

## BOOKEDFORTRAVEL

Alaska: New Gold Rush



This five-generation family of Alaskan ladies pose ruff-necked and parka-packed.

Fairbanks.

THERE ARE hours of wilderness flying on the way to Fairbanks, which is as far north as Nome and almost directly over the Hawaiian Islands, if you dropped a plumb line straight south. Cruising over this endless sea of evergreen for over five hours I was, in a way, almost surprised that we located it, a scattered settlement nestling in seclusion there by the river, north of the sixty-third parallel.

The northward excursion, moreover, made as it was, in the roomy old Boeing Stratocruisers that Pan American is using on its Alaska runs these days, seems even more incongruous once you've had a look at this gold rush town. Recalling bygone flights to London and others from Honolulu to Los Angeles aboard this winged Waldorf, I have long maintained that the Stratocruiser is the world's most agreeable airplane. With the advent of the jets on other routes Pan American has, I couldn't help but feel, relegated its Stratocruisers-old before their time -to the Alaska run. As for me, I could scarcely have been more pleased to fly it, but those long, comfortable hours in the lower-deck cocktail lounge on the way here, were on later reflection, rather like riding a Hispano Suiza to a clambake.

Fairbanks, let's face it, is still frontier. There may be a small skyscraper or two, albeit of modest size, but beavers still build dams on the river in view of the tenants, and some
citizens still live in log cabins that are as prominent in Fairbanks today as tenements in Manhattan. Strolling into a main-drag luncheonette, you can order a bowl of soup, buy a magazine, or have your arm tattooed. Yet the supermarkets nearby are as shiny as any Mikoyan visited in Maryland, and only the prices are different. Heads of lettuce are available at anywhere from forty-seven cents to seventy-nine cents, depending upon size. A five-pound caponette bore a price tag of $\$ 4.90$, and three ears of corn were available to anyone willing to ante up fifty-nine cents. Eight ounces of heavy cream costs fifty-nine cents, or did on the day I shopped, and regular local milk was forty-seven cents a quart.

No matter how much one may have heard of the prices of Alaska, especially aretic Alaska, the laundry and cleaning costs are enough to prostrate the most profligate philanthropist, and I must say paying $\$ 2.55$ for a haircut and being offered a shoeshine for seventy-five cents caused a fluttering in my auricle that a cool can of beer (at seventy-five cents a can) failed totally to calm.

About the best accommodations in downtown Fairbanks are theoretically available in a motel called the Traveler's Inn, a twin of a similar enterprise in Anchorage. At certain hours of the day, a bellhop of schoolboy age is on hand and in deference to the tourists that crowd the place, he wears a parka, a pullover with a fur-trimmed hood. Parkas are pro-
nounced parky up here, and the fur trim is called a ruff. These summer days the uniform is a "summer parka," but even so it's an uncomfortable rig. Although the city is perched on permafrost, it is shirt-sleeve weather here in midsummer, and daylight lasts far into the night.

Hotel accommodations are difficult to come by in Alaska, and I had, in fact, been all but talked out of this tour of the tundra by a prominent Alaska travel executive who told me flatly that it would be impossible to find space here in midsummer. This assessment, however professional the source, proved something of an exaggeration. Independent tourists who fly up here will certainly experience difficulty in finding rooms at the last minute, but a casual look at the advance reservations in midsummer revealed scattered available rooms for late-season dates. On the other hand, travelers heading for these parts simply have to attune themselves to the price structure and be prepared to pay $\$ 17$ a day for a double room and very little service. The food prices are moderately high considering that the restaurant of the Traveler's Inn is a motel coffee shop by continental U. S. standards. Still, a plateful of Alaska king crab legs is a respectable $\$ 3.50$ and the white flaky meat, which is not nearly as recalcitrant as a lobster in parting with its casing, will be more than the average man can eat. I must say, no restaurant in memory ever served me too much lobster.

A marvelous sleeper of a place where the rooms have actually gone begging this summer is Cripple Creek Resort, in the suburb of Ester, a few miles outside Fairbanks. Built out of an old gold mining camp, Cripple Creek has thirty-five double rooms, all of them neat and new and equipped with private baths. Meals are served mining-camp style on long tables in a large barn of a room, which is otherwise decorated with nickelodeons and moose heads. Sourdough breakfasts call for sourdough hotcakes with hot huckleberry syrup, smoked pork shingles, or freshly ground reindeer sausage-your choice. At dinnertime shee fish, an arctic catch, is deep fried, and there are salmon steaks, reindeer steaks and hot miner biscuits.

Cripple Creek has also organized a summer program of singular ac-tivities-gold panning, horsedrawn wagon tours of mining operations, reindeerburger parties, and eskimo dances by a troupe which performs on stage alongside a dogsled once owned by the famed racer, Horace Holysmoke (no rel.).

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town Fairbanks is inclined towards the raw and lusty. The local El Morocco is a dusty arena where drinks are a dollar each, cash on the barrelhead, and your change in silver dollars. The entertainment on the night I explored the place was a band of displaced female impersonators up from the honky tonks of the West Coast. If their freak routines were a bore to visitors from what Alaskans call The Outside, they were fascination incarnate to the local citizens that packed the place at show time. I emerged gratefully at midnight and drove home in the eerie daylight without headlights.
The prime excursion for tourists at large in Fairbanks is a four-hour trip that covers twenty-five miles of the river aboard an old rehabilitated paddle-wheeler. The ship nuzzles up alongside Indian fish wheels which, cranked by the swift current, flip immense salmon out of the flowing glacial silt waters of the Tanana River. At the Indian camps, which the paddle-wheeler also visits, the salmon is skinned, cleaned and boned, then dried and smoked and stored away for the winter months, when it will provision the family and the dog teams, too. The river in the winter months, of course, is frozen solid, a circumstance that provides for a huge lottery known as the Nenana Ice Pool. The bettors contribute to a pot that grows well over $\$ 100,000$, gambling on the exact moment of the breakup of the ice at the town of Nenana, sixty miles south of Fairbanks. The listing of the entrants and their guesses fill a volume as thick as the Brooklyn telephone directory.

Storing away provisions for the winter is not solely a practice of the Indians. C. W. Snedden, publisher of The Fairbanks News-Miner who happened to be aboard the paddlewheeler the day we cruised the fishwheel country, told me he hunts moose each fall, eats it all winter. A small yearling with a gross weight of about 1,300 pounds will dress out at about 500 pounds or more, providing meat for moose steak and moose roasts as tasty as baby beef. Game is so plentiful in the unspoiled wilderness that Snedden likes to tell the story of a sporting friend who came to visit him bent on getting a dall sheep, a grizzly, a caribou, and a moose. The friend only had a week. As it turned out, he bagged one each and went home two days early.

A fair idea of the game that lives outside town can be gained by nothing more adventurous than a trip to the museum on the grounds of the University of Alaska at College, a community just outside Fairbanks. Its most awesome exhibit is a brown
bear shot in 1950 that weighed 1,500 pounds and stands, stuffed, at nine feet tall. Among the other fauna here on the hill, is a stuffed two-headed caribou fawn, a mastodon tooth, the tusks of a hairy mammoth, and a set of interlocked moose horns, a memorial to a final fight that brought death to both warriors. I move that it be presented to Khrushchev as a going-away present when he leaves the United States.

Among other exhibits is the waxed mustache bust of Felice Pedroni, donated by the Italian government in honor of the Italian immigrant who discovered gold in Fairbanks on July 22, 1902. There is the log of the Italian dirigible Norge that left Italy April 10, 1926, and floating by way of London, Oslo, Leningrad, and Spitzbergen, came down at Teller, Alaska, on May 13, 1926. It had traveled 7,750 miles at an average speed of 43.3 miles an hour.

HUNG on a museum wall is the original design for Alaska's striking flag, which was designed by Benny Benson, then a seventh-grader in Seward High School. It combines the Big Dipper and the north star on a deep blue field. As Benny Benson himself explained, "The blue is for the Alaska sky and the forget-menot, an Alaskan flower. The north star is for the future state of Alaska, the most northerly in the Union.

Somewhat more commercial in intent, but equally interesting to see is the exhibit of Arctic lore on the premises of Jonas Brothers' fur store in Fairbanks. There are lifesize models of Eskimo hunters wearing soft, warm parkas of the breasts of murre birds, Eskimo women fleshing fat from sealskins, and skin boats mounted on whale jawbones. At the same premises the well-dressed Alaskan can come by a pair of hair-seal slacks for $\$ 65$, and to match, a hair-seal jacket with knit collars and cuffs for men at $\$ 157.50$. Bolo ties with fur-seal sliders are the cravat of the north at $\$ 3.50$, yet I feel confident they will never be copied by the Countess

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Mara. The local hula hoop is the Eskimo yo-yo, two balls of fur each suspended on a string of different length. The object is to make one fur ball twirl clockwise while the other spins counterclockwise, an action that somehow evoked fond memories among the more cultivated members of our party of the tassel twirlers who worked those Forty-second Street theatres in the bygone days of Minsky.

A few blocks away Martin Victor, a furrier who advertises "from the trapper to you," was in the middle


Toklat Grizzly, Mt. McKinley Nationl Park.
of an August fur sale, a season when a Fairbanks citizen with forethoughts of the coming winter could buy a sheared white rabbit parka with a ruff of white Arctic fox for $\$ 125$, a saving of $\$ 75$ over the midwinter price. The handsomest of midwinter insulators is a parka made of sicsicpuc, or whistling marmot, a brown fur inlaid with a pattern of dog-sled trim on the bottom- $\$ 395$ for men, $\$ 295$ for ladies. Mukluks, the soft, northern calf-high boots cost $\$ 25$ a pair, an indication of the high price of keeping warm.

I'm not sure what anybody can do with a sicsicpuc parka or a pair of mukluks once back home in the lower latitudes, although this furry gear is proving popular for those who expect to be on hand for the winter Olympics at Squaw Valley. An Eskimo yo-yo and a real whale's tooth are about as far as we have gone so far, although we do have in hand an Eskimo cook book, which includes such instructions as "Take the feathers off from the Owl. Clean owl and put in cooking pot. Have lots of water in pot. Add salt to taste." Also, how to cook the small intestines of ptarmigan and what to do to make bear feet tasty. Anybody invited to our house for supper this fall will be very wise to eat first.

## -Horace Sutton.

Editor's Note: This is the first of a series of articles on Alaska.


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People

## (Continued from page 25)

boring and colorless image which has found its apotheosis in the Albert Memorial in Hyde Park.
Mr. Eyck's biography of the Prince Consort is more political than personal with, as his publishers say, an "emphasis on the need for a strong Germany." I find it hard to see how this thesis is borne out by this record of a second-rate figure whose chief merit was that he learned early not to interfere unduly in political affairs. In a memorandum to himself, headed "Necessity of caution in the extreme and discretion in the society of a Court," which Mr. Eyck quotes, the Prince Consort wrote, "The less the intercourse with all inmates. the better your chance of escaping difficulty . . Avoid giving an opinion as much as possible, and never volunteer it." That is not the language of greatness but of mediocrity.

$\mathrm{I}_{\mathrm{r}}$T WAS not in the controversial sphere of international affairs but in the neutral territory of industry that Albert showed his talent. The Great Exhibition of 1851, a revolutionary enterprise in those days, originated in his suggestion to the Society of Arts. But even this admirable project illustrated how hard it was to be a consort and a foreigner and to have bright ideas. In the House of Lords, Lord Brougham fulminated that the Crown had no right to hold an exhibition in Hyde Park. In the House of Commons, a Colonel Sibthorp forecast that Britain would be overrun by aliens who would corrupt its morals, steal its secrets, subvert religion, and undermine its loyalty to the sovereign, Queen Victoria. Nevertheless, the Exhibition was opened by the Queen, and prospered together with the public esteem of Albert.
Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, Britain was em-pire-building and France was the rival. That was the context of AngloGerman amiabilities, and the Prince Consort left no more than the legacy of a good public-relations man to reinforce these sympathies. He helped them, but history made them. Albert's real contribution to British life in the nineteenth century was to make it stuffy.

It is quite possible to imagine that had it not been for the Germanic heaviness which he helped to impose on society, Britain could have had an industrial revolution and built an empire gaily. It may well be that France's radiance derives in part from the fact that for all the tragedy of resisting
the Germans in armed conflict, it also resisted the suffocating Prussian dreariness which even the famed Madame de Staël couldn't popularize in Paris.
The Prince Consort was a conformist, and this was a felicitous circumstance for the monarchy, for in the revolutionary decade of the 1840 s when thrones began to tremble, it was only the most acceptable of rulers who survived. It would be of value if Mr. Eyck, who has written a most painstaking book, were to supplement it with a more personal account of Albert's influence on Queen Victoria and through her on popular sentiment. How was it that this inexperienced girl became the child of moderate change rather than the victim of revolution? And what, if anything, lies behind the portrait of Albert in Windsor Castle-that smooth, blank face with its little moustache and its pretty mouth?
It is a pity that in a biography of the Prince Consort Mr. Eyck hasn't dealt at any length with Albert's relations with his son who later became King Edward VII. He throws out a tantalizing hint when he mentions the Queen's opinion that her husband became ill after he visited his son at Cambridge. What happened when he got there? Gambling, horses, actresses? A row about the Prince's proGerman activities? About Edward's allowance? Mama's interference? Mr. Eyck is silent. His portrait of the Prince stares back at us with the stylized indifference of A. W. Penley's painting. The top hat's on the table; the gilt's on the wall; the trousers look padded. But where is the man?


Queen Victoria with Albert in $1854-\mathrm{He}$ proved a stayer.

## Continued from page 28

we recognize the very high literary worth of those books and are not afraid to say so. We respect the attempt of those writers to search for truth.
"It would please us deeply if the same liberal approach could be adopted by American publishers and critics. Perhaps when you return you might convey these views. You might also want to look into the practice of distorting those few books by Soviet authors that are published in the United States. American publishers will include Forewords without the consent of the author-Forewords that make it appear that these books are actually bitter attacks on Soviet society. This is misrepresentation, seriously so.
"I am not complaining because my own works are not represented in the United States. I'm used to it; it doesn't disturb me. And if American publishers do decide to take one of my books and they don't bother to ask my permission or pay me royalties, I am prepared to take this philosophically, especially if my books by any chance may do a little good."

I thanked Mr. Fedin for what he had just said. In bringing up the question of royalties, I certainly did not wish to foreclose discussion on other matters of mutual importance to writers in both countries. It would be a serious error, however, to minimize the royalties problem so far as our authors were concerned or to allow it to become entangled with these other issues. I said I hoped we might attempt to dispose of one question and then proceed to the next.

Marguerite Aliger, regarded by many Soviet literary critics as one of the most talented of young poets, politely interrupted me.
"You will forgive me if I observe that your approach is characteristic of your national traditions," she said. "America stresses efficiency and a commercial approach. Here in our country, our national character reflects the crusading spirit of our revolution; we are interested in ideas that are close to the people. I don't know whether I have made myself clear. It is always such a hazard to have to go through an interpreter. We poets constantly have to struggle with the hazards of translation.
"Anyway, we are interested in America. We hope you will be interested in us. We have tried to do something in our own country towards that purpose. We hope you
will do something in America. As for the business matters, why not let the trade people worry about it?"

Mr. Zelenski decorated this theme by observing that the Soviet Union didn't buy American oranges. That was something for the orange growers to take up with the trade officials. Writers were concerned with literature, not oranges, therefore this was the wrong place for such a discussion.

MR. PERTSOV paid tribute to Mr . Fedin for writing so movingly about contemporary life and giving us a "chance to see the wholeness of our people." Then he said: "I should like, if I may, to make some general comment. I speak as a fellow critic and editor. It is customary for Soviet literary periodicals to publish literary criticism only after the books are read. You publish criticism in your country not only before the books are read but without the books ever being available. You don't publish the books themselves. My suggestion, therefore, is this: Provide space in the Saturday Review for Soviet critics to write about Soviet books that are worth knowing about and publishing. We will provide space in our journals for you to write about American authors whom you feel should be published. We should then publish those authors. You will publish our authors. This way we can make some progress. Do you agree?"
At first I hesitated to answer. What he had proposed was totally unacceptable. Mr. Pertsov had dramatized the authoritarian nature of the Soviet Union of Writers. The proper way to handle a problem, he in effect declared, was to make a deal between matching imperiums. He wanted to be able to call the shots on the writers who were to get attention. This is what they did inside the Soviet Union; why not do it the same way on the outside as well? And they were willing to trade privileges. Mr. Pertsov's proposal threw an important light, it seemed to me, on the nature of the Writers' Union. The Union has the power to accord recognition or withdraw it. It can surround a book or an author with the kind of effluvium that can almost automatically provide success and renown. It can influence acceptance of a manuscript. It can influence the kind of publication a book will be given. It owns journals of literary criticism. It can put a book within reach of the public. In short, the Union has both a closed shop and a closed circle. When recognition comes from the outside to a Soviet writer, it had better be to someone who is in favor. When it comes to someone who has com-
mitted the grossest of sins-looked elsewhere for approbation after his book has been rejected-then the resultant wrath is both predictable and thunderous. Pasternak's crime was that he sought acceptance and received it after being told by the ultimate authority that his book was objectionable and inadequate.

Mr. Pertsov was willing to be fair about his deal. He would accord us the same privilege.

As politely as I could, I told Mr. Pertsov that neither the editors of $S R$ nor anyone else in the U. S. possessed the kind of authority that would make possible the kind of arrangement he proposed. I would be troubled, in fact, if any one person or agency in the United States had the power to specify which books would be put into print in the Soviet. And on the receiving end, I was certain each American publisher would want to retain complete independence of selection.

This bothered Mr. Pertsov, I am sure, as much as it bothered the others. For it meant that there was probably no real or operational relationship that could be formed between them and ourselves; at least, not on the basis that they proposed. They had a tight corporation; they could control the issuance of the stock and peg the prices. We were strictly open market. Their power held only so long as they could control recognition. Our method was decentralized, uncontrolled, hazardous, improbable.
A T THIS point in the meeting, we were light years apart. Yet, we could exchange some pleasantries about the need for both countries to find a basis for peace on the national level, and we could pledge ourselves as writers to that golden objective. But in those intimate matters where writers and critics are supposed to share a common language, even if the words are pointed in different directions, I am afraid we had no way of reaching one another.

Mr. Fedin looked at his watch. Mr. Chakofsky, who likes a tough debate but who, I sensed, felt a little awkward about the fact that I had been at a numerical disadvantage, said he hoped I didn't feel my visit had been a failure. I told him quite truthfully that I didn't feel I had failed altogether. For at least I had come to the right place. If the problem of the American author in the Soviet is to be solved at all, this is the place to begin.

The writers got up and started to leave. I made a point of going over to Mr. Fedin just before he left, telling him how grateful I was for his courteous consideration of the prob-

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lem I had put before the group. He said perhaps at some later date there might be a happier resolution than seemed to be possible at the moment. In any event, he hoped I had a good picture of the situation as it stood.

And that was the way the meeting ended.
Where do we go from here?
The problem could be solved with one sweep of the pen, of course, if the issue of royalties were to be tied into any general settlement between the two countries. Mr. Khrushchev, in direct discussion with the President, might decide this is a good thing to do, and let the Soviet writer's blue chips fall where they may.

Short of this, however, it would be reasonable to suppose that the question, if it is going to be solved at all, will require endurance and a gift for the long view. There is a glacial quality to Soviet positions where substantial self-interest is involved, as contradistinguished from ideological positions, which are apt to be regarded as tactical and therefore subject to correction. Yet even glaciers are subject to the laws of thaw; and it is our job to be eternally patient, inexhaustibly persistent, supernaturally benevolent.
In approaching the royalties question, it might be prudent to waive any retroactive claims and start afresh as of a given date. There is no doubt, moreover, that the dollar shortage in the Soviet Union is a serious one. Hence, we might indicate our willingness to take payment in rubles. The important thing is to get acceptance for the principle of royalty payments even though the form of the payments might not be ideal.

Here are the approaches open to us:

1. We can try the punitive approach. We can raid their literature-not only their novels and short stories but their text books and technical books (firstrate, incidentally). The desirability of the dollar being what it is, we can create a gravitational pull in a number of Soviet authors away from the present Union policy. If some of the leading Soviet writers have a direct stake in a royalties arrangement, we might be able to talk business. But the amounts involved, whether with respect to the novelists or the academicians, would have to be fairly substantial. American publishers, however, may not be too much interested in issuing Soviet books, even assuming publishable quality.
2. We can do exactly the opposite; namely, to treat Soviet authors on the same basis we do our own, regardless of our own hurts, grievances, re-
sentments. Instead of imitating the offender, we can give him a polite lesson in the anatomy of decency and good faith. As in the case of the previous point, however, the number of books involved would have to be large enough to be visible.
3. Independently of points one and two, we can attack the problem from a variety of angles. We can step up the number of writers and publishers going to the Soviet Union, whether on an exchange or private basis. We can encourage our people to bring the subject up whenever it seems appropriate-and perhaps even on a few occasions when it might not seem appropriate-so long as they do so knowledgeably, courteously, effective1y. If a writer like Ernest Hemingway, for example, were to get into a public discussion of the issue, the Writers' Union might find itself under considerable popular pressure. For Hemingway, perhaps more than any nonpolitical figure in the world today, is a subject of adulation by the Russians.
4. We can make the question of royalties an item to be brought up for discussion at top-level meetings.

Not all these points are mutually exclusive, of course. My personal preference would be a combination of points two, three and four. I don't say we can shame the Soviet Writers' Union into doing the right thing just through the power of example. But I doubt that the punitive approach will do anything more than to give them grounds for self-justification. Besides, it is high time that the United States acted in keeping with its own history and traditions instead of running a race in competitive puniness and petulance. It is possible that an open and generous policy by the U.S., one which demonstrates the working possibilities of what it is we seek, may in fact be our best chance.

- N. C.


## LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

Column Two should read: 15, 14, $13,12,11,10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1$. 1. "Where the Blue Begins" (Morley). 2. "Stuart Little" (E. B. White). 3. "Don Quixote" (Cervantes). 4. "Archie and Mehitabel" (Marquis). 5. "Treasure Island" (Stevenson). 6. "Doctor Dolittle" (Lofting). 7. "The Jungle Books" (Kipling). 8. "Tale of Mrs. Tiggiwinkle" (Potter). 9. "Uncle Wiggily" (Garis). 10. "The Story of Ferdinand" (Leaf). 11. "Thidwick the Moose" (Suess). 12. "A Visit from St. Nicholas" (Moore). 13. "The Mysterious Island" (Verne). 14. "Babar the Little Elephant" (De Brunhoff). 15. "Tarzan and the Golden Lion" (Burroughs).

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