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Alaska, the last frontier Voice of American Pt. 4, Broadcasted October 8, 1967, No Location, Narrated by Ret Turner

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Alaska, the last frontier – The Promise of Alaska. Ret Turner is the narrator. Robert Atwood is an articulate spokesperson for developing Alaska. Atwood says “It’s a revolution without any blood. It’s a revolution where ties were severed and new ones were created. Yet there was a friendly government where the ties were being severed, so they had help.”

Turner begins a narration. On a Golden Nugget Jet flight nonstop to Anchorage, Cathy Smith is a stewardess on an airline jet that moved from Seattle, to Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Nome. There are 4 major airlines from the Lower 48 states into Alaska. Jet powered internal airlines crisscross every part of the territory. The airplane has been one of the most important keys to development. Small feeder airlines began after the 1940s to haul people and goods everywhere. Wien Airlines which started from the bush flying of the Wien brothers, Noel, Ralph and Sig.

The Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs is an organization established to work with Native populations. In Nome, Turner talked to Joseph Abrahamson of the Bureau who described the amazing ability of the Eskimos. The Eskimo people have high mechanical aptitudes, Abrahamson says. “They are amazing people in that respect.” Many of the Eskimos who have been acculturated through education have picked up the electronics field and are airline mechanics and pilots. A special training program on geology and mining engineering was conducted at the University of Alaska last year and there were about 20 Alaska Natives in the graduating group.

Vital to the 270,000 people in Alaska are University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Alaska Methodist University in Anchorage, and Sheldon Jackson College in Sitka. Dr. Peter Gordon Gould of Alaska Methodist University explains that in the history of U.S, new resources are discovered when each frontier area is developed. Colleges from the eastern United States said bring your young people here, we’ll educate them and they went to get an education but never came back. Gould discovered that 95% of Alaska’s young people leaving Alaska for their college education did not come back after they received their degree. The University of Alaska was created in Fairbanks in 1917 through a federal land grant program. President William Wood describes that there are registered at the University, students from 101 or 102 communities from Alaska. The University has 95 communities that none of which would be over 200-300 inhabitants. The church also established institutions of learning. In Anchorage where almost half of the state’s population is centered, the Methodist church in 1960 opened Alaska Methodist University. Dr. Fred McGinnis, president of the school, outlines its role. He believes the role of a private school is to

develop a strong first rate liberal arts program with a strong influence of social science and humanities. Alaska Methodist University was the dream of Dr. Peter Gordon Gould who is now its director of development. Dr. Gould is of Native Aleut descent. He was born the son of a poor fisherman on the Aleutian Islands and worked his way through schools in the Eastern States. He persuaded the Methodist board of Missions to conduct a national campaign for funds to establish the school. The schools of higher learning in Alaska have encouraged people to stay. Dr. Fred McGinnis says one of the outstanding students recently said he wanted to come to this institution because he wanted to see the way the new world developed a new state. He wanted to use some of those skills to help develop his country. 16 or more countries of the world are represented at UAF.

Alaska is blessed with geological and meteorological phenomenon. Alaska suffered a cataclysm in 1964 when an earthquake destroyed the town of Seward, parts of Kodiak, Valdez and Anchorage. Robert Seward was at home practicing his trumpet when he looked to see the yard crumbling. The people in Alaska are riding a great wave of drive and enthusiasm. Robert Atwood discusses how Alaska was controlled by Washington DC, 3,000 miles away. Congress is so busy that they rarely had much time to give consideration to Alaska. When Congress granted Alaska statehood in 1959, the local leadership took over. The constitution had to be written and people had to be elected as leaders. For the first time people could vote, for the first time two people were to represent Alaska. Statehood had increased an immense number of business investments. Commissioner of Natural Resources Phil Holdsworth says Alaska is 6th in coal, 7th in gas, and 8th in petroleum preserves. He believes Alaska has a truly great timber potential and already outside investments are coming into the harvest timber. Japanese industries have built a large pulp mill in Sitka and a lumber mill at Wrangell sends wood and pulp to Japan for processing into cellulose products. Alaska is as close to Tokyo as it is to New York. Alaska airports have become international stopping points. Anchorage is becoming a transportation hub. Anchorage is the one true city in the state with tall buildings and wide streets. It has vitality and bustle. Robert Atwood editor of the state's largest newspaper, the Anchorage Times, speaks. Atwood discusses the natural resources and everything Alaska has to offer including one of the major oil reservoirs right under the water of Cook Inlet. With all of these things, it indicates that as this state grows, this is area that's going to fill up with people first (Anchorage). Economic conditions make it unprofitable to mine, but there are other resources to be developed. There is a large oil reserve under Barrow, fisheries, timber, Alaska king crab from Kodiak has now become world famous. Damming the Yukon River [Rampart Dam] also has potential to produce energy and a lake larger than Lake Erie.

On a 40 acre site in Fairbanks, the Alaska '67 exposition [Alaskaland, now Pioneer Park] was established as a permanent attraction to display Indian and Eskimo exhibits, mining displays, a wildlife zoo, and a real life steamboat. \$4 million was given to Alaska communities for centennial celebrations.

The Moose Gooser is a little antique steam train. It was put into operation in the spring of 1967 and has become one of the talking points of the city. Today's Narrow Gauge railroad climbs the track that runs from Skagway up over the White Pass Trail of '98, one of the routes created by the gold rush. The Alaska 67 exposition suffered major damage during the flood when the Chena and Tanana River flooded in 1967. It will reopen next year for people to enjoy. Ride down the Tanana on Jim Binkley's stern wheeler river boat, the Discovery, the last one in Alaska.

In Nome and Barrow, the visitor may see traditional Eskimo dances and the blanket toss. At Port Chilkoot at Lynn Canal, there are Native Tlingit dances. Lowell Thomas, Jr, and his wife, Kay are worldwide travelers and lecturers. He came up when he was 16 on a mountain climbing expedition. Brought his wife and daughter, Anne, around 1969 to decide they would move up to Alaska as soon as they could. They were not happy with living in New York suburbia because money isn't everything, Thomas says. Thomas is now a state senator and they are active in Anchorage civic activities. The average age of Alaskans is believed to be in their 20's. Hundreds in Nome are looking for the conditions to be right for gold mining. Von Davis is 65 and still prospects for gold. The life he has out there is away from everything and particularly if you've been dealing with people, it's a vacation. Herb Engstrom from Sweden is still mining too. Though the living isn't what it used to be, he wouldn't stop. He says they made a living here, a good miner. Herb is 75 so he figures nobody wants him. Herb knows that there's gold there. He says it's a free-for-all. Garrit Heinie Snider, originally from the Netherlands, is now from Wasilla. Snider says Alaska is one of the best places to live because all his travels as a hobo he found that the in the United States the greatest thing is freedom. In Alaska, there is a greater amount of individual freedom than any place in the world. Schneider had the opportunity to become the senator of the Alaska territorial legislature and he's proud that as a son of a shoemaker he was able to do that. Jack Weitzel then concluded that music was performed by the Anchorage Philharmonic Orchestra.