at the time, starred in all six of them.⁶²

Such behavior might be expected from a “B” studio but Universal-International was just as reckless in its presentation of *The Far Country* (1954), which starred James Stewart and Walter Brennan. Dismissed by some as “juvenile claptrap,” Pierre Berton lambasted it for its historical inaccuracies — everything from a gunfight on the streets of Dawson City, to Chilkat Indians inhabiting the upper Pelly River valley. It also featured a scene where it got so disorderly in Dawson that a Mountie asked a group of prospectors to elect themselves a U.S. Marshal.⁶³

Fortunately, the postwar period offered a few departures from the usual story lines. *Arctic Fury* (1949), for instance, recounted the 1925 Nome serum run, much as *Untamed* (1940) had done a decade earlier; *Alaska Patrol* (1948) dramatized the life of an international spy; and *Alaska Seas* (1954), based on Barrett Willoughby’s *Spawn of the North*, dealt with two fishermen — one good, one bad — at war over the angel of the port. *The World in His Arms* somehow combined a “Boston Man,” a fugitive Russian princess, and a Portuguese seal poacher together, and emerged with a fairly respectable product. The plots of such movies did little to educate audiences about the

realities of life in the North, but at least they conveyed the impression that the land was populated by more than gold prospectors, trappers, Mounties and outlaws.⁶⁴

Feature films about the north country were produced at a fairly regular pace into the 1950s. At least one was released each year from 1950 through 1953, and four more reached the theaters in 1954. But the industry then began to show signs of decline. The growing popularity of television and the higher costs of moviemaking contributed to the slide; studio bosses were also forced to recognize that movie audiences were better educated than ever before and they would no longer accept the same old fantasies. But whatever the cause, the result was fewer “B” movies, fewer westerns, and fewer films that featured northern themes. Hollywood made it into 1955 with one last north-country potboiler — one last remake of *The Spoilers* — and the old ways were gone forever. For the next five years Hollywood ignored Alaska and the Yukon, except for television episodes and movie serials.⁶⁵

Since 1960, fewer than 20 movies have been produced with a northern setting. Those products have been thematically diverse. *Ice Palace* (1960), based on the Edna Ferber novel, and *Pipe Dreams* (1975), set in Valdez during the oil boom, tried to show the modern side of Alaska. Both were artistic and financial flops. Others, such as *The Savage Innocents* (1959), *Mara of the Wilderness* (1965), or *Never Cry Wolf* (1982) tried to be consciousness-raising. And *North to Alaska* (1960), starring John Wayne and Fabian, was just plain fun. Most reviewers thought the tongue-in-cheek movie, set at the cabin “a little southeast of Nome,” was “just awful” but, bad as it was, it was listed as one of the 20 top-grossing westerns in a 1975 survey.⁶⁶

Today, Hollywood seems to be treating the North in two fairly divergent ways. On the one hand, the traditional gold rush theme is still alive and well, as *White Fang* has shown, and authenticity is high on the priority list. But *Northern Exposure*, the current television series, has shown the world the quirky side of small-town Alaskan life. At first glance, the show seems too light-hearted to be taken seriously, but it points out real if subliminal truths about the lifestyles of northern residents.⁶⁷

It would be tempting to conclude that because recent movies have been more realistic than those shown before 1955, Hollywood has therefore seen the error of its ways and will henceforth aim toward true interpretations of the people and

environments of Alaska and the Yukon. Such a hope, however, is both unrealistic and misguided. Motion pictures intended for entertainment are not designed to follow any prescribed codes of authenticity. Such strictures are outside the bounds of the creative process. Alaskans and Yukoners feel justified in their complaint that Hollywood does not see those areas the way they really are. But have motion pictures treated Arizona, Montana or California any more fairly? In most cases, the industry has used these and other well-known locations as bases from which to generalize and stereotype. Critics have argued that articles and novels can successfully convey a regional mood while simultaneously telling a good story. The mechanics and economics of motion picture production, however, militate against the conveyance of regional flavor.

Historians and other moviegoers need to recognize that most if not all movies about the North will continue to emphasize the qualities of northern life that are unavailable elsewhere. The history of movies about the north country has shown that a well-executed production can provide a realistic glimpse into different times and places. It is hoped that the current trend toward historical accuracy in film is a long-lasting one.

Frank Norris is an historian with the National Parks Service in Anchorage. Besides film, he is interested in tourism and technological development and has published in *Alaska History Journal*.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Susan Hackley Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," *The Alaska Journal* 9 (Winter 1979), 13.
- ² Marilyn Jody, *Alaska in the American Literary Imagination: A Literary History of Frontier Alaska with a Bibliographical Guide to the Study of Alaskan Literature* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1969), 62; Frank Norris, "Alaska/Klondike Films," unpub. mss., located in Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park library, Skagway, Alaska; Frank E. Buske, *The Wilderness, The Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914: John Muir, Jack London and Rex Beach* (unpublished dissertation, University of California, Davis, 1976), xii.
- ³ Archie Shields, *The Purchase of Alaska* (College, University of Alaska Press, 1967), *passim*.

- ⁴ Frank Norris, "Gawking at the Midnight Sun: The Tourist in Early Alaska" (Alaska Historical Commission Studies in History No. 170, June 1985), 3; Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, vi, 24.
- ⁵ Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, viii, 37, 39, 98. Between 1867 and 1887, more than 50 articles, in twenty different journals, were published about Alaska. *Ibid.*, 23-24. Some of the most publicized reports emerging during this period were the following: Frederick Whymper, *Travel and Adventure in the Territory of Alaska* (London, John Murray), 1868; William H. Dall, *Alaska and Its Resources*, 1870 (reprint, New York, Arno Press, 1970); Frederick Schwatka, *Report of a Military Reconnaissance in Alaska Made in 1883*, (Sen. Ex. Doc., 48th Congress, 2nd Session, No. 2) 1885; George M. Dawson, *Report of an Exploration in the Yukon District, North West Territory and Adjacent Northwestern Portion of British Columbia* (Ottawa, Queen's Printers), 1887; Sheldon Jackson, *Alaska and Missions on the North Pacific Coast* (New York, Dodd, Mead), 1880; Eliza Ruhamah Scidmore, *Alaska, Its Southern Coast and the Sitkan Archipelago* (D. Lothrop and Co.), 1885; and Maturin M. Ballou, *The New Eldorado* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin), 1889.
- ⁶ These trips took place in 1879, 1880, 1881, 1890, 1897 and 1899. Buske, 82, 92, 94, 96, 99, 106.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 71-72.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, viii, 46, 48.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, viii, 26-28, 46; Jody, *Alaska in the American Literary Imagination*, 10-12.
- ¹⁰ Merle Colby, *A Guide to Alaska, Last American Frontier* (American Guide Series, Federal Writers' Project) (New York, Macmillan Co., 1950), 31; Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 123-24, 127.
- ¹¹ Jody, *Alaska in the American Literary Imagination*, 151; Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, x, 104, 145-46; W.H. New, *A History of Canadian Literature* (New York, New Amsterdam, 1989), 112-14.
- ¹² Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 131, 146, 150; Jody, *Alaska in the American Literary Imagination*, 141-42, 144, 150.
- ¹³ Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, ix, xii, 111.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, x.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 159, 161.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, x, xi, 161-62, 166, 169.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*, xi, 163-66, 170; Colby, *A Guide to Alaska*, 369; Johnson, "When Movie-makers Look North," 13.
- ¹⁸ Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 181, 184, 190.

- ¹⁹ Norris, "Gawking at the Midnight Sun," 4; [Thomas Riggs], *Message of the Governor to the 4th Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Alaska* (1919), 8.
- ²⁰ George Woodcock, *The World of Canadian Writing: Critiques and Recollections* (Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1980), 24-25, 160; New, *A History of Canadian Literature*, 112-18, 129-30.
- ²¹ George Woodcock suggests that "Little Canadian fiction that was published before 1900 now seems worth rereading either for pleasure or for the kind of subliminally directed information that, at its most sensitive, literature can project over the centuries." A contemporary critic, John Bourinot, agreed; he noted that "there is one respect in which Canadians have never won any marked success, and that is the novel or romance." Margaret Atwood suggests that Canadian literature is still [in the late twentieth century] scarred and misshaped because of the state of mind that comes from a colonial relationship. Woodcock, *The World of Canadian Writing*, 21, 159.
- ²² Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 195.
- ²³ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 13; Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 168, 187.
- ²⁴ Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 169, 175. Kipling, who wrote several northern short stories and poems, averred that "there's never a law of God or man runs north of 53."
- ²⁵ Pierre Berton, *Hollywood's Canada: The Americanization of Our National Image* (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975), 45.
- ²⁶ Beach, who was curious about the motion picture industry, served as an advisor to *The Spoilers*. Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, xi, 193.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, xi, 194-95. According to Susan Hackley Johnson (page 13), *The Spoilers* was a thirty-minute film which cost \$5000. Most one-reelers of the day cost less than \$1000. Barry Norman, *The Story of Hollywood* (New York, New American Library, 1987), 252.
- ²⁸ George N. Fenin and William K. Everson, *The Western, from Silents to the Seventies* (New York, Grossman, 1973), 112-13.
- ²⁹ Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 195; Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 13.
- ³⁰ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 12, 14.
- ³¹ Jim Hitt, *The American West from Fiction (1823-1976) into Film (1909-1986)* (Jefferson, N.C., McFarland and Co., 1990), 297.
- ³² Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 27.
- ³³ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 14; Hitt, *The American West from Fiction into Film*, 311.
- ³⁴ Elizabeth Tower, Evangeline Atwood, and other sources have also called this business the Alaska Moving Pictures Company.
- ³⁵ Elizabeth A. Tower, *Mining, Media, Movies: Cap Lathrop's Keys for Alaska Riches* (Anchorage, the author, 1991), 42-47. Filming took place between March and August 1923. Norman Dawn, who did some of the

filming, later went on to film other movies with Alaska location shots, such as *Golden River* and *Tundra*. Grant H. Pearson, *A History of Mount McKinley National Park* (National Park Service, 1953), 56; Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 20.

- ³⁶ Tower, *Mining, Media, Movies*, 49. Susan Hackley Johnson ("When Moviemakers Look North," 22) called it *The Great White Silence*.
- ³⁷ Lathrop successfully sold the movie's distribution rights to Pathe-International; it was a financial failure, however, in its statewide showings. Tower, *Mining, Media, Movies*, 48; Evangeline Atwood, *Anchorage, Star of the North* (Continental Heritage Press, 1982), 58.
- ³⁸ Tower, *Mining, Media, Movies*, 49; Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 20.
- ³⁹ Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 227; Brian Garfield, *Western Films, A Complete Guide* (New York, Rawson Associates), 1982.
- ⁴⁰ Audiences never seemed to tire of *The Spoilers*. A fourth version was released in 1942, starring John Wayne and Randolph Scott and, in 1955, it was filmed again, this time with Rory Calhoun, Jeff Chandler and Anne Baxter. Wayne and Scott, in the 1942 remake, managed to injure each other in the same fight sequence in which William Farnum and Tom Santschi were hurt back in 1914. Garfield, *Western Films, A Complete Guide*, 304.
- ⁴¹ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 13, 18.
- ⁴² Norman, *The Story of Hollywood*, 12, 23-25, 34-36.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 256-60.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 230-34.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 234; Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 46.
- ⁴⁶ Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 142-43.
- ⁴⁷ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 16; Garfield, *Western Films, A Complete Guide*, 244.
- ⁴⁸ Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 198, 216.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 145.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 46, 83, 276; Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 19.
- ⁵¹ Norris, "Alaska/Klondike Films;" Garfield, *Western Films, A Complete Guide*, *passim*.
- ⁵² Both movies had the same star, an Inupiat Eskimo named Ach-nach-chiak. Better known as Ray Wise during the early 1930s, his stage name in *Eskimo* was Mala; thereafter, he was known as Ray Mala. He stayed active in Hollywood where he made money in real estate, wrote film scripts and acted in films which called for Native roles. His son, Ted Mala, became a doctor and currently (1992) serves as Alaska's Commissioner of Health and Social Services. Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 16-18.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, 14-18. Considering the tone of most westerns, it is perhaps remarkable that northern Natives were treated with such sensitivity and respect. Fiction produced before 1910, and early movies as well, treated Natives ambivalently or worse. But since the 1920s, movies about the North have consistently described Natives as helpers and experts rather than as personifications of evil. This change of heart appears to be a reflection of

changing attitudes toward the Native American; it may also reflect the relative lack of violence which has characterized Native-white relations in the North. Jody, *Alaska in the American Literary Imagination*, 172.

- ⁵⁴ As Pierre Berton notes, *Alcana* was set in the midst of rolling farmland and deciduous trees, a refreshing change from the ponderosa trees which were seen in so many Alaska-Yukon movies.
- ⁵⁵ Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 46, 270.
- ⁵⁶ Colby, *A Guide to Alaska*, 128.
- ⁵⁷ In April 1924, one production company seriously considered the idea of duplicating a gold rush scene at Chilkoot Pass. Several studio representatives hired Skagway resident George Rapuzzi to guide them up the then-impassible Chilkoot Trail. They spent two weeks scouting the area's movie potential. They spoke to local residents about rebuilding Sheep Camp, the abandoned tent town three miles south of the pass, and constructing a road to the area from Dyea. But nothing came of the idea. George Rapuzzi, interview with the author, Skagway, November 21, 1983.
- ⁵⁸ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 13, 18; Tower, *Mining, Media, Movies*, 43, 44.
- ⁵⁹ Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 29, 37, 142.
- ⁶⁰ As far back as 1908, a travel writer was bewailing the fact that "the individual miner has let go and the monopolists are coming to take his place." Buske, *The Wilderness, the Frontier, and the Literature of Alaska to 1914*, 59.
- ⁶¹ Norris, "Alaska/Klondike Films;" Hilton John Wolfe, *Alaskan Literature: The Fiction of America's Last Wilderness* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1973), 272.
- ⁶² Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 46, 104.
- ⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11, 211-14; Garfield, *Western Films, A Complete Guide*.
- ⁶⁴ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 19, 20; Norris, "Alaska/Klondike Films."
- ⁶⁵ Berton, *Hollywood's Canada*, 18, 270; Fenin and Everson, *The Western, from Silents to the Seventies*, 16.
- ⁶⁶ Johnson, "When Moviemakers Look North," 22; Fenin and Everson, *The Western, from Silents to the Seventies*, 255; Will Wright, *Six-Guns and Society: A Structural Study of the Western* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975), 31.
- ⁶⁷ The set for *Northern Exposure*, supposedly set in Cicely, Alaska, is Roslyn, Washington, on the eastern side of the Cascade Mountains. Andee Beck, "Elaine Miles: From Homebody to Star," *Anchorage Daily News*, July 28, 1991, P4; Timothy Egan, "Northwest Noir: An Art of the Seriously Goofy," *Anchorage Daily News*, July 28, 1991, M1, M4-5; Charles R. Cross, "Northern Exposure: A State of Mind," *Alaska Airlines Magazine* 16 (January 1992), 19-21, 74.

Alaska-Yukon Feature Films

FRANK NORRIS

This list attempts to compile all feature (general entertainment) films with an Alaska or Yukon setting. It includes one- and two-reel films issued before 1915, and longer films issued since then.

Particular effort has been made to include movies with settings in either Alaska or the Yukon. At times this has been difficult. Silent movies often alluded to the "frozen north," and many so-called "Mountie movies" took place in the "Canadian northwest." If a movie's setting seems to have been in the study area (perhaps due to gold rush characters, a title bearing the name "Yukon" or "Alaska," or strong reference to northern mining), it is included in the list. But if the movie's emphasis is on the "frozen north," on trapping, on wilderness or similar topics (as most "Mountie" movies did), it is not listed.

Film locations shots in Alaska or the Yukon are noted with the sign: #. Note: a reel is approximately 10 minutes long.

1) General Feature Films

- Ace of Spades, The*, 1912, Selig, 1 reel
- # *Adventures in the Far North*, 1923, Capt. F.E. Kleinschmidt, 4-5 reels
- Alaska*, 1919, Richard Surratt/Monte M. Katterjohn, 5 reels
- Alaska*, 1944, Monogram Pictures, 76 mins.
- # *Alaska Highway*, 1943, Paramount, 66 mins.
- # *Alaska Passage*, 1959, Fox, 71 mins.
- Alaska Patrol*, 1948, Burwood Pictures, 61 mins.
- Alaska Seas*, 1954, Paramount Pictures, 78 mins.
- # *Alaska-Siberian Expedition, The* (Carnegie Museum), 1912, Frank E. Kleinschmidt, 6 reels
- # *Alaska Wonders in Motion*, 1917, State Rights/Smith Films, 4-5 reels
- Alaskan, The*, 1924, Paramount, Famous Player/Lasky, 7 reels
- # *Alaskan Adventures*, 1926, Pathe Exchange, 6 reels

- # *Alaskan Eskimo, The*, 1953, Walt Disney, 30 mins.
- # *Alaskan Romance, An* (1919) — See *The Girl Alaska*
- # *Alaskan Safari*, 1968, Alaskan Shows, 118 (later 93) mins.
- All Hands on Deck*, Twentieth Century-Fox, 98 mins.
- # *Arctic Flight*, 1952, Monogram Pictures, 78 mins.
- # *Arctic Fury*, 1949, Plymouth Productions, 61 mins.
- Arctic Manhunt*, 1949, Universal, 69 mins.
- # *Arctic Safari*, 1964, Ron Hayes, 80 mins.
- # *Atop the World in Motion*, 1912, State Rights, 6 reels

- # *Barrier, The*, 1917, Rex Beach Picture Co./State Rights, 10 reels
- Barrier*, 1926, MGM, 7 reels
- Barrier, The*, 1937, Paramount, 90 mins.
- # *Bear Island*, 1980, Taft/Columbia, 118 mins.
- Belle of Alaska* 1922, Chester Bennet Productions, 5 reels
- Belle of the Yukon*, 1944, RKO, 83 mins.
- Blind Hearts*, 1921, Hobart Bosworth Productions, 6 reels
- Brand, The*, 1919, Glodwyn Pictures, 7 reels
- Brawn of the North*, 1922, Trimble-Murfin Productions, 8 reels
- # *Break Up, The*, 1930, Jack Robertson, 5 reels
- Bucking the Barrier*, 1923, Fox Film Corp., 5 reels
- Bucking the Tiger*, 1921, Selznick Pictures, 6 reels
- Burning Daylight*, 1920, Metro Pictures, 6 reels
- Burning Daylight*, 1928, First National Pictures, 7 reels
- Burning Daylight: The Adventures of "Burning Daylight" in Alaska*, 1914, Paramount, 5 reels
- Burning Daylight: The Adventures of "Burning Daylight" in Civilization*, 1914, Paramount, 5 reels

- Call of the Klondike*, 1926, Paul Gerson Pictures, 6 reels
- Call of the Klondike*, 1950, Monogram, 67 mins.
- Call of the North*, 1970, Alaska Outdoor Picture Corp.
- Call of the Wild*, 1923, Pathe Exchange, 7 reels
- Call of the Wild*, 1935, 20th Century, 89 mins.
- Call of the Wild* (German-Italian-Spanish-French version), 1972, MGM, 102 mins.
- Call of the Yukon*, 1938, Republic, 70 mins.
- Captain Kleinschmidt's Adventures in the Far North* (1923) — see *Adventures in the Far North*
- Carmen of the Klondike*, 1918, Selexart Pictures, 7 reels

Carnegie Museum Alaska-Siberian Expedition, The (1912)
— see *Alaska-Siberian Expedition*

Caught Bluffing, 1922, Universal Film Mfg. Co., 5 reels
Challenge to Be Free (a.k.a. *The Mad Trapper* and *The Mad Trapper of the Yukon*), 1976, Garnett, 88 mins.
Chechabcos, The, (a.k.a. *The Great White Silence* and *Mount McKinley*, 1924, Capt. Austin E. Lathrop/Associated Exhibitors, 90 mins.
Chechako, The, 1914?, Paramount, 5 reels
Claws, 1977, Chuck Keen, 100 mins.
Code of the Yukon, 1918, Select Pictures, 6 reels
Cry Vengeance, 1954, Allied Artists, 81 mins.

Darkening Trail, The, 1915, New York Motion Picture Corp., 4 reels

Death Hunt, 1981, 20th Century Fox, 96 mins.

Deathblock, The, 1915, Mutual, 5 reels

Destination Tokyo, 1944, Warner Brothers, 135 mins.

Dorothy of the Snows, c. 1915

Drifters, The, Jesse D. Hampton Productions, 5 reels

Dynamite Smith, 1924, Thomas H. Ince, 7 reels

Eskimo (a.k.a. *Mala the Magnificent*), 1934, MGM, 120 mins.

Eternal Struggle, The, 1923, Louis B. Mayer Productions, 8 reels

Eyes of the Totem, 1927, H.C. Weaver Productions, 7 reels

Far Country, The, 1954, Universal/International, 97 mins.

Flame of the Yukon, The, 1917, Triangle Film Corp., 5 reels

Flame of the Yukon, The, 1926, Metro Pictures, 6 reels

Frozen Justice, 1929, Fox, 9 reels

Frozen Limits, 1939, Gainsborough [Brit.], 84 mins.

Frozen North, The, 1910, Selig Pictures, 1 reel?

Gas-s-s ... Or It May Become Necessary to Destroy the World in Order to Save It!, 1970, American International, 79 mins.

Gay Purr-ee, 1962, UPA Pictures, 86 mins.

Girl Alaska, The, 1919, World Film Corp., 5 reels

Girl From Alaska, The, 1915-18?, Lubin Mfg. Co.

Girl From Alaska, 1942, Republic Pictures, 75 mins.

- Girl From Outside, The*, 1919, Eminent Authors Pictures, 7 reels
- Girl With the Champagne Eyes*, 1918, Fox Film Corp., 5 reels
- Gold Rush, The*, 1925, Charles Chaplin/United Artists, 10 reels
- Gold Rush, The*, 1942 (reissue with music and Chaplin narrative), 71 mins.
- * *Golden River*, 1938, Norman Dawn; may be same as *Taku* (1940)
- Golden Rosary*, 1917, Diana Motion Picture Corp., 5 reels
- Golden Snare, The*, 1921, First National, 6 reels
- Golden Trail, The*, 1920, American Lifeograph Co., 6 reels
- Golden Yukon*, 1927, Sierra Pictures, 53 mins.
- Goldrausch*, 1962, Filmarchives Internationale, 10 reels
(German version of *The Gold Rush*)
- Great Alone, The*, 1922, West Coast Films, 6 reels
- Great Race, The*, 1965, Patricia-Jalem-Reynard Co., 157 mins.
- * *Great White North, The* (a.k.a. *Lost in the Arctic*), 1928, Fox Film Corp., 6 reels
- * *Great White Silence, The* (1924) — see *The Chechabcos*
- Great White Trail, The*, 1917, Wharton, 7-8 reels
- Grip of the Yukon, The*, 1928, Universal, 7 reels
- Grub Stake, The*, 1923, Nell Shipman Productions, 7-8 reels
- Guilt of Silence, The*, 1918, Bluebird Photoplays, 5 reels
- Gypsy of the North*, 1928, Trem Varr Productions, 6 reels
- Heart of the Yukon*, 1960, Warner Bros., 161 mins.
- * *Hunt for Red October*, 1990, Paramount, 132 mins.
- Hunted Woman, The*, 1925, Fox Film Corp., 5 reels
- * *Ice Palace*, 1960, Warner Bros., 161 mins.
- Idol of the North*, 1921, Famous Players/Paramount, 6 reels
- * *Igloo* (a.k.a. *Manna*), 1932, Fox Film Corp., 61 mins.
- In the Land of the Head Hunters*, 1914, Seattle Film Co., 4 reels
- Iron Strain, The*, 1915, New York Motion Picture Co., 6 reels
- * *Iron Trail*, 1921, Bennett Pictures, 7 reels
- Isle of Retribution, The*, 1926, R-C Pictures, 7 reels

- Jack London*, 1943, Samuel Bronston/United Artists, 93 mins.
- Jack London Story, The* (1980) — see *Klondike Fever*
- Jack London's Klondike Fever* (1980) — see *Klondike Fever*
- * *Jonico and the Kusb Ta Ka*, 1969, Alaska Pictures, 94 mins.
- * *Joyride*, 1977, American International, 92 mins.
- Justice of the Far North*, 1925, CBC Films Sales Co., 6 reels
- Kid From the Klondyke, The*, 1911, Thomas A. Edison, 1 reel?
- Klondike*, 1936, Monogram Pictures, 68 mins.
- Klondike Annie*, 1936, Paramount, 85 mins.
- Klondike Fever* (a.k.a. *Jack London's Klondike Fever* and *The Jack London Story*), 1980, CFI Investments, 60 mins.
- Klondike Fury*, 1942, Monogram Pictures, 7 reels
- Klondike Kate*, 1943, Columbia, 64 mins.
- Klondyke Bubble*, 1914, Lubin, 2 reels
- Klondyke Steal, A*, 1911, Vitagraph, 1 reel
- Laughing Bill Hyde*, 1918, Rex Beach Pictures, 6 reels
- Law of the Northwest*, 1943, Columbia, 57 mins.
- Law of the Yukon*, 1920, Mayflower Photoplay Corp., 6 reels
- * *Leaving Normal*, 1992, Universal, 110 mins.
- Little Pal*, 1915, Paramount, 5 reels
- Lost in Alaska*, 1952, Universal, 76 mins.
- * *Lost in the Arctic* (1928) — see *The Great White North*
- * *Lure of Alaska*, 1915-19, State Rights, 7 reels
- Lure of the Yukon, The*, 1914, Picture Playhouse Film Corp., 3 reels
- Lure of the Yukon*, 1924, Norman Dawn Alaskan Co., 6 reels
- Mad Trapper [of the Yukon], The* (1976) — see *Challenge to Be Free*
- Mala the Magnificent* (1934) — see *Eskimo*
- Manna* (1932) — see *Igloo*
- * *Mara of the Wilderness* (a.k.a. *Valley of the White Wolves*), 1965, Unicorn Productions, 90 mins.
- Michigan Kid, The*, 1928, Universal, 6 reels
- Mighty Tundra, The* (1936) — see *Tundra*
- Mints of Hell, The*, 1919, Jesse D. Hampton, 5 reels

Morganson's Finish, 1926, Tiffany Productions, 7 reels
Mount McKinley (1924) — see *The Cheebabcos*
Murder on the Yukon (*Renfrew of the Royal Mounted*
series), 1940, Criterion Pictures/Monogram Pictures, 58
mins.

Never Cry Wolf, 1983, Amarok/Buena Vista, 91 mins.
Next in Line (1942) — British title for *Riders of the*
Northland

North of Alaska, 1924, Sanford Productions, 5 reels

North of Nome, 1925, Arrow Pictures, 6 reels

North of Nome, 1936, Columbia, 64 mins.

North of the Sun, 1960, Gordon Eastman, 80 mins.

North of the Yukon, 1939, Columbia, 62 mins.

North of the Yukon, 1984, Yukon Pictures Inc., 103 mins.

North to Alaska, 1960, 20th Century Fox, 121 mins.

North to the Yukon, 1984, Yukon Pictures, Inc., 103 mins.

North Wind's Malice, 1920, Eminent Authors Pictures, 6
reels

Northwest Rangers, 1942, Loew's/MGM, 64 mins.

Odyssey of the North, An, 1914, Paramount, 6 reels

Orphans of the North (1940) — see *Taku*

Outdoorsman, The, 1968, W.A.B. Motion Picture
Productions, 90 mins.

Pardners, 1910, Edison Mfg. Co., 2 reels

Pardners, 1917, Thomas Edison/Mutual Film Corp., 5 reels

Pipe Dreams, 1976, Avco Embassy, 87 mins.

Primitive Love, 1927, Frank E. Kleinschmidt, 6 reels

Queen of the Yukon, 1940, Monogram Pictures, 73 mins.

RCMP and the Treasures of Gbenghis Khan, The [re-edit-
ing of the serial *Dangers of the Canadian Mounted* —
see next section], 1948

Red Snow, 1952, Columbia, 75 mins.

Report from the Aleutians, 1943, U.S. Army Signal Corps,
47 mins.

Riders of the Northland (a.k.a. *Next in Line*), 1942,
Columbia, 58 mins.

Road to Utopia, 1946, Paramount, 89 mins.

Roads to Destiny, 1921, Goldwyn Pictures, 5-6 reels
* *Rocking Moon*, 1926, Metropolitan Pictures of
California/Producers Distribution Corp., 7 reels
Rose of Nome, The, 1920, Fox Film Corp., 5 reels
Rose of the Yukon 1949, Republic, 69 mins.
Rough and Ready, 1918, Fox Film Corp., 6 reels
* *Runaway Train*, 1985, Northbrook/Cannon, 111 mins.

Safari in Alaska, 1965, Alaska Shows, 90 mins.
Safari Moja (Alaska to Africa), 1970, Willy Taber
Satan Town, 1926, Charles R. Rogers Productions, 6 reels
Sea Wolf, The, 1930, Fox Film Corp., 10 reels
* *Seal Island*, 1949, Walt Disney, 30 mins.
Shadows, 1919, Goldwyn Pictures Corp., 5 reels
Shame, 1921, Fox Film Corp., 8-9 reels
Shark Munroe, 1918, William S. Hart Productions, 5 reels
Shattered Lives, 1925, Gotham Productions, 6 reels
Shooting of Dan McGrew, 1915, Popular Plays and
Players/Metro Pictures Corp., 5 reels
Shooting of Dan McGrew, 1924, Sawyer-Lubin
Special/Metro Pictures Corp., 7 reels
Silent Sanderson, 1925, Hunt Stromberg Corp., 5 reels
Silver Horde, The, 1920, Goldwyn Pictures, 7 reels
* *Silver Horde, The*, 1930, RKO Pictures, 76 mins.
Sins of Her Parent, 1916, Fox Film Corp., 5 reels
Siren Call, The, 1922, Famous Players-Lasky, 6 reels
Smoke Bellew, 1929, Big 4 Productions, 5 reels
Smouldering Embers, 1920, Frank Keenan productions, 5
reels
Snowblind, 1921, Goldwyn, 6 reels
Snowdrift, 1923, Fox, 5 reels
Social Ambition, 1918, Selexart Pictures, 6-7 reels
Son of the Wolf, The, 1922, R-C Pictures, 5 reels
Song of the Wage Slave, 1915, Popular Plays and
Players/Metro Pictures, 5 reels
* *Sourdough*, 1977, Film Saturation, 94 mins.
* *Spawn of the North*, 1938, Paramount, 110 mins.
Spell of the Yukon, 1916, Popular Plays and Players, 5 reels
* *Spirit of the Wind*, 1979, Doyon Ltd./Raven, 98 mins.
Spoilers, The, 1914, Selig Polyscope/State Rights, 9 reels
Spoilers, The, 1916, Selig re-issue with Rex Beach introduc-
tion, 12 reels

Spoilers, The, 1923, Goldwyn, 8 reels
Spoilers, The, 1930, Paramount Publix, 85 mins.
Spoilers, The, 1942, Universal, 87 mins.
Spoilers, The, 1955, Universal, 84 mins.
Spoilers of the North, 1947, Republic, 66 mins.
 # *Star Trek VI*, Paramount, 101 mins.
Steele of the Royal Mounted, 1925, Vitagraph, 6 reels

Taku (a.k.a. *Orphans of the North*), 1940, Norman Dawn Productions, 44 mins. May be the same as *Golden River* (1938).

Tangled Fates, 1916, World Film Corp., 5 reels
30 Below Zero, 1926, Fox Film Corp., 5 reels
This is My Alaska, 1969, Alaskan Adventures, Inc., 120 mins.

Those Redheads From Seattle, 1953, Paramount, 90 mins.
Thousands Cheer, 1943, MGM, 126 mins.
Tiger's Cub, The, 1920, Fox Film Corp., 6 reels
 # *Timber Tramps*, 1975, Chuck Keen
 # *Track of the Giant Snow Bear*, 1970, Walt Disney, 110 mins.

Trail of '98, The, 1929, MGM, 10 reels
Trail of the Upper Yukon, The, 1915, Rex/Universal Film Mfg. Co., 2 reels
 # *Trail of the Yukon*, 1949, Monogram Pictures, 67 mins.
Trap, The (a.k.a. *A Woman's Law*), 1919, Universal Film Mfg. Co., 6 reels
 # *True North, The*, 1925, Robertson/Young, 7 reels
 # *Tundra* (a.k.a. *The Mighty Tundra*), 1936, Universal, 78 mins.
 # *Two Against the Arctic*, 1974, Walt Disney, 110 mins.

Untamed, 1940, Paramount, 83 mins.

Valley of the White Wolves (1965) — see *Mara of the Wilderness*

Very Confidential, 1927, Fox Film Corp., 6 reels

Way of the Strong, The, 1919, Metro Pictures, 5 reels
Where the North Begins, 1923, Warner Brothers, 6 reels
White Fang, 1925, R-C Pictures/Film Booking Offices of America, 6 reels

White Fang, 1936, 20th Century-Fox, 70 mins.
White Fang, 1946 (Russian version), Alexander Zguridi
White Fang, 1972 (Italian/Spanish/French version), 97
 mins.
 # *White Fang*, 1991, Buena Vista, 104 mins.
White Fury, 1969, A.R. Dubs, 100 mins.
White Raven, The, 1917, Rolfe Photoplays, 5 reels
Wilderness Calling, 1969, Aaro Films, 102 mins.
Wilderness Woman, The, 1926, Robert Kane Productions, 8
 reels
 # *Winds of Chance*, 1925, First National Pictures, 10 reels
Wolf Lowry, 1917, New York Motion Picture Corp., 5 reels
Wolves of the North, 1921, Universal, 5 reels
Woman's Law, A (1919) — see *The Trap*
World in His Arms, The 1952, Universal/International, 104
 mins.

Yukon Flight (Renfrew of the Royal Mounted series), 1940,
 Criterion Pictures/Monogram Pictures, 57 mins.
Yukon Gold, 1952, Monogram Pictures, 62 mins.
Yukon Manhunt, 1951, Monogram Pictures, 62 mins.
Yukon Patrol, 1942, Republic Pictures, 7 reels
Yukon Vengeance 1954, Allied Artists/Monogram Pictures,
 68 mins.

Movie Serials and Television Shows

Alaskans, The, 1959-60, Warner Bros., 36 episodes
Canadian Mounties Versus the Atomic Invaders, 1953, 12
 episodes
Dangers of the Canadian Mounted, 1948, Republic, 12
 episodes
 "Klondike," NBC, 1960-61, 18 episodes
 "Northern Exposure," CBS, 1990-present
Royal Mounted Rides Again, The, 1945, Universal, 13
 episodes
Sergeant Preston of the Yukon, 1955-1958, Charles E.
 Skinner Productions, 78 episodes