

When four people discover gold in the Klondike, thousands rush to Alaska to get rich. Their stories go far beyond gold. They can inspire us to wonder how far we would go to build the life we seek.

Wealth is out of reach for 98 percent of people living in the United States in the 1890s. They struggle through poor working conditions, economic depressions, and unequal rights. But the 1896 discovery of Klondike gold promises instant wealth to those able to make a challenging journey.

The Klondike Gold Rush brings together tens of thousands of people from over 30 nations, including those who already call this place home. Many are here to find a better life. Others are sent to represent US interests. This could be a golden opportunity, but what will happen ...

View of the White Pass area from the United States-Canada border.

... when new people overwhelm your home?



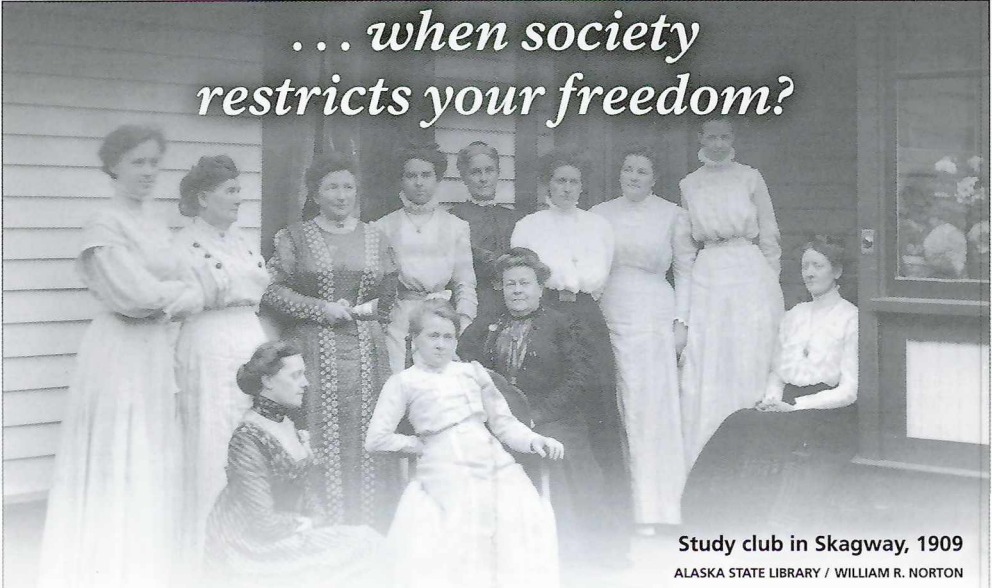
People in traditional Kíngít regalia

The Kíngít ("klin-kit") inhabited this region for thousands of years before the Klondike Gold Rush. Then, from August 1896 to July 1898, a wave of foreign gold-seekers inundated their lands. The newcomers crammed traditional Kíngít trade routes, like the Chilkoot Trail. They turned Dyea into a crowded and unhygienic boomtown.

Some Kíngít guides and packers profited by charging fees to carry the gear of stampedeers—a nickname for the tens of thousands of people who came here seeking gold during the Klondike Gold Rush. Some Kíngít were cheated out of their profits. Others felt overpowered by the sudden frenzy. Their people faced violence, racism, and language barriers. Cultures clashed as their way of life went through tumultuous change.

Child packer

... when society restricts your freedom?



Study club in Skagway, 1909

The culture of Victorian America did not always let women step outside their domestic roles. Many late-1800s laws did not let women own property or be protected from discrimination and violence.

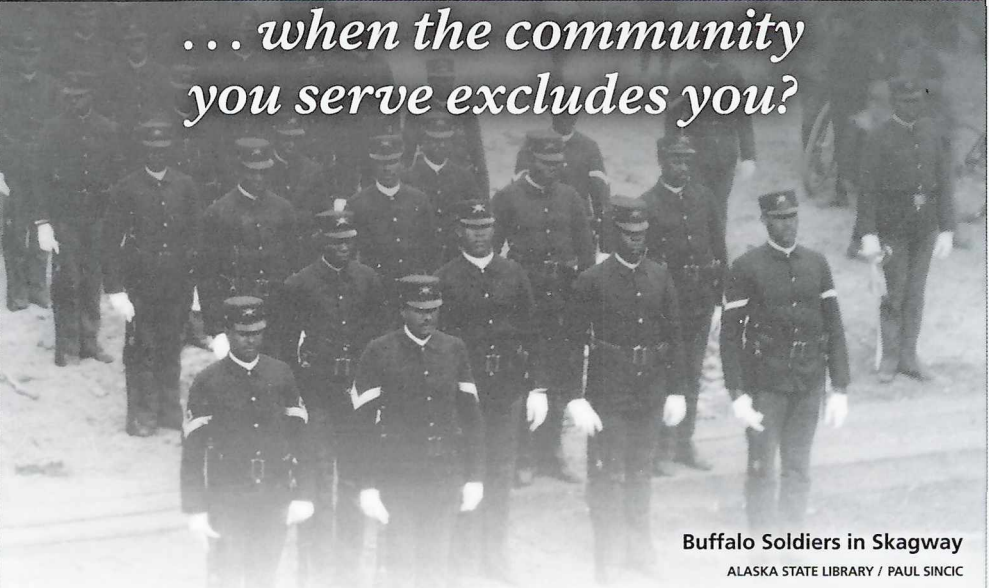
Some women came here during the Klondike Gold Rush with their husbands or families; others came on their own.

MARGIE SUTHERLAND

Some women were able to step out of their traditional roles here, and many triumphed on the journey. A few staked gold claims or ran businesses while others worked as stenographers or tourism promoters. For some, the last resort was prostitution.

During the Klondike Gold Rush, boomtown lawlessness increased all women's risk of murder, abuse, or trafficking. Risks were higher for African American, Alaska Native, and other minority women.

... when the community you serve excludes you?



Buffalo Soldiers in Skagway

Company L, 24th Infantry of the US Army, was part of four African American regiments formed after the Civil War known as Buffalo Soldiers. From 1899 to 1902, Company L was stationed in Alaska during a US border dispute with Canada. They helped maintain law and order and protected the Kíngít from settlers' and miners' abuses.

In July 1899 a swift forest fire in Dyea destroyed the dock, officers' cabins, barracks, and military

storehouses. The unit then moved to Skagway, where it helped protect the town during a 1901 flood. Some soldiers brought their families here and participated in churches, sports, music groups, and civic events. Despite some social integration, racism persisted. In 1900, 30 men from Company L joined the local YMCA, but—even though these men served the community—many Whites objected to a desegregated club. In 1902 Company L relocated to Fort Missoula in Montana.

Skagway children

One Event, Many Journeys



KEISH, also called Skookum Jim Mason, was a Kíngít and Tagish native of the Dakl'awéidi clan and a packer on the Chilkoot Trail. In 1886 he met American gold prospector George Carmack in Dyea.



CARMACK married SHAAW TLÁA (Kate), shown above with their daughter GRAPHIE. On August 16, 1896, with Keish and Káa Goox (Dawson Charlie), they found gold that launched the Klondike Gold Rush.



Stampeder MABEL MEED lived in Dawson City from 1898 to 1907. Her husband's company built and operated the stern-wheeler Prospector, shown with Mabel at the helm during a 1905 trip to the Yukon.



HARRIET PULLEN came to Skagway with \$7. She went from pie-seller to profitable owner of properties and businesses in Dyea and Skagway. She was also a tourism promoter.



MARTIN ITJEN arrived during the Klondike Gold Rush and later promoted Skagway as a tourist destination. He helped preserve buildings, collections, and tales of the Klondike Gold Rush.



Entertainer GRACIE ROBINSON said she "worked hard for sixteen years in the States, and it was a hand-to-mouth struggle at best, while at dear Old Dawson, in a little over two years, I have made my fortune."

The Long Trek to the GOLD

Word of the discovery spread worldwide. People began journeys north through Dyea and Skagway—the "Gateway to the Klondike." During the Klondike Gold Rush (August 1896–July 1898), the towns were ports for a mass migration that required a year's supply of food to cross

into Canada. Stampedeers hiked either the White Pass Trail or the Chilkoot Trail toward Dawson; if they went on to the Klondike gold fields, they faced a trip last-

ing months over land and water. During the 1897–98 winter, roughly 30,000 stampedeers stayed in tents by frozen

lakes, hundreds of miles from the gold fields, building rafts and boats and waiting. When the ice thawed, they paddled into raging rapids near Whitehorse that crushed some boats and even killed some travelers. Past the rapids, calmer waters

carried them to Dawson City. Those who made it this far—nearly two years after the rush had begun—found all the gold claims staked out.

Con man JEFFERSON "SOAPY" SMITH, Skagway, 1898



Boat building, Lake Bennett, 1898

The Klondike Gold Rush brought together thousands of people. Few found gold, but many shared in a remarkable journey. For the lure of gold, many risked all, even their lives, to be part of it.



Selling supplies in Dawson City for fare home, 1898

Skagway, August 1897

Preparing for Chilkoot Pass, 1898

Rapids near Whitehorse

A pan of Klondike gold

Discover the Klondike Gold Rush

How will you explore history, cultures, and nature at Alaska's most visited national park? You can tour historic town sites, hike "the world's longest museum" (the Chilkoot National Historic Trail), go camping, or photograph dramatic landscapes, seascapes, and wildlife.

Retrace the steps of the Klondike Gold Rush with these suggested itineraries. Please visit the park website for seasonal hours, programs, and reservation information.

Find History All Around You

Skagway's Historic District has a Klondike Gold Rush atmosphere full of preserved and restored buildings. Once a major gateway to the gold fields, Skagway and the White Pass Valley have been designated the Skagway and White Pass District National Historic Landmark. Many of the buildings you find here contribute to the valley's national significance.



From April 1898 to July 1900, an estimated 35,000 people helped construct the White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad, whose trains once ran between Skagway and Whitehorse.

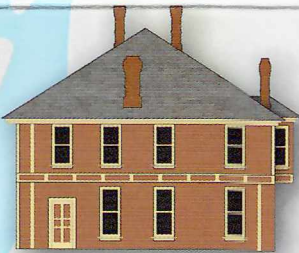
START YOUR VISIT Begin at the park visitor center and museum for a film, information, exhibits, and ranger-led programs.

A FEW HOURS Attend a free ranger program. Explore outdoor exhibits. Earn your Junior Ranger badge at the family-friendly visitor center. Tour Jeff. Smiths Parlor Museum, Mascot Saloon Museum, and Moore Homestead.

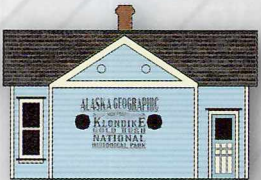
A FULL DAY Visit the historic Dyea townsite (self-guiding). Hike the Chilkoot National Historic Trail.

OVER A DAY Camp or view wildlife in Dyea. Backpack on the Chilkoot National Historic Trail.

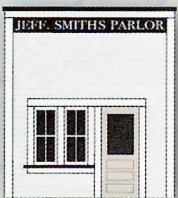
ALASKA AND BEYOND Explore Klondike Gold Rush International Historical Park. In the **United States**: Dyea and Chilkoot National Historic Trail, Skagway, White Pass, and Seattle. In **Canada**: Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site, Thirty Mile Heritage River (Yukon River), and Dawson Historic Complex National Historic Site.



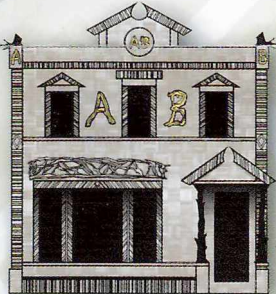
White Pass & Yukon Route Broadway Depot (1898) VISITOR CENTER
The original train depot was used until the 1960s. Restored to 1908–15 appearance.



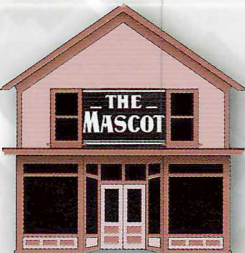
Martin Itjen House (1901) BOOKSTORE
Martin Itjen owned this home with unique porthole windows. Restored to 1921–46 appearance.



Jeff. Smiths Parlor Museum (1897) MUSEUM
A bank, Soapy Smith's base of operations, a fire department's garage, then a museum. Restored to 1960s appearance.



AB Hall (1900; non-NPS)
The Arctic Brotherhood Hall's facade has over 8,000 pieces of driftwood. Restored to 1900 appearance.



The Mascot Saloon (1898) MUSEUM
Skagway's longest-operating gold rush-era saloon. Closed by prohibition laws in 1916. Restored to 1905–16 appearance.



The Pantheon (1897) SALOON
This one-time saloon was later a hotel, then a paint store. Restored to 1903–16 appearance. No entry inside.

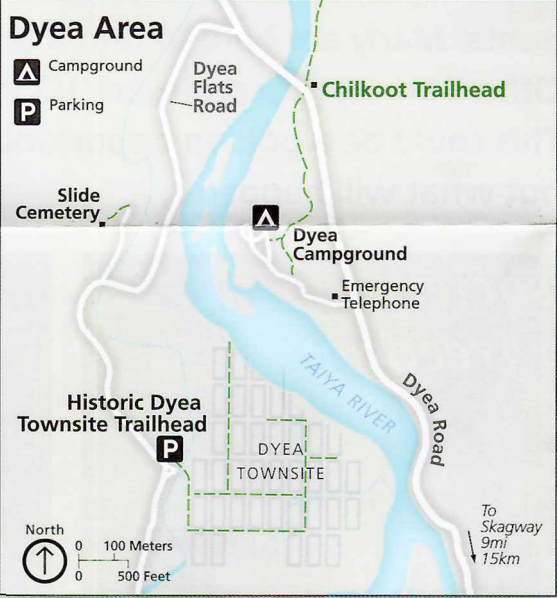


The Boss Bakery (1897) TRAIL CENTER
The Boss Bakery supplied baked goods and candy during the Klondike Gold Rush. Restored to 1902–06 appearance.



The Moore House (1897) MUSEUM
Ben and Minnie Moore (born Klinget-sai-yet Shorridge) began building their home-stead in 1897. Restored to 1904–06 appearance.

Historic Gold Rush Trails from Skagway and Dyea



MORE INFORMATION
Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park
PO Box 517
Skagway, AK 99840-0517
907-983-9200
www.nps.gov/kglo

Follow us on social media. Use the official NPS App to guide your visit; download the park to use offline.

Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park is one of over 430 parks in the National Park System. Learn about national parks at www.nps.gov.



Plan Your Visit

The park visitor center is at Broadway and 2nd Avenue in Skagway. Open daily (summer only). Park museum, film, and ranger-led programs. Contact the park for limited winter services.

For information about touring the historic Dyea townsite (self-guiding), visit the park visitor center. You must arrange your own transportation to and from Dyea.

Once a trade route used by Lingit people, the Chilkoot National Historic Trail is

enjoyed by hikers today. To plan your hike, visit the park website and the Trail Center, 907-983-9234 (summer only). Watch the required orientation video at the Trail Center before you hike. For overnight use, get a permit at the Trail Center or reserve in advance.

When traveling between the United States and Canada, you must report to customs. Canada customs in Fraser: 867-821-4111, www.cic.gc.ca. US customs in Skagway: 907-983-2325, www.uscis.gov.

We strive to make facilities, services, and programs accessible to all. Service animals are welcome. For information call or check the park website.

For firearms regulations check the park website. Federal laws protect all natural and cultural features in the park. Using remotely piloted aircraft like drones is prohibited.

Emergencies call 911

National Park Foundation.
Join the park community.
www.nationalparks.org

©GPO 2025-431 626/84242 Last updated 2025

A variety of plants, animals, and landscapes intertwine from the coastal forests of the Taiya Inlet to the alpine heights of the White Pass and Chilkoot Pass.

CHOCOLATE LILY—© ALAN FRITZBERG;
DEVIL'S CLUB—© MARTHA DE JONG-
LANTINK; NOOTKA LUPINE—© DAVID
SCHWAEGLER



Taiya Inlet remains an important passageway to Skagway.

ALL IMAGES—NPS UNLESS OTHERWISE CREDITED