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Alaska, the last frontier Voice of America Pt. 3, Broadcasted October 1, 1967, Narrator is Ret Turner, Location Unknown

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The Voice of America Studio 1, a portrait and sounds of the legends of Alaska. Ret Turner is narrating. Robert W. Service is described as the poet of the Klondike followed the gold stampede of 1898 into the Yukon. John Thornton and the "Great Dog Buck", or Jack London "The Call of the Wild," Rex Beach's Alaska stories are literature mentioned about the area. Turner describes Alaska dramatically "From human exploits from the land that almost staggers the imagination." Turner believes the Alaskans add an immense chapter to the legend of America. No exploits are more colorful than from the men from the Yukon and Alaska. Pete Walsh, from three generations of gold miners in Nome, is interviewed. The Bullmoose Kid, Champagne Kid, Two Story Hans, Sleepy Pete, Rocky Mike, Too Much Johnson, Not Enough Johnson, Wingdam Johnson, Strawberry John are some of the names Walsh mentions. If you heard their real names, you wouldn't know who they were talking about because they all went by their nicknames. One in particular was the Champagne Kid his real name was Alfred Hansen. He got the name of Champagne Kid when he was mining in the Candle area and he struck a rich deposit. He took his boys to town and dropped all of his money on Champagne. They ran out of money and their claim had gotten jumped and somebody else was mining it. Champagne Kid didn't stake his claim. There were tales of fighting, thievery, and frontier justice/heroism.

Walsh spent the early part of the 1967 summer in Alaska. Everywhere he went there was a firm handshake and a hearty smile. They have room, lots of it, and land. Though life is hard they still represent a pioneer spirit of hardy independence. The original Alaskans, Eskimos, have lived in Alaska for about 10,000 years. Sadie [Brower] Neakok, from Barrow, for years has been a Good Samaritan to the people in the Eskimo Village. Sadie has 12 children, 9 boys and 3 girls ranging from age from 4 to 26. Sadie isn't only the chief welfare worker for the city of Barrow, she is now the village magistrate, when someone breaks the law they are brought before Sadie. One time her younger brother was brought in. The game warden brought in her brother for killing a cow moose at the out of season. She didn't let on that it was her brother so she took care of him. Later on she told the game warden that it was her little brother, the father of 13 kids. They had to confiscate the meat her brother had illegally gained. Later on she said to her boss that now you're going to have to take all the meat that she confiscated and he replied that he has to give it to the welfare worker who will distribute it as she pleases. So she told him she was also a welfare worker. In the cases where there is a big family and she has to send people to jail, she has to turn right around and bring the wife in and provide assistance. She asked her brother

how many children he has at his house, he says he has 13 soon to be 14 children, and he said that was all they had so Sadie gave him part of the meat for his family.

One of the most colorful legends of the Eskimo is the Aeskinat and the little man. Major Marvin Marston known to the Eskimo and all of Alaska as Muktuk Marston organized the coastal Natives into a territorial guard during WWII. He tells the story of the little man. Lesenak is the chief of the little man. In one time the sun and moon were wed and round and round the world they went as man and wife. One time the sun said to the moon, "I'm going down to the Cape Prince of Wales" and the moon said don't do it the little men will get you. He met the little men where a great struggle happened. A lake was created, after three days the sun extracted itself and out comes the moon and tells the sun "I told you so." Aeskinat came back to the village and asked what happened here. They said the sun called and he asked why they didn't keep the sun because he never met them. Aeskinat knew Julius Caesar and Jesus. They said we tried but he was too mighty they couldn't hold him [the sun]. Aeskinat knowing all said the sun will return. He stood on the shore of the lake for 1,000 years. At 1,000 years the sun said he was going back to Cape Prince of Wales to the moon. Half a mile from that lake is a bigger lake where the sun met Aeskinat and the little men were so mighty that the sun has never rejoined the moon. "That's a great guy" said Muktuk.

Ret Turner discusses that the Indians who live on the interior and along the southeastern coastal area were for the most part a peaceful people. One of the greatest monuments to all the Indian cultures is the totem poles. The Tlingit were the original totem carvers. The legend of their culture exists in the carvings of giant red and white cedar trees. They were divided into 2 families, the Ravens and the Eagles.

Robert Service begins speaking and says that 1,100 pounds of supplies needed to be transported for each man in order to survive. Sometimes, frontier life grew faster than the police could keep up with. One of the more colorful stories comes from Nome where a powerful political boss and mining company owner managed to get a corrupt judge to pass a law that said certain profitable mining claims were to be taken from individuals and given to the company for exploitation. The mining boss was Alexander Mackenzie and the judge was Arthur H. Noyes. Maurice Kelliher, Nome's district judge, explains what happened. Kelliher says the judge appointed his good friend Mackenzie as the receiver of good ground. In several years they mined some of the best claims and stole several million in gold. Later the judge was impeached and Mackenzie went to jail for 6 months. Judge Wickersham came down from Circle to Nome and later became the first father of statehood for Alaska. During the illegal fight in Nome it was bloody. Gunmen from the Old West had traveled up to Alaska. The miners including John Dexter and Lane had to send messengers secretly to San Francisco by boat to try and get some justice. Their delegates came back with authority to overrule Judge Noyes which he ignored. It took quite a bit of legal red tape to get the whole thing unraveled and eventually get the receivership set up. The miners were ready to fight for their possessions. There were hired gunmen on both sides. Quite a few people were killed. This is covered very well in "The Spoilers" by Rex Beach who was a miner.

Frontier justice was quick and rough. A group of miners would meet in judgment of an offense and quickly meet out punishment. Murder was punished by immediate hanging. Lesser crimes were met

with whipping. Bobby Sheldon was a young man in Skagway when Soapy Smith was shot in a street fight with vigilantes. Bobby saw that, but became famous for building the first automobile in Alaska. Bobby built the "first girl trap in Alaska." The girl he built it for left with a fella with a horse and buggy. He was an engineer at the power plant and tied up there at night and this girl he was keeping company with, he had some stiff competition including the good looking son of a prominent doctor whose father had a swanky horse and buggy. He'd let his son use the horse and buggy and they'd drive back to the plant and "toodaloo" or rub it in. He figured he had to do something desperate to compete with the horse and buggy. He had a little gas engine that came from a boat and there was all kind of discarded buggies in Skagway back in those days. He fixed it up and the thing ran. He dealt that boy with the horse and buggy some misery. He sent out for Sears and got little rubber squawker horns. He'd drive up to her house and he'd say my girl advisedly because she said she loved him but what she was telling the other guy he didn't know until she married that guy. He drove up to the house and she'd come flying out when she heard the horn and leave that kid chewing his fingernails to the knuckle. In Skagway in those days there's always these kindly old ladies making it their business to make sure the girl didn't marry the wrong guy. People were referring to Sheldon as a genius, he didn't even know what a genius meant; he was interested into something more potent. Come to find out that the kindly old ladies were telling the mother of the girl that they better think this thing through pretty carefully because they must remember there is a very thin line of demarcation between genius and insanity and the girl didn't want to be the mother of a bunch of geniuses so she got out when the going was good and married the boy with the horse and buggy.

Among the legends of the 49th state are stories of daring exploits of bush pilots. They flew in any weather and landed on snow and ice. The names are many: Carl Eielson, Noel Wien, Russ Merrill, Joe Crosson, Bob Reeves, and Harold Gillam. Al Lyle of Copper Center had a trip from Copper Center to Valdez to catch the boat. He had a woman and her husband. Lyle stopped in Valdez and picked up Jack Coates, an engineer on the Alaskan Road Commission. He wanted to come to Anchorage and there was a weather report of clear and unlimited. They started right across through Prince William Sound and got through to Portage and it was socked in so he swung around and got onto Seward and got onto the railroad tracks and he got in over Turnagain Arm in February. There were icebergs all over the bay and got down right on the water about 20 feet off the water and he got on the topside on the sunshine and found a hole when all of a sudden the top of number one cylinder flew off and he had about 6-700 rpms so he opened the window and stuck his head out so he could see the difference between the water and the fog. He then finally made the shore and on the shore was all big ice cakes and he saw the telephone line on the railroad track so he bent the plane over on a tight turn and he saw a pot hole by a hill. To avoid the pot hole he ran out on the brush about 50-100 feet and never scratched a thing on the airplane. The guy Jack walked over to the section house and he drained the oil out of the engine and tied it down and he said there's a plate of ham and eggs over there at the house for Lyle and Coates. Just then Harold Gillam went over and he was on the top side. He had the only Hornet engine and that was the time he went down in the inlet and there was a pilot by the name of Steven Mills who lived at the Parsons Hotel and he saw an airplane and a couple fellas sitting on the ice out there and he called the fire department and they saved those men.

One of the most famous stories of Alaska is about a common law wedding on the Koyukuk Trail in 1898. Garrett Heine Schneider is telling the story (Schneider is originally from the Netherlands). They had a man down there, a lanky fella name McGinniss who everyone called The Farmer. He was called that because he was always talking about sheep, horses, and goats. Not only did he love animals, he also became a foremost dog musher. McGinniss was the first one to find out that to have a dog team all of one family. The strategy was activated to avoid fighting. He got from the U.S. and Canada one of the biggest mail carrier jobs in Alaska. On one occasion while he stood on at the dock at Skagway down the gangplank came a female, a very charming young lady came down the gangplank and handed him a letter and stated that her name was so and so and she was a teacher and needed transportation to go down to the Kuskokwim so instead of all male he also had a female on the sled. While on the way to the different places, the two fell in love. In the wilds of Alaska, it's pretty hard to get a marriage license. On one occasion there was a little man on a trail and McGinniss says if you want to get married, here is a good chance. There is French Pete who can marry us. McGinniss says he's delivering the mail and wants Pete to marry them so they stood down there and the girl spoke first. "Ten miles from the Yukon on the shore of this lake, I Agnes McGinniss, to a husband will take, there is no preacher and I ain't got a ring, but it doesn't amount to a damn, it's just the same thing. On the sled there is a "g-pole." So McGinniss says, "I swear by my 'g-pole' under this tree, that I McGinniss to Agnes and true and lawful husband will be, to love and protect this mate is so fair, from the sourdough stiff on the Koyukuk trail. Old France Pete says "And for two bits which is quarter, in Cheechako money, I unite this couple in the holy matrimony, he being a farmer and she being a teacher, but heck I done the job as good as any good preacher." The record of that marriage is recorded in the pages of the Yukon press on March 17th, 1898.

Robert Service is quoted: "It's the great big broad land way up yonder, it's the forest where silence has lease, it's the beauty that thrills me with wonder, it's the stillness that fills me with peace, I'd like to go back again."