

Utilizing Social History to Identify Impacts of Resource Development on Isolated Communities: The Case of Skagway, Alaska

Rabel J. Burdge , Donald R. Field & Stephen R. Wells

To cite this article: Rabel J. Burdge , Donald R. Field & Stephen R. Wells (1988) Utilizing Social History to Identify Impacts of Resource Development on Isolated Communities: The Case of Skagway, Alaska, *Impact Assessment*, 6:2, 37-54, DOI: [10.1080/07349165.1988.9725634](https://doi.org/10.1080/07349165.1988.9725634)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/07349165.1988.9725634>



Published online: 06 Feb 2012.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 91



Citing articles: 3 [View citing articles](#) [↗](#)

*Utilizing Social History to Identify Impacts of
Resource Development on Isolated Communities:
The Case of Skagway, Alaska*

Rabel J. Burdge*, Donald R. Field,[†]
Stephen R. Wells[‡]

INTRODUCTION

The dramatic social consequences of resource development are often played out and easily observed in isolated rural areas. Most important are the boom-bust cycles common to resource-dependent areas. Resource management agencies as well as private-sector developers are concerned about community response to growth and decline.

The boom-bust phenomenon is well known in the social assessment literature. The popular image is of a small North American community consumed. The main thesis of this paper is that by examining the social and cultural history of a community we can better understand how communities will adjust to future environmental and social impacts due to alternate periods of prosperity and recession.

Implicitly, the social impact assessor relies upon rural-urban continuum theory, which assumes that all change will move a community from the rural to the urban end. Little attention, however, is paid to looking at the community in terms of its historical context and experiences with the ups and downs of development cycles. We present Skagway, Alaska, as a case example of how social history was useful in predicting how a resource-dependent community adjusted to development events. In a ninety-year

*Professor of Rural Sociology, Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, IL USA

[†]Associate Dean of Agriculture and Director of the School of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI USA

[‡]Consultant with Community & Systems Analysis Consultants, Bainbridge Island, WA USA

span, Skagway has experienced not one, but six, major impact events. The first was the gold rush that led to a massive influx of people and subsequent mineral extraction and land exploitation. After the stampede left, the community attempted to retain the spirit of that era by developing tourism. The decision to build the Alaska Highway resulted in the U.S. Army occupation of Skagway during World War II (resource alteration in the form of transport enhancement). Designation of the area as a National Park in 1976 and events leading up to it meant dramatization, expansion, and protection of gold rush artifacts. The 1978 completion of the road to Carcross meant a land route from southeast Alaska to the interior of the Yukon Territory and the Alaska Highway. In 1983 the Yukon and White Pass railroad closed — a victim of declining revenue brought on by the new road and reduced shipments of minerals from the Yukon territory. In 1988 the 20.4-mile stretch from Skagway to White Pass was reopened as a tourist attraction.

A Short History of the Development Events in Skagway

The Klondike Gold Rush of 1897-1898 brought thousands of people north to seek their fortunes in the Klondike.¹ The vast majority of these people and their goods got to the gold fields by following the protected waters along the coast of British Columbia and Southeastern Alaska to a terminus at the end of the fjord-like Lynn Canal, about 100 miles north of Juneau (Berton, 1958; Bearss, 1970). At the end of the canal two boom towns, Skagway and Dyea, grew within six miles of each other (Figure 1). From each community a trail led the gold-seekers over the mountains of the Coast Range to the headwaters of the Yukon River. Dyea led to the Chilkoot Trail — shorter in distance but higher in elevation and not suited for pack animals. Skagway was the gateway to the White Pass — longer in distance but less of a climb and better suited to pack stock.

Skagway and Dyea competed for the business of the gold seekers by extolling the virtues of the routes they served. However, the trails were anything but virtuous. The Chilkoot and White Pass trails broke the hearts, bodies, and spirit of many of those bent on finding their fortune in Klondike gold. Yet the trails and the towns that lived and died with them caught the spirit of the two nations, and through the novels and

¹The "Klondike" refers to the Klondike River which flows into the Yukon River at Dawson City, Yukon Territory. The gold was found in the beds of the small creeks that flowed into the Klondike (Bonanza Creek, Bear Creek, etc.). Dawson City is downstream from Whitehorse about 400 miles and upstream about 1,200 miles from where it flows into the Bering Sea. (See Figure 1)

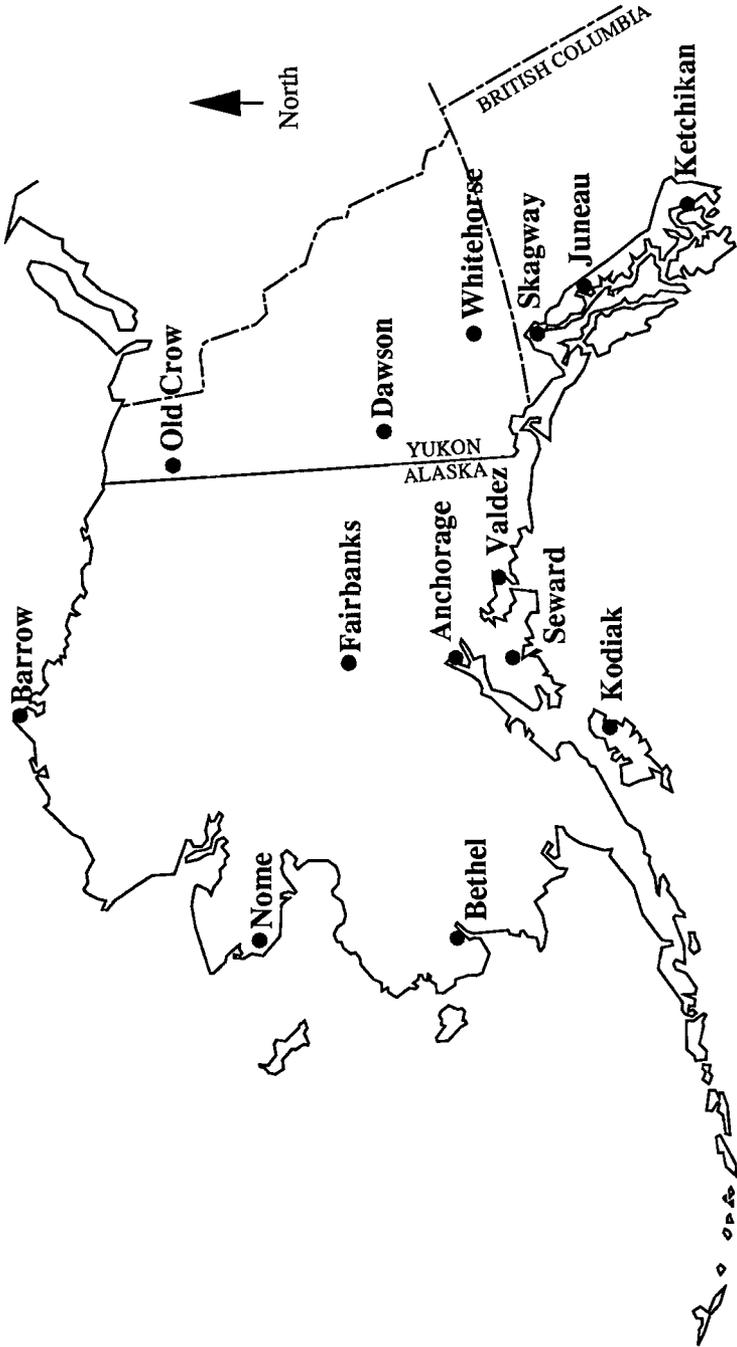


Figure 1: The Far North

poems of Jack London and Robert Service they became a collective part of the Canadian and U.S. folk history.

With the end of the Klondike gold rush, Dyea died. By 1900 the population had dwindled from thousands to 261 (U.S. Census, 1900), and five years later the only human activity in Dyea was the homestead of one family. Skagway on the other hand persisted. Though population declined from a peak estimated at greater than 10,000 to 3,117 in 1900 and eventually to a plateau of about 500, the community continued to serve as the primary transportation link to and from the Yukon. In 1900 the White Pass and Yukon railroad was completed from Skagway to Whitehorse, 100 miles inland. Though gold seekers were no longer streaming into the Yukon, the railroad continued to haul goods and curious sightseers into the interior and to haul out gold and silver.

During the years after the gold rush, many of the original buildings in Skagway were moved from scattered locations to a more consolidated central business district. This created a gold-rush tone in the heart of the community, which was subsequently cultivated for tourism. These buildings together with the Chilkoot and White Pass trails and the many gold rush artifacts stashed away in public and private collections constitute a historic resource. Local and national interest in the preservation of this significant resource culminated in June 1976 with the creation by the U.S. Congress of the Klondike Gold Rush International Historic Park (P.L. 94-323). The park includes a historic zone within the central business district of Skagway and narrow strips of land along the two trails leading to the Canadian border at the summit of the Coast Range. Parks Canada then assumes jurisdiction for developing the park along the two trails and in Whitehorse and Dawson City.

Reasons for the Study

The National Park Service was interested in how the community of Skagway would adjust to the active presence of a government agency within the Skagway community. We wanted to know, what were the essential social impact variables that could be used to predict community response to social change? What has been the history of change in those variables and the relationship among them? What historical forces or factors either external or internal can be associated with those changes?

Answers to these questions were derived from archival research, content analysis of newspapers and public documents, open-ended interviews,

and participant observation of the Skagway community done at intervals since 1974.²

COMMUNITY THEORY AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Community studies represent the oldest and most important contribution by rural sociologists to the social science literature. During the 1920s and 1930s, much of the emphasis was on the definitions of the community, its structure and functions. Early theories on human ecology from the Chicago school as well as descriptive analysis, represented the major research approach (Wade, 1964). Data were obtained from field observations and comparisons among different rural communities.

In the post-World War II era, community research shifted to studies of social change in rural communities. Rural industrialization, declining community populations, and the impact of new farming methods represent a few of the topics.³ Many of the observed changes were adjustments to the outmigration of rural people, agricultural marketing practices, and new transportation systems.

In the 1970s and the 1980s, research knowledge obtained from the study of community change focused on the likely social consequences of change due to impacts brought about by some external event. Examples include the siting of a nuclear power plant, planning a national park, construction of a new pipeline system, or the closing of a factory.

The conceptual and empirical task in social impact assessment is to understand the process of community adaptation to the external forces of change. In using our theory to locate key elements for study within the community, we must remember that social impact assessment (SIA) is anticipatory planning. Although rural sociologists are not accustomed to crystal-ball gazing, we feel that historical response to change will be a key factor in predicting the adaptation of the community to a future impact event.

Use of Community Theory in Social Impact Assessment

As Wilkinson (1982) and others have pointed out, community analysis of impact events has relied upon the traditional rural-urban continuum

²The authors of this paper have spent considerable time in the Skagway community. And all have hiked the grueling Chilkoot Trail. One of the authors has panned for and found gold on Bonanza Creek.

³For a summary of community theory during those years, see Kaufman (1959).

to explain social change. Communities were placed along this scale depending upon the degree to which urban and rural characteristics were identified. The influx of outsiders due to development was presumed to move the community toward the urban end of that continuum. Although not explicitly stated in the SIA literature, rural values, social structure, and life styles were presumed to dominate in isolated areas. The impact event was seen as leading to a more urban type of social organization.

The implicit theory goes on to point out that, with the impact event, forces beyond the community are likely to exert increased control over local decisionmaking. In effect, local community control was usurped. Another point, following from Wilkinson and others (1982), is that in communities (and in a region) in which change has been occurring with some regularity in the past, it would seem likely that social and personal mechanisms for coping with change would have developed. That observation supports our notion that previous community response is a powerful predictor of coping mechanisms.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS AND THE SIA PROCESS

The SIA process is intended to anticipate environmental impacts in advance of the event and then propose ways to mitigate those impacts. By reviewing the social history of Skagway, we should be able to predict what might happen in the community as new development events occur. The analysis reported here weds historical analysis with social impact assessment variables.⁴ Superimposing a knowledge of the proposed project on a chronology of the communities' social history provides a clue as to whether the impacts will be significant.

Although impact events come in different levels of intensity and complexity and are instigated by all levels of government as well as private-sector organizations, they have a certain commonality and regularity, be it the boom-bust cycle of Skagway, coal development in eastern Kentucky, or siting nuclear wastes in New Mexico. Similar consequences can be expected for any type of resource development or alteration.

The following seven social impact variables were used to guide the historical social analysis of the Skagway community (Burdge, 1967).

⁴We have used the definition of social impacts by Freudenberg and Keating (1982, p.72) as the impact of new technologies or resource alteration on the human populations and attendant social systems.

1. **Population Influx-Outflux:** Will the development involve significant influx of new people and has the community experienced significant population influx-outflux in the past?
2. **Community Involvement:** Will the project or policy be known in advance, and to what degree will the community be involved in the planning decision process?
3. **Previous Impact Events:** Does the community have a history of the same or similar social impacts?
4. **Occupational Composition:** What is the occupational composition of the persons who will be involved in the project and to what degree does it match with that of the host community?
5. **Local Benefits:** Will the benefits of the project accrue to private-sector or government agencies of the larger society or will they accrue to the local community?
6. **Presence of Outside Agency:** Will the proposed project bring to the community a new neighbor in the form of a temporary or permanent government agency or private-sector organization? Does the "new neighbor" have a history of attempting to mitigate the social impacts it creates? Has the community experienced occupation by an outside agency in the past?
7. **Mitigation Measures:** To what degree has the community acted as a unified decisionmaking body in past dealings with outsiders? Does the community make decisions in response to a crisis or was some advanced planning involved (Dixon, 1978:300)?

We now turn to the history of development events in Skagway, Alaska, to determine which, if any, of these social impact variables allow us to make statements about the impact of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park and subsequent changes in the region.

SOCIAL HISTORY OF SKAGWAY, ALASKA: 1896 to 1988

The social history of Skagway can be studied in three eras with specific development events taking place in each. The Gold Rush era lasted from 1896 to 1910. Then came the lean years from 1910 until the beginning of the Second World War. The third era coincides with the post-war boom in the U.S. and Canadian economy.

When we think of people living in frontier Alaska, we dwell on such notions as rugged individualism, self-sufficiency, subsistence hunting, egalitarianism, and rustic simplicity (many traits associated with rural living). Yet from the early days of the town, Skagway was a very urban place. The populace was urban in origin, highly educated, and cosmopolitan (Smith, 1980), and the social relationships among those living there were characteristically urban. Skagway achieved its urban characteristics as a result of a massive and essentially immediate influx (of stampeders) from Seattle and the rest of the world. However, it was a flow *through* rather than a flow *to* Skagway. The influx was motivated not by an interest in Skagway *per se*, but rather by an interest in the gold fields that lay beyond. In that relationship to the Klondike and the Yukon lies the story of the birth, decline, and eventual recovery of, as one journalist put it, "The City of Fluctuating Fortune," (Bond, 1972). A city or town as a place to "flow through" is not unique to Skagway or other parts of the sparsely populated northern and western parts of North America. In fact, the boom-bust cycle may be the rule rather than exception. Dixon (1978) describes the history of Fairbanks in much the same way. The Trans-Alaska pipeline is only one event in a series of historical boom-bust cycles which represents a history of adjustment to externally imposed resource-related impacts.

A City in the Wilderness: 1896 to 1900

Sociologists label places urban when they are diverse, bureaucratic, hierarchical, technological, formal, commercially intense, specialized in function, and relatively removed from direct involvement with natural resources. During the gold rush years social relationships within the city of Skagway could be characterized in those terms.

Skagway's urban nature was evidenced in many ways, of which we mention only a few here. The disregard for the lay of the land as seen in the grid pattern of the first plat of the townsite shows an attitude more sensitive to urban convention and tradition than to the more subtle characteristics of the land (Wade, 1964). There was a high degree of specialization in the occupations and businesses of the community; wholesale and retail merchants were separated, and a buyer could choose among several suppliers of those goods and services. There were enough lawyers to justify a local Bar Association. At the peak of the rush at least ten doctors, seven churches, several movie houses, a multitude of saloons, an abundance of prostitutes, and an array of social and civic clubs were

counted. Stores were of sufficient number to allow comparison shopping, competitive pricing, and abundant advertising. The impersonal and formal nature of social relationships and the large size and rapid rate of turnover of the population made the development of widespread personal friendship and informal communication networks unlikely and unreliable. The urban formality of naming streets, numbering avenues, and assigning each building on a street a consecutive number was necessary in a community composed of strangers. The ambitious bureaucratic structures of the quasi-government of Soapy Smith, the reigning con man of 1898, and later of the more formal government activities in the city were specialized in function, adhered to fixed rules, and were organized around a recognized hierarchy of authority.

Adapting to New Conditions: 1900 to 1910

From a city of between 10,000 and 20,000 people in 1898, Skagway showed a population of only 3,117 in 1900 and of about 1,000 in 1903 (Carson, 1903). By 1910 it had a population of 872, and by 1920 the population had stabilized at about 500 residents. This abrupt population loss led to an emphasis on permanence rather than urban refinement in Skagway.

The bust cycle, as we label it today, was brought about by several factors, not the least of which was that gold had been discovered on the beaches of Nome, Alaska, in 1899. In addition, the demand for transportation into the interior fell off in proportion to the decline of the population of the Yukon Territory. From a high of 24,200 in 1901 the territory dropped to 8,500 in 1911 and to 4,200 in 1921 (Lotz, 1970). The completion of railroad construction between Skagway and Whitehorse in July 1900 drastically reduced the number of jobs available in the region. The U.S. Army permanently closed Camp Skagway on September 30, 1904.

In spite of the dramatic decline in size, the town persisted. Emphasis was placed on solidifying its government and ordinances, providing for schools and sidewalks, and consolidating jobs, buildings and property ownership.

Perhaps the most significant realization in these first years after the gold rush was the inklings of a potential tourist industry. The first excursion train ran part way up the line in July 1898 (Bearss, 1970). The aura of the Klondike was much alive even six hundred miles from the actual diggings. Because of their appreciation for the role that Skagway had

played in the Gold Rush, these early visitors were the first nonresidents to place a value on Skagway that was intrinsic to the community rather than derived from its location relative to the Yukon.

In analyzing the Gold Rush era of Skagway, we find that rapid population influx was the major characteristic, represented by persons with an urban, middle-class background. The occupational structure of the community consisted of traders and railroad laborers, most of which were drawn from the ranks of the stampedeers. No outside agency or business was present, although the U.S. Army did have a small encampment. The benefits of the Gold Rush accrued to the local power structure and business operations. The railroad, of course, got its start as the dominant feature of the community. When George Carmacks picked up the first gold nugget on Bonanza Creek in 1896, Skagway had little inkling about its future until the steamship *Portland* arrived in Seattle in the fall of 1897 with trunks of gold and tales of riches from grizzled sourdoughs.

Lean Years: 1910 to 1941

After the gold rush, a much reduced but nevertheless steady volume of people and freight flowed through Skagway. Population levels stayed virtually constant between 1920 and 1940. The payroll of the railroad, when adjusted for change in the purchasing power of the dollar, changed very little. Between World War I and II tourism began to emerge as an important part of Skagway. Four steamship companies operating as many as sixteen ships provided service to Skagway in the summers, and cruise ships arrived several times a week each carrying 200-300 passengers (Burnett, 1929; U.S. Department of Interior, 1945). The volume of visitors did increase to a high in 1927 and then dropped off again (Anonymous, 1920:43). In fact 1927 was the peak year for passengers riding the White Pass Railroad prior to 1962 (MacBride, 1954).

The Second Boom: Army Occupation 1942 to 1945

Between 1942 and 1945 the White Pass and Yukon railroad was leased and operated by the U.S. Army in order to transport into the Yukon the men, material, and equipment needed to build the Alaska Highway. This meant that thousands of soldiers moved into and through Skagway. From operating two trains a week if the weather was good enough, the railroad under Army operation worked up to a peak of 38 trains one August day in 1942. The memories and methods of coping with a transient influx of temporary visitors (now in the form of soldiers) were kept alive by tourists

and the activities developed by the community to cater to them.

The events of the war were physically, politically, and socially traumatic for Skagway. Relations with the Army were so strained that in July 1943 the City Council demanded the following as reparations: title to the Federal Building and to the phone and sewer systems installed by the Army, the paving of the two main streets and of the cross street between them, construction of a small boat harbor, removal of the airport to the Dyea tidal flats, and the building of a connecting highway from Haines to the Alaska Highway. The highway from Haines was eventually built, the one main road was paved, and the Army did leave behind all the improvements necessary to build the highway.

The building of the Alaska Highway brought a second boom to Skagway and with it some now familiar social impacts. The population influx was large and somewhat permanent. An infrastructure was basically in place as a leftover from the Gold Rush. Again, the change was rapid and not known too far in advance. The decision to build the highway to Alaska was made quickly when it was thought that the Japanese would threaten the sea route to Anchorage. A new twist was the presence of an outside agency — namely the Army. However, the town was now organized and able to demand and get certain mitigation measures. As before, the economy of Skagway was service oriented and directed to operating and maintaining the railroad.

Development in the Yukon: 1946 to 1975

In 1947, the post-war economic boom began in earnest; mining, prospecting, and oil exploration in the Yukon were stimulated by the Canadian government's \$100 million Roads-to-Resources development program. The United Keno Hill Mines had been brought into production. The Alaska Highway was opened to general civilian use, and the military was actively building new defense and communication facilities in the north. By 1950 Whitehorse had its first southern-style subdivision, and the 1951 census showed that the Yukon Territory had surpassed the 1911 population level for the first time (World War II excepted). This growth in the Yukon implied economic health in Skagway as evidenced by the increased volume of shipments.

The decade from 1954 to 1964 was for the Yukon a decade of development based on resource exploitation and expanded government activity. Canadian government expenditures in the Yukon rose from \$11 million in

1954-1955 to \$23.4 million in 1962-1963. Claim-staking in the Yukon Territory from 1961 to 1963 far exceeded any similar activities in the previous 25 years. In 1965 at least 40 companies, as many individual prospectors, and three syndicates were actively seeking new ore bodies in the Yukon.

Tourism: 1945-1970

Tourism in Skagway underwent a parallel transformation. All visits had ceased during the war. Because the freight-hauling business of the railroad was in a post-war decline, there was an incentive to re-establish tourism and for the people of Skagway to work toward that goal.

In 1952, the National Park Service inventoried the recreation potential of Alaska. At that time Skagway was the fifth most heavily visited recreation site in the Territory. Of the approximately 10,000 visitors who came to Skagway that year, 85 percent came by ship, 10 percent came by air, and the remaining 5 percent came over the mountains from the Alaska Highway by train (Stanton, 1953). A Park Service survey concluded that Skagway had great potential. That study also showed that for many of those respondents, the train trip on the White Pass and Yukon Railroad was the highlight of their Alaskan visit.

Just as the 1960s were years of development in the mining industry of the Yukon, they were years of growth in tourist visits to Skagway. Total rail passengers (visitor and resident) on the White Pass grew from 18,000 in 1960 to 42,000 in 1966. The Alaska Marine Highway ferry system began operating in 1962 and added greatly to the volume of people passing through Skagway. Although there were still only four cruise ships serving Skagway in the summer of 1963, between 10,000 and 20,000 visitors contributed about \$94,000 in value added to the local economy. By 1968 visitation reached 35,000 visitors, up 27 percent from the previous year.

At this point in our historic analysis, Skagway has returned to a year-round population of about 700 people made up of long-time residents. A basic infrastructure is in place, and the railroad along with tourism provides a rather stable economy. However, the interest by the National Park Service looms on the horizon as well as increased involvement by the Alaskan Government brought on by statehood in 1959.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOLD RUSH PARK

The idea of preserving the artifacts and the spirit of the Gold Rush in a federal park had such a long history that many of the potential

social impacts were mitigated by the passage of time and by the active involvement of the city's representatives in the development of the master plan for the park. Beginning in 1955, the continuing dialogue between the Park Service and the community allowed both to react and respond to the plans, proposals, and ambitions of the other. By the time the legislation creating the park was being considered by the U.S. Congress, there was no significant controversy presented in the hearings.

There was, however, an undercurrent of concern about the possible development of the Gold Rush Park to include the restriction of personal freedom (i.e., to fly airplanes over the passes, to ride horses in Dyea and on the Chilkoot, to drive and park in the historic district, etc.); the taking of property either by condemnation, the exercise of eminent domain, or by restriction of an owner's property rights; the loss of real property tax base as buildings and lots are acquired by the Park Service; an increase in the population of the community; and the fear of living in a "zoo or museum" after "the Park people get everything set up the way they want." However, a very positive development of the Klondike Park was the evolution of cooperation among the city, the state, and the Park Service in comprehensive planning for the Skagway Valley.

The Social Impacts of the Gold Rush Park

The presence of the park altered the flow of visitors through the community only by increasing the rate of that flow. The length of the visitor season was not significantly affected. A threshold had long since been passed where the level of visitation precluded personal (as opposed to personable) hospitality. From 1967 to 1983 the community was dominated by the flow of mine products coming from the Yukon. The park posed no threat to that flow and consequently did not mitigate or supplement the social implication of it.

The most significant of the social changes associated by people in the community with the park were just as strongly associated with the opening of the Carcross Road (and connection to the Alaska Highway). These included fears of the loss of peace, security, and frontier autonomy. If such losses do in fact occur, it will not be possible to attribute them separately to one cause or another. In addition, given the implications of future events, such as the proposed construction of the MacKenzie Valley pipeline along the Alaska Highway, the economic benefits and costs of the Klondike Park become very difficult to assess. However, the closing of the railroad in 1982 was easy to assess. The most important and consistent

employment source (year around) in the community was gone.

Park Service personnel have expressed pleasure with the speed and warmth of their integration into the community. This can be explained by what at the time, in our opinion, were perceived local benefits to Skagway from the Klondike Park and because the park evolved as a cooperative effort of the Park Service and the community. The development of the Klondike Park was done *with* Skagway rather than *to* Skagway.

Since its inception, Skagway has been very much a community in transition. Without a full knowledge of the social history of the community one might attribute radical social impacts to the Gold Rush Park. However, the social history of the community uncovered the roots of how Skagway has been adapting to social change all along. Therein lies some protection for the National Park Service since there might be a temptation to blame negatively valued social change on the agency as newcomers and outsiders. In fact, they are but the second government agency to become a Skagway neighbor (fortunately for the Park Service the first one was not a good one).

HINDSIGHT AND LOOKING AHEAD

This ethnographic study of Skagway has shown that knowing the past history of the community was the best predictor of how the community would adapt to the new park. The town, the railroad, the famous Chilkoot Trail, the Army, the Alaska Highway, the Gold Rush park, the Carcross Highway and now the loss of the railroad and its partial reopening for tourists illustrate that the town has always been a pass-through community. People have come up the Lynn Canal and over the mountains into the Yukon. Depending upon the time in history, that activity has been a boom or a bust — a cycle with ups and downs. The establishment of the park represented a slight upturn on the boom cycle when it was developed and then opened, but the presence of the park could never cushion the loss of the complete operation of the railroad. For example, visitation to the park increased from 37,000 in 1979 to 48,000 in 1980, although there was some decline in subsequent years.

If we were looking at Skagway in 1955 through our historical assessment model, we might have been able to predict quite well what actually happened. Although Skagway would experience increased visitation as a result of the park, that would soon reach a plateau. The change did not come abruptly; the time from conception to implementation of the park

was 21 years. The park was but one impact event in a long chain, with more links being added all the time. The Carcross Highway was the next one, to be followed quickly by the closing and then the partial reopening of the White Pass and Yukon Railroad.

Although the occupational composition of the park employees was different from the skilled persons required to operate the railroad, they fit the service and administrative category that serviced the tourist industry. Benefits seem to exist more for the community at large rather than any segment of the local power structure. If anything, the stability in employment will benefit all. Although the Park Service does represent an outside agency, the community has a history of coping with them. It has demonstrated the collective ability to negotiate with the U.S. Army and the Alaska state government. Skagway residents have a good idea what mitigation measures are necessary and appear to have shown a collective notion as to how they might be achieved in the case of the National Park Service.

The future of the Skagway community will hinge on the future of the railroad. If the MacKenzie pipeline is built, the railroad will probably be fully reopened to haul construction materials to the interior of the Yukon. The tourist trade will stabilize and perhaps increase, for the railroad trip over White Pass was a highlight of the visit to Skagway (at least based on evidence from recent surveys of cruise-ship passengers [Field, et al., 1985]). The number of hikers going over the trail has declined due to the difficulties in obtaining return transportation once the hike is completed.

Note: Data upon which this paper is based come from a report titled "Skagway: A Frontier Community Investing Its Past in Its Future Social History (1897-1975) and Assessment of the Social Impacts of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park," by Stephen R. Wells, submitted to the Sociology Studies Program, Cooperative Parks Studies Unit, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington, March 1978. The field study by Wells attempted to recreate events in the community before the Gold Rush era. Ethnographic notes and interviews were supplemented with secondary data from community and census records. Those data have been updated for the present paper based on continued visits to the community as well as a recent environmental impact statement.

References

- [1] Anonymous (1920) Skagway, the Gateway for the Tourists, *The Pathfinder of Alaska* 2, 3.
- [2] Anonymous (1977) Skagway Residents Reassess New Park, *Southeast Alaska Empire*, November 7, 1.
- [3] Bearss, Edwin C. (1970) *Proposed Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park: Historic Resource Study*. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- [4] Berton, Pierre (1958) *The Klondike River: The Life and Death of the Last Great Stampede*. Alfred Knopf, New York.
- [5] Bond, David L. (1972) Skagway: Gateway to History, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 7, F1.
- [6] Burdge, Rabel J. (1987) The Social Impact Assessment Model and the Planning Process, *Environmental Impact Assessment Review*, 7, No. 2 (June), 141-50.
- [7] Burnett, Frederick J. (1972) The Village of Skagway, Alaska, Which Was Once Gateway to the Land of Gold, *Sunset*, 62, June, 24-26.
- [8] Carson, Sir Edward (1903) Statement of October 2, 1903, *Proceedings of the Alaska Boundary Tribunal, Volume VII*. Senate Document 162, 58th Congress 2nd Session. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 728-29.
- [9] Dixon, Mim (1978) *What Happened to Fairbanks? The Effects of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline on the Community of Fairbanks, Alaska*. Westview Press, Boulder, Co.
- [10] Field, Donald R., R. Clark and B. Koth (1985) Cruiseship Travel in Alaska: A Profile of Passengers, *Journal of Travel Research*, 16, No. 2 (Fall).
- [11] Freudenberg, William R. and K.M. Keating (1982) Increasing the Impact of Sociology on Social Impact Assessment: Toward Ending the Inattention, *The American Sociologist*, 17, May, 71-80.
- [12] Kaufman, Harold F. (1959) Toward an Interactional Concept of Community, *Social Forces*, 38, October, 8-17.

- [13] Lots, J. (1970) *Northern Realities: The Future of Northern Development in Canada*. New Press, Toronto. 307 pp.
- [14] MacBride, W.D. (1954) The White Pass Route, *Beaver*, Autumn, 18-23.
- [15] Meals, J.E. (1927) A Trip to Skagway: What to See in the Garden City, *Alaska Magazine*, 1, February, 103-108.
- [16] Miller, M. (1973) Canal Communities a Contrast, *Alaska Industry*, 5, December, 29-30.
- [17] Pavitt, R.W. (1976) *Economic Base Study of Skagway, Alaska*, Technical Assistance Project Number 07-6-01723, Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. 35 pp.
- [18] Reynolds, C.P. (1977) Correspondence with Manager, Passenger Sales, White Pass and Yukon Route, March 6.
- [19] Selkregg, L. (1976) *Alaska Regional Profiles; Southeast Region*. University of Alaska, College, Alaska.
- [20] Smith, K.L. (1980) The Most Wonderful Railroad of the North, *Scientific American*, 98, January, 29-30.
- [21] Stanton, W.J. (1953) Analysis of Alaska Travel: With Special Reference to Tourists, June 1 through September 30, 1952. Part one, Volume 2, *National Park Service, Alaska Recreation Survey*. National Park Service, Washington, D.C.
- [22] U.S. Department of Interior (1945) *Alaska*. U.S. Department of Interior, Washington, D.C.
- [23] U.S. Department of Labor (1976) *Summary Manpower Indicators for Skagway Portion, Alaska: A Custom-Made Manpower Data Report*, USDL Manpower Administration, Data Systems and Reports, Region IX.
- [24] Wade, R.C. (1964) *The Urban Frontier: Pioneer Life in Early Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Lexington, Louisville, and St. Louis*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- [25] Warren, Roland L. (1978) *The Community in America*. Rand McNally, Chicago.

- [26] Wells, Stephen R. (1982) *Skagway Costal Management Plan*. CASA, 5180 Northeast Sullivan Rd., Barinbridge, WA 98110.
- [27] Wilkinson, Kenneth P., James G. Thompson, Robert R. Reynolds, Jr., and Lawrence M. Ostresh (1982a) Local Social Disruption and Western Energy Development, *Pacific Sociological Review*, 25, (July), 275-96.
- [28] Wilkinson, Kenneth P., Robert R. Reynolds, Jr., James G. Thompson, and Lawrence M. Ostresh (1982b) Response, *Pacific Sociological Review*, 25 (July) 367-76. □
-