THE LAST FRONTIER FOR WHOM? AN INDIGENOUS OBSERVATION OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN BOARDING SCHOOLS AND TOURISM IN ALASKA

Emily Edenshaw
Yup'ik/Iñupiaq; adopted into the St'langng Laanas Thunderbird Raven Clan of Old Massett, Haida Gwaii;
Alaska Native Heritage Center, 8800 Heritage Center Dr., Anchorage, Alaska 99504; eedenshaw@alaskanative.net

Benjamin A. Jacuk (Dolchok)
Dena'ina Dene/Sugpiaq; Alaska Native Heritage Center, 8800 Heritage Center Dr., Anchorage, Alaska 99504;
bjacuk@alaskanative.net

ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the historical context of ecotourism and ethnotourism in Alaska, its roots in Sheldon Jackson, and the far-reaching effects of Jackson's involvement up to now. This will be done by explaining ecotourism and its establishment, which excluded Alaska Native populations. We then examine ethnotourism in Alaska and how it shaped and portrayed the Indigenous population. Last, we will explore the effects of these forms of eco- and ethnotourism today and how the Alaska Native community is working to change the narrative.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Alaska, shops with merchandise that promotes and perpetuates the state motto "The Last Frontier" are everywhere. Mountains, brown bears, fishing, and wilderness have become synonymous with who and what Alaska is, yet they lack any Indigenous representation. The "Alaska section" in gift shops and shopping centers frequently evokes the image of an "untouched land" of beauty where visitors can be the first to encounter and experience the incredible wilderness. These images of untouched land perpetuate the concept of the "The Last Frontier" while also invoking a sense of being on the border of Western civilization, a border meant to be pushed and expanded upon and a slogan meant to conjure up the national ideology of Manifest Destiny (see Jacuk, this volume).

Ironically, shops that expound this idea of untouched land and westward expansion often also sell poor representations of "authentic" Alaska Native art, copies made by those outside our communities that appropriate who we are. These images draw upon an exoticism created for no other reason than to sell products, forsaking art forms with thousands of years of meaning. It is this coexistence and conflicting nature of the "Last Frontier" and Western caricatures of the Indigenous population that largely make up the image of tourism in Alaska.

These two conflicting perspectives of Alaska present an exoticized view of its Native population. While the exploitation of land and people through tourism is not new, in the Alaskan context there is a hidden figure who has rarely been linked to the history of the tourism industry: Sheldon Jackson, the architect and operator of boarding schools in Alaska, was also a promoter of ecotourism and ethnotourism operations (see Jacuk, this volume).

ECOTOURISM

Throughout the history of the United States' presence in Alaska, picturesque landscapes and tourism have been used as vehicles to further Western imperialism. Yet tourism

that is framed through a Western lens "is argued to (currently) be the prime threat to indigenous homelands and cultures, through its exploitation, dislocation and desecration" (McIntosh et al. 2002:39). This can be seen in the famed photographer Eadweard Muybridge's expedition to the territory in 1868, for his "views besides being beautiful works of art give a more correct idea of Alaska and its scenery and vegetation than can be obtained from any written description of the country" Campbell (2007:92). Muybridge received permission to join "General Henry W. Halleck's reconnaissance trip to Alaska," along with other "wealthy and well-connected elites" (Campbell 2007:91). While Muybridge's photos were important in promoting Alaska's impressive scenery, his presence aboard the naval vessel also served military needs through the photography of important military sites. Muybridge's work in Alaska "signified the conjoining of the imperial connections between strategic sites and aesthetic sights" (Campbell 2007:92), revealing the political portrayal of the Alaska landscape, but it also opened the door to other forms of imperialism hiding under the guise of ecology.

The exploitation of nature and its use for development was something to which the future secretary of education in Alaska, Sheldon Jackson, was no stranger. Jackson, a prominent figure within the Presbyterian Church and creator of numerous boarding schools throughout the western United States, was instrumental in using ecclesial institutions to build transportation networks throughout the West. For "railroads were 'quite consciously . . . agents of state,'" and, as historian Richard White noted, "Just as Manifest Destiny made the expansion of the United States synonymous with the expansion of republican freedom, Christianity, and civilization itself, so the railroads made their expansion an expansion of civilization" (Sabol 2017:206). Churches and boarding schools became ways to take care of the "Indian Problem" through the "emasculation" of these communities (Sabol 2017:219) and to make way for expansionist efforts through railroads. For instance, in a letter to the Presbyterian secretaries of Foreign and Home Missions, Jackson laid out his plan to use missionaries to assist in this expansion:

> Now for the specifications with reference to the organization of churches. Bear in mind that in 1872 Montana was expecting the speedy building of the North Pacific Railroad, and was receiving a large immigration. It was then considered a wise policy to [unintelligible] central points. Consequently I organized churches [and missions] at Helena, Deer Lodge . . . also urged the sending of a missionary to Fort Benton as well. Those places at that time were the strategic points and are yet with the exception of Gallatin and Hamilton . . . Gallatin being at the forks of the Missouri River was expected to be a great place on the Northern Pacific Railroad. (Jackson 1880:16)[1]

One of the strategic points in Montana where the North Pacific Railroad's construction was intended to provide reliable transportation for ecotourists was the newly created Yellowstone National Park, an achievement Jackson heavily publicized in his various publications (Jackson 1973:68). Jackson's assimilative work was tied to various forms of tourism that supported his overall colonial and expansionist policies. It should also be recognized that Jackson's tactics were to the detriment of Native populations, who would eventually be displaced by Eurocentric non-Native Americans seeking access to pristine scenery (Jacoby 2006). Upon entering Alaska, Jackson saw new opportunities to continue this work.

In Jackson's publication *The Rocky Mountain Presbyterian*, he described Alaska as "new, raw land of the far Northwest . . . with its thirty-five thousand heathen natives, for whose evangelization nothing whatever had been done by any Protestant denomination" (Young 1927:63). His use of the terms "raw land" and "heathen natives" deliberately set out to separate the beauty of this "untouched land" from the Eurocentric image of Native "heathenism." This compartmentalization gave individuals like Jackson the opportunity to capitalize on Alaska's scenery while erasing the Native peoples from the image.

To fully understand Jackson's motivations, it is essential to define ecotourism within this context. Despite the many interpretations of tourism existent throughout history, Jackson's understanding of ecotourism within this context would be "a search for something sacred, a ritual, or pilgrimage, whereby the tourist steps out of their everyday life and goes through a liminal tourist phase, only to return to their habitual existence after the tourist experience" (Nosková and Scholl-Schneider 2020:395). Ecotourism characteristically presents Alaska as a place grounded in geographical phenomena without accurate consideration of the peoples who have lived here for time immemorial. This narrative relies upon the notion that natural areas are "untainted" by humanity as a means of interpreting what is "sacred." Therefore, the erasure of Alaska Native peoples is critical to the story that is often sold through ecotourism, even though these communities

have lived in harmony with their environments for as long as they have existed.

To promote this image of Alaska to the public, the famed naturalist John Muir traveled north. In 1888–1889, Muir traveled with Jackson throughout Alaska, stating his goals for the trip as follows:

> We are going to write some history, my boy, [referring to S. Hall Young, Ft. Wrangell teacher]. . . . Think of the honor! We have been chosen to put some interesting people and some of Nature's grandest scenes on the page of human record and on the map. Hurry! We are daily losing the most important news of all the world. (Campbell 2007:61)

Muir's work distinguishes between land and the Alaska Native peoples by focusing solely on the natural and reporting on the scenic beauty of Alaska, separating the traditionally inseparable. Muir's description of Alaska Natives was nuanced, as he was informed by the Euro-supremacy framework common at that time. Examples of Muir's othering language, which helped shape the opinions of future tourists to the region, include "they are pale copper-colored, have small feet and hands, are not at all negroish in lips or cheeks like the coastal tribes" (Campbell 2007:148). Muir thus placed Alaska Natives as something separate from other peoples and hinted at a lack of evolutionary development compared to their "superior" European counterparts—a distinction, of course, based solely on the opinions and perceptions of the self-proclaimed superior. Travel writers like Muir and Eliza Scidmore "painted Alaska as an extension of the North American West that was waiting to be explored by visitors," while the "native inhabitants, if discussed at all, were also depicted as being part of the natural landscape" (Raibmon 2005:141). Muir romanticized Alaska alongside this othering language, helping "transform Alaska from an unknown wilderness into an iconic vision of sublime solitude and peacefulness" (Miller 2013:38) and, not coincidentally, create a market for the Inside Passage tour (Nash 1981:4–6).

An accompanying teacher on this trip, S. Hall Young, later wrote more directly that the "strange habits of the wild fishermen; the lack of morality . . . the Indian medicine-men, the witchcraft, the queer totemic system and primitive customs—all the lights and shadows blended. . . . Thirty-five thousand heathen natives in a land without law, order or protection! The shameful neglect of this, America's last frontier, was a reproach to civilization" (Young 1927:65). Contrast Young's opinion of the Alaska Native population with his description of scenery like that of Glacier Bay:

> so far as we were able to ascertain, no white man had ever penetrated these forbidding wilds. . . the most wonderful bay for natural scenery in all the earth, and that it fell to our lot to unfold this wonder to an admiring world. . . . The work the glacier did was a labour of love, and its stern aspect, its roaring voices, its immense masses breaking off into bergs, its relentless march through the mountains as it carved out its own valleys, were to him the products, not only of infinite intelligence but of a kind and loving heart. (Young 1927:197–199)

In Young's writing, the reader can see a linguistic separation of land (described in terms usually ascribed to a mother) and the Native population, which, as understood through the lens of savagery, needed to be civilized. This linguistic move humanizes nature while dehumanizing the Alaska Native peoples. Both Young's and Jackson's work falls in line "with Western practices of representing them [Alaska Natives] as 'the Other,' practices that originated in the nineteenth century and have been carried to the present" (Bunten 2010:289).

Through this separation brought about by Jackson through Muir and Young, the public had the tools needed to acknowledge one without the other, opening the opportunity of ecotourism within Alaska. In these early tours there was always a mixture of "natural scenery with the views of progress, the labor of resource extraction," a venture in which Jackson was also involved (Campbell 2007:93). Like Muybridge, Jackson was later able to merge the scenic beauty of "raw land" with the extraction of resources revealing westward expansion at work, while also separating the Native population through caricatures of savagery. This "problem" was one Jackson could only solve by forceful assimilation of the Alaska Native population through boarding schools.

These connections created by Jackson deepened when, in 1899, Edward H. Harriman began an expedition "with a cast of leading American Scientific supernumeraries made up of geologists, botanists, zoologists, and mining experts. The old Alaska hand Dall was along, so was wilderness enthusiast John Muir and the future ethnologist and Indian photographer, Edward S. Curtis" (Cole 1985:309). Though Jackson also helped further the goals of Harriman's Union Pacific Railroad, the relationship between the two men is unclear. What is clear is that Harriman's expedition reinforced Jackson's distinction

between nature and Alaska Natives while promoting resource extraction under the pretense of western expansion. While the work of naturalists such as Muir promoted this divorced view of land, Edward Curtis (who had previously worked with Sheldon Jackson) further developed the image and status of Alaska Natives as dehumanized (see Jackson and Princeton Theological Seminary 1880:17). The trope of the dehumanized Native savage was already prevalent in Alaska, but Curtis used photography and art to add to this narrative, promoting the idea of the "Vanishing Race" (Curtis 1904). As a result of that famous concept, "Curtis, who staged many of his photographs, has been credited with helping to create a nostalgic and inaccurate popular image of Native Americans" (Campbell 2007:241; cf. Egan 2012:41–59).[2] Curtis's creation of the "Vanishing Race" was not accidental, as it "assumed that the Indians and the frontier—the western regions that had remained unclaimed by white settlers through the nineteenth century—were vanishing" (Miller 2013:42).

Through this narrative, the Native population and the land drew even farther apart in the minds of settlers. It was this divorce of land and people on which Jackson framed his marketing of ecotourism to Alaska in his publication *The North Star*. This newsletter is filled with instances of uplifting the natural beauty of Alaska, discussing the depravity of its Native population, and always ending with an advertisement for the North Pacific Railroad (which he assisted in creating) to Alaska through Yellowstone National Park (Jackson 1973:76). While Jackson's portrayal of Alaska Natives is shocking, it is typically balanced with the civilizing work of the boarding schools he created, thereby suggesting that the negative caricature of Native peoples is being corrected due to his efforts, as seen in Figure 1. In this excerpt from *The North Star,* Jackson (1973:8) describes the murder of an Alaska Native woman and blames the victim, stating, "The wages of sin is death." Jackson follows this horrific instance of missing and murdered Indigenous women/people (MMIW/P) by talking about the good he is doing through assimilative work and (to the right) advertising trips to Alaska via the Northern Pacific Railroad. This was another thing Jackson attempted to capitalize on. His ability to divorce the people from the land and then, through mechanisms of his own creation, do away with the existence of Native peoples, provided a pathway to interpreting the land without consideration for Native peoples (e.g., see Pratt 1994). Thus, Jackson created and then sold the narrative of the Last Frontier through ecotourism.

We present our readers this month with an illustration of the two principal buildings of the Industrial Training School at Sitka. The building nearest the flag is 100 x 50 feet in size, and was erected in 1882. It is occupied by the boys; in it are also the rooms of Rev. Mr. and Mrs Austin, Miss Rodgers Mrs. Paul, Mrs. Harding, and the Superintendant's office and rooms.

The building with the small cupola, is 120 x 50 feet in size, and contains the dormitories and work rooms of the girls, the school and dining rooms for both boys and girls, also the rooms of Miss Kelsey, Mrs. Winans, Mr. and Mrs. Overend, Miss Lee and Miss Chisholm. It was built in 1884.

In the rear of these buildings, (but not visible in the illustration,) are the laundry, bakery and woodhouse. A few hundred yards to the east, is the Shepard Industrial building, containing the carpenter, boot and shoe shop and printing office. The under portion of this building is used as a boat house. Near by is the blacksmith shop.

Still farther to the east is the girls' ward of the new hospital, 60 x 30 feet in size.

And still farther to the east are three small cottages erected as model homes for the young men who have completed their time at the Institution and have married.

The mountain in the rear of the building is Cross Mountain, 2597 feet high, and the snow capped peak back of Cross Mt. (in the illustration it looks like one and the same mountain), is Vostovia, 3216 feet high.

Between the building and the mountain is the beautiful Indian River from which water is brought in iron pipes to the school.

In front of the buildings, the high tides of the ocean come within 20 feet of the front yard.

The outlook over bay and islands is one of wondrous beauty.

What a sight was witnessed in our town last week!

A bright winsome native girl found dead! Died in a low hovel! Dead, with a couple of half emptied whiskey bottles at her side!

Her paramour, or fell destroyer, is supposed to be a white man. Ah, yes, it is the same old story, a few short years of pleasurable indulgences, woeful debauchery and *premature death!*

This is but one of the many instances of the irrational, yes beastly treatment of helpless native girls by designing men. Sorrowfully be it said of her, "The wages of sin is death."

The children that accompanied Dr. Sheldon Jackson east to school were, Flora Campbell, Florence Wells, Minnie Shotter, Blanche Louie, Alga Hilton, Henry Philip Easton and Fred. Harris.

Henry Philip is to learn the art of printing, and Fred. Harris is to learn tinsmithing at the Carlisle School, Penna.

Speaking of the departure of seven Alaskan children to eastern schools, through the kindness of Mrs. Elliott F. Shepard, a white man remarked that he wished his children could have such an opportunity, but they had no "Shepard."

We here give a list of Government Teachers and their salaries, as published in the ALASKAN.

Miss Margaret Powell, Sitka,	$1,000
Miss Virginia Pakle, "	800
Miss May Ranson, Killisnoo,	800
G. B. Johnston, Juneau,	1,200
Miss Henrietta Jensen, Juneau	800
Dr. F. F. White, Haines,	1,200
Miss Lyda L. McAvoy, Ft. W'g'l	1,000
J. W. Chapman, Yukon River,	1,200
J. H. Killbuck, Bethel,	1,200
F. E. Wolff, Nushagok,	1,200
John H. Carr, Unga,	1,200
W. E. Roscoe, Kadiak,	1,200
J. A. Wirth, Afognok,	1,200
L. W. Currie, Klawack,	1,200
Miss Clara A. Gould, Howkan,	1,000
Salary of General Agent,	1,200

The schools are in session ten months each year.

Last December Prof. S. A. Saxman, Government teacher, and Mr. Louis Paul, were lost at sea. Mrs. Saxman having no children of her own, has asked to be allowed to adopt the four-year old boy of Mrs. Paul.

Consequently Master Samuel Kendall Paul accompanied the Alaska party of children east, to his new home in Western Pennsylvania.

We have received a number of packages and boxes which will cause the eyes of our boys and girls to sparkle with delight on Christmas day.

"THE NORTH STAR" wishes its readers a "Merry Christmas" and a "Happy New Year!"

The past summer was noteworthy for the large number of tourists who found their way to the "Land of the Midnight Sun." Alaska is slowly but surely emerging from darkness into light. However, just at this time of the year, darkness overshadows the morning and the evening of each day

The illustration of our main buildings on the title page, is not a very true likeness. The fence in front appears higher than it really is, and the mountains in the rear do not appear to be more than half as high as they really are, while the buildings look older than they really are. This picture is but a bird's eye view of the premises.

There are now in the school, one hundred and fifteen boys and girls, representing eight different tribes.

Many of these were helpless, homeless waifs, with no future before them, excepting a low, aimless life.

On November 20th, Rev. E. S. Willard received ten persons into the Alaskan Presbyterian Church at Juneau. Six of the new communicants represented three families—young husbands and wives. Eight adults and one infant were baptized.

Figure 1. Excerpt from* The North Star *(Jackson 1973:8), originally printed in 1888, that combines sensationalized, dark stories of the boarding schools Sheldon Jackson is running with tourism.

ETHNOTOURISM

In 1884, Sheldon Jackson wrote a letter to an undisclosed senator about a trip he was organizing to Alaska via the North Pacific Railroad, on the same route promoted in *The North Star*. This letter was very much centered around ecotourism, describing the scenery in detail with the promise to "climb glaciers, see the wale [*sic*] in his northern home" and "feast upon the finest of fish . . . among the wildest and grandest of scenery"; however, Jackson also stated that the travelers would see "Indian Villages" and "inspect Indian Missions" (Jackson 1884:2). He further noted that the trip would be "instructional" (Jackson 1884:1). Ethnotourism was thus added to the ecotour itinerary.

When considering the context of Alaska in this period, it is important to reckon with the reverberations of the discourse related to ethnotourism to contemporary times.

Jana Nosková interprets the intersection of the history of tourism in modern iterations of power structures by describing it as "neo-colonialism and imperialism, focusing primarily on the power asymmetries between developed and less developed countries (or peoples)" (Nosková and Scholl-Schneider 2020:395).

This definition also includes the exotification of those "less developed" peoples while, of course, understanding that the level of development is based upon a Western European framework. Shari Huhndorf, in her work *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*, describes this phenomenon where:

> By 1914, European Nations controlled over 85 percent of the territories in the world, and seekers after the pleasures of "otherness" relied on Western political dominance to indulge their fascinations. Through the exertion of colonial power, the West thus made the rest of the world available, in various ways, to its own citizens. Western travelers journeyed to distant lands, collectors amassed exotic objects, prominent artists and writers sought inspiration in the 'primitive,' scientists researched these new subjects, explorers mapped uncharted territories, and corporations and entrepreneurs transformed colonial resources into vast profits. (Huhndorf 2001:83)

The colonial element of tourism reveals the role of otherness in solidifying societal understanding of Western dominance over Indigenous peoples around the world. More specifically, for the purposes of this paper, ethnotourism can be defined as tourism focused on understanding a specific people group (in this case Alaska Natives) based on a Eurocentric—and very often dehumanizing—lens created by those in power. Furthermore, this frame of understanding denies the self-identification and overall sovereignty of Alaska Native communities by usurping the narrative to put them in a space that is frozen in time and associated with negative social characteristics. Ethnotourism can therefore be seen to employ views of "savagery" and "heathenism" based not in fact but instead on a perception of Eurocentric supremacy. Jackson's efforts to develop ethnotourism in Alaska conforming with this definition are illustrated not only by his writing in publications like *The North Star* but also through promotional imagery such as the so-called "heathen dance" (Fig. 2). As Miller notes, this "authentic experience for a turn-of-the-century tourist was based on that tourist's preconceived ideas of what constituted 'Indianness,'" which was defined by the "Western-based traditional constructions of what indigenous people should be, how they should dress, and what they should look like" (Miller 2013:47–48). This meant that while "authenticity" was desired, it could only be understood through the exotifying lens of colonial constructs and not defined by Alaska Native peoples. While ecotourism sets out to ideologically and physically separate Alaska Native peoples and the Alaska land, ethnotourism seeks to define the identity of Alaska Native peoples exclusively from the colonial gaze by determining "authenticity." Both serve to designate Indigenous populations as the other.

In Jacksonian ethnotourism, this sort of imagery and Curtis's "Vanishing Race" motif were used to represent both the "Disappearing Indian" (by touring Indian villages) and the "reformed Native" (inspecting Indian missions and boarding schools) (e.g., Jackson 1884). Within these categories, Jackson himself was instrumental in the "disappearance" and "reformation" of Native peoples through the boarding school system he established (Fig. 3). His widespread role in creating the Eurocentric identity of Alaska Native peoples in the nineteenth century was also evident in his 1887 convening of "the first meeting of the society of Alaska Natural History and Ethnology," a body that did not have an Alaska Native present during its formation or existence (Carlton 1999:33). Jackson shrewdly used the exoticism of the "Disappearing Indian" when offering tourists the opportunity to purchase cultural items from supposedly soon-to-be-lost cultures (Jackson and Princeton Theological Seminary 1890–1892:1–2; Fig. 4). While it is not clear if any of the items being sold were stolen material culture that came into Jackson's possession during his travels, it is known that he had his students make art and other cultural objects (Cole 1985:76). The mental gymnastics that went into commodifying the very culture Jackson tried to exterminate will never be known; however, it is clear that, in Jackson's scheme, Alaska Native cultures could exist only under his terms and for his benefit. Having students make such items (in schools meant to eradicate their cultures) to be sold to support the boarding school model is a solemn representation of Jacksonian ethnotourism.

Through his control over the boarding schools and influence of Alaska, Jackson helped form the societal vision of an "untouched land" to the exclusion of Alaska Native peoples while simultaneously defining and exoticizing Alaska Native identity. Therefore, Jackson created the model for colonial identities to recognize two opposing

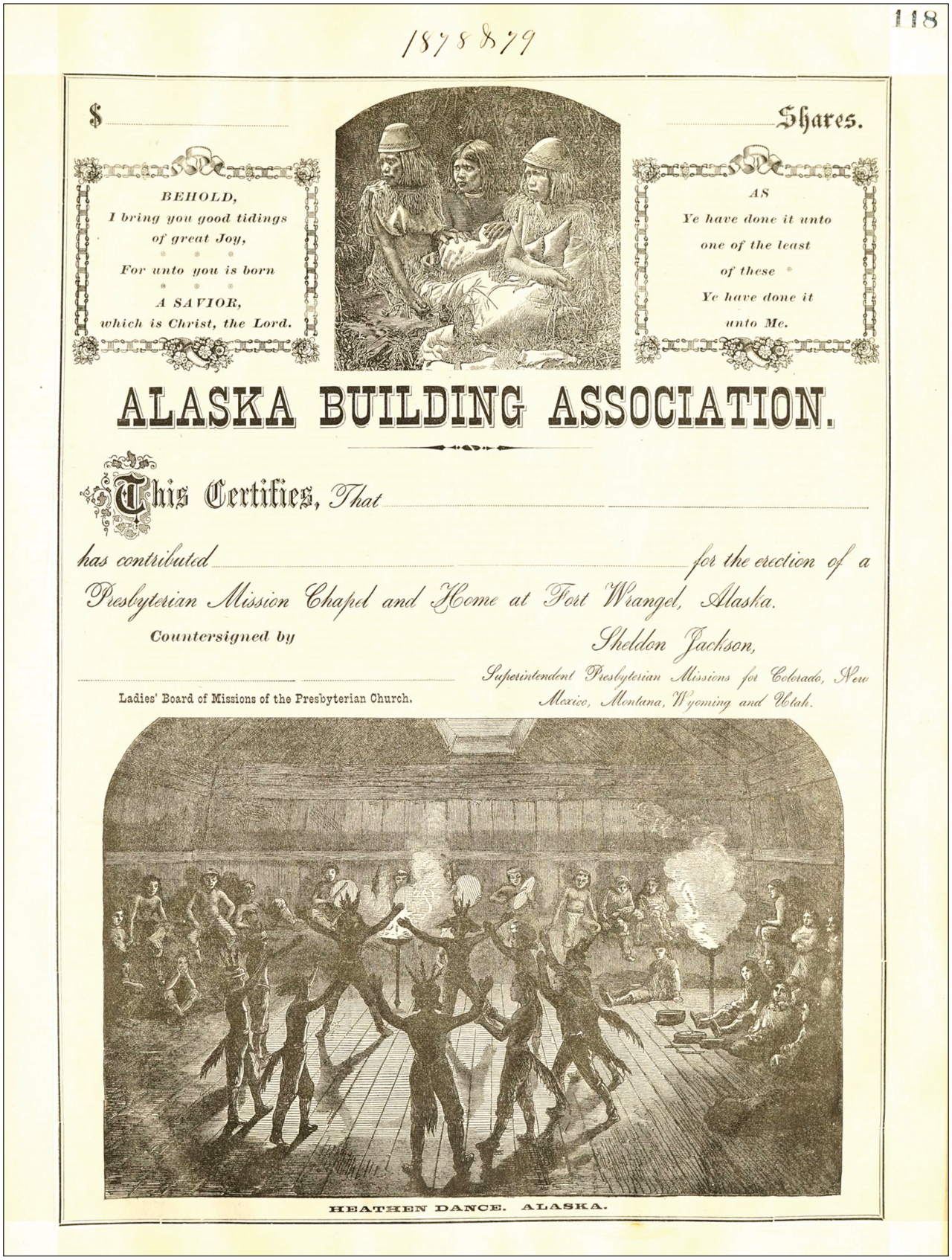
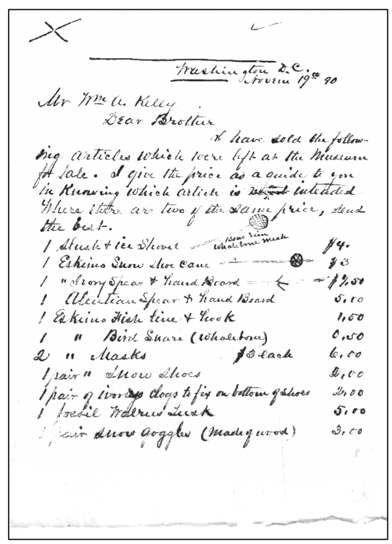


Figure 2. "Heathen Dance, Alaska," reprinted on a certificate acknowledging financial contributions to construct the Presbyterian Mission Chapel and Home in Fort Wrangell, Alaska (Jackson 1855–1909:117).

Figure 3. Students at Sitka Industrial Indian School. Jackson poses in the front, holding his hat (Jackson 1877–1909:8).

ideologies of an untouched land and an exoticized Alaska Native population. In this model, both land and the caricature are allowed to exist, but never have any relation.



Washington D.C.
Novem 19th 90

Mr Wm A. Kelly
Dear Brother

I have sold the following articles which were left at the Museum for sale. I give the price as a guide to you in knowing which article is intended. Where there are two of the same price, send the best.

1	Slush & ice Shovel	$4.
1	Eskimo Snow Shoe Cane	$3
1	" Ivory Spear & hand Board	$7.50
1	Aleutian Spear & hand Board	5.00
1	Eskimo Fish line & hook	1.50
1	" Bird Snare (Whalebone)	0.50
2	" Masks $3 each	6.00
1 pair	" Snow Shoes	2.00
1 pair	of ivory dogs to fix on bottom of shoes	2.00
1	fossil Walrus tusk	5.00
1 pair	Snow goggles (Made of wood)	3.00

Figure 4. List of Sheldon Jackson's inventory to be sold to tourists and collectors (Jackson and Princeton Theological Seminary 1890–1892:1–2). It includes such items as an ivory spear for $7.50, two masks for $6, and a pair of snowshoes for $2. This piece is hard to read, but it highlights an important point concerning the lack of legibility and auto-search capabilities of this document. Many of Jackson's documents are in a similar state, meaning that to truly understand this history requires researching every document without automated or artificial intelligence assistance, demanding an extra level of commitment. It also explains the slow pace with which this history is being uncovered and why current understandings of it have been narratively colonial in nature.

ALASKA NATIVE HISTORY AND THE PRESENT: A CRITICAL APPROACH

For hundreds of years, the Alaska Native population has been represented by the frameworks made widespread by Sheldon Jackson. It is therefore beneficial to understand the true history of Alaska and its peoples outside of these "othering" colonial frameworks.

The name "Alaska" derives from an Unangan Tunuu word, *Aláxsxaq* or *Alaxsxix*, both meaning "Where the Sea Breaks Its Back" or the "main land." Archaeological evidence shows Alaska Native people have lived and thrived off the lands we refer to as Alaska for at least 10,000 years (e.g., Crowell et al. 2010:104). To provide a more specific example, the Native village of Point Hope, Alaska, has been continuously occupied for *over* 10,000 years (Jensen 2014:11), making it the longest-inhabited place in the United States. On the other hand, the colonial history of Alaska spans just a couple hundred years. It is important to compare the long history of the Alaska Native peoples and land with its colonial history, for 200 years is a drop

in the bucket compared to a 10,000-year history. This rich Alaska Native history clearly reveals an unbreakable bond between the Indigenous peoples and the land, a history often ignored or unacknowledged by these colonial entities. For instance, "until 2005, the Alaska State Board of Education did not require students to receive instruction on the history of Alaska or Alaska Native cultures, so educators were not compelled to develop course materials on those subjects" (Pratt 2009:29).

Considering these facts, one must ask how Alaska has been distilled down to what it is portrayed as by the tourism industry today: a place comprised of mountains, brown bears, and glaciers and lacking Native representation or relationship. Alaska is not a place of European origin or claim on its Native peoples, making it the furthest thing from the "Last Frontier." Marketing Alaska in such an ecocentric light perpetuates the earlier ecotourism misconception of "untouched land." For, regardless of the narratives of colonial-era ecotourism, Alaska is the ancestral homeland of the Alaska Native peoples. Thus, the absence of Alaska Native voices in the modern tourism industry constitutes a continuation of the Jacksonian frameworks of erasure.

As the home to more than 229 federally and state-recognized tribes, Alaska has the highest percentage of Indigenous peoples in the United States (USDA Forest Service 2023:4). How can a place that has been the home to Alaska Native peoples for more than 10,000 years be a "Last Frontier"? There is much work to be done in tourism where too often panels and webinars spotlight Alaska yet have little to no Alaska Native representation. Together, we must lift the veil of misrepresentation to see the true beauty and truth of who and what Alaska is. In doing so, the fog of the unknown will rise, and Alaskans—and tourists—will see Alaska's true beauty for what she is, a Native place. Our hope is for tourists to see Alaska with open eyes. However, to understand the state of Alaska, we need to know our past, particularly the painful parts. One organization leading this work is the Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC), the only statewide living cultural center dedicated to preserving and strengthening all Alaska Native cultures and traditions. The best way to counteract the Jacksonian framework of ethnotourism is cultural tourism done on Alaska Native terms.

The heart, the root, of cultural tourism is much more than that. It is the perpetuation of Alaska Native ways of life; it is healing; it is language revitalization; it is the accurate telling of Alaska Native history; it is Alaska Native youth knowing they are part of a community that is living and vibrant, with a robust future, and that we have had and still have a powerful story and experience to share. In its simplest form, cultural tourism in Alaska creates a space for the Alaska Native community to learn more about their own cultures by sharing our traditions, stories, values, knowledge, and ways of life. In contrast to ecotourism and ethnotourism, cultural tourism "turn(s) to local cultural models to shape their presentations of self" in a way that we "have the power to choose how to respond to the tourist (colonial) gaze" (Bunten 2008:382). As opposed to being described and othered by colonial frameworks, cultural tourism creates a place of self-determination and representation of Indigenous peoples. Through this self-determination and representation, Alaska Native peoples can define not only ourselves but also our unbreakable relationship to the land that has defined us for over 10,000 years, undoing the negative effects of eco- and ethnotourism. While this relationship has always existed, motifs such as the "Last Frontier" have sought to erase this narrative within society, effectively manufacturing the divorce between the original peoples and the land.

Cultural tourism sets out to create a mirror showing a true understanding of the "authentic" Native self while also redefining who the "other" is, in response to the colonial window that warps Native identity to the goals of colonization. One element of cultural tourism that entities such as ANHC and the Alutiiq Museum do through the lens of self-determination and presentation is the participation in communal and societal cultural revitalization, reversing the Jacksonian structures to one where Native people see and define ourselves on our own terms, not only for healing from the effects of historical loss but also to create a future where our peoples can thrive. This creates a place where Alaska Native communities are able to define what is truly "authentic," understood through our own ancestrally informed lens. In recent years the cultural tourism mirror has also redefined the "other" of the settler, shedding light on the historic and continued effects of colonialism. While the cultural tourism formula has consisted of "the greeting, the guide, demonstrated use of the heritage language, traditional architecture, a performance, a gift shop or souvenirs for sale, and, often, demonstration of traditional Native crafts" (Bunten 2008:385), there has been a push to discuss more than just the precontact history and to show the true authentic self of Alaska Native peoples, the role of colonialism, and its continued effects. ANHC, for instance, has

created a "History of Education in Alaska" exhibit that looks at not only systems of education precontact but also the boarding school era, its continued effects touched on early in this work, and the cultural revitalization that is underway. This helps redefine not only the category of "authenticity" but also redesignates who is the "other," all on Native peoples' terms.

ANHC supports people from all the widely diverse Alaska Native cultural and language groups that make up the history and foundation of this state and are very vital to the fabric of Alaska. Since opening our doors to the public in 1999, ANHC has worked with millions of people worldwide, including Alaska Native youth, elders, and the broader community throughout Alaska. ANHC serves as a gathering place for the multitribal Alaska Native community and as a focal point for visitors who wish to learn about Alaska Native cultures, heritages, and traditions. At ANHC, we believe everyone deserves access to their culture, no matter where they live, and has a fundamental right to know their history. We also know our cultures are our strongest forms of medicine and central to our identities and ways of life. ANHC is aware that cultural tourism in Alaska takes on many forms. It can be Native and tribally owned businesses, cultural centers, and museums; it might be Native artists and storytellers; it may be unforgettable Alaska excursions, like walking tours, cruises, guided hunting, and fishing; it could be unique experiences with Native food and art. ANHC has also created an Indigenous research program, *Lach'qu Sukdu* ("true story"), tasked with doing healing research for the well-being of all Alaska Native peoples. ANHC's devotion to uncovering the true history of this past is fueled by the recognition that healing can only occur when Alaska Natives know what we need healing from, which can only occur through research. Through the work of *Lach'qu Sukdu*, ANHC has begun to uncover not only the history of the boarding schools but the issues connected to this colonizing project (including eco- and ethnotourism). *Lach'qu Sukdu* has become Alaska's leader in researching and uncovering this history, working with the various ecclesial denominations and federal entities and making it possible for Alaska Natives to tell our own story.

One avenue for telling this story is through ANHC's boarding school exhibit mentioned earlier. As the first of its kind, this exhibit will discuss not only this tough history but the entire history of education through an Alaska Native lens. ANHC is also in the process of bringing healing to the Alaska Native community through ceremony. For instance, the 2023 Boarding School Haida Healing Totem Pole and Potlatch represented ANHC's devotion to healing through research and by taking back the ownership and narrative of our collective identities. These are just a few examples of the work ANHC is doing, but they highlight the organization's emphasis on being not only a true representation of Alaska Natives but also a place of healing for all from the lasting effects of the boarding school era. ANHC is a place where the truth will be shared through research and ceremony passed down by our ancestors, needed by our communities today. For the first step in healing is learning the truth.

CONCLUSION

For the last several years, the ANHC has proudly co-led a statewide cultural tourism workgroup dedicated to identifying cultural tourism successes and barriers. We have worked with our partners across Alaska to enhance cultural tourism businesses' capacity building at a community level. This work enriches and increases cultural connections, understanding, and respect, building empathy and relationships in our Alaska communities. ANHC is also in the beginning stages of creating the first statewide "Cultural Tourism Economic Impact Report." Additionally, ANHC has submitted proposals to federal agencies with the goal of advancing rural communities and our state. ANHC has also worked in partnership with non-Native entities to advance tourism and cultural tourism, counteracting the Jacksonian models and frameworks meant for erasure. For it is through true Alaska Native representation and our connection to the land that we can begin to break down those colonial frameworks, together. *Quyana.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to acknowledge Kenneth Pratt for his peer review of this work. Without his dedication to both boarding school research and to the Alaska Native peoples, this work would not be possible. We also thank two unknown peer reviewers for comments and suggestions that helped significantly improve this paper, and Dale Slaughter for technical assistance in enhancing the quality and legibility of the figures.

NOTES

1. There are various primary source documents in which Jackson highlights his role in the construction of the North Pacific Railroad. This is an important topic, but it is not the focus of this paper.
2. The authors agree with Campbell's assessment of Curtis's work, but his subsequent statement that the photographs taken by Curtis during the 1899 Harriman expedition were "refreshingly free of the stagecraft" reveals Campbell's lack of familiarity with Alaska Native culture. That is, many of the photographs were not true representations of Alaska Native populations.

REFERENCES

Bunten, Alexis C.
2008 Sharing Culture or Selling Out? Developing the Commodified Persona in the Heritage Industry. *American Ethnologist* 35(3):380–395. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27667498
2010 More like Ourselves: Indigenous Capitalism through Tourism. *American Indian Quarterly* 34(3):285–311. https://doi.org/10.5250/amerindiquar.34.3.285

Campbell, Robert
2007 *In Darkest Alaska: Travel and Empire along the Inside Passage*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.

Carlton, Rosemary
1999 *Sheldon Jackson: The Collector.* Alaska State Museums, Juneau.

Cole, Douglas
1985 *Capturing Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts.* University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Crowell, Aron A., Rosita Worl, Paul C. Ongtooguk, and Dawn D. Biddison
2010 *Living Our Cultures, Sharing Our Heritage: The First Peoples of Alaska.* Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Curtis, Edward
1904 *The Vanishing Race—Navaho*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. https://www.loc.gov/resource/ppmsca.05926/

Egan, Timothy
2012 *Short Nights of the Shadow Catcher: The Epic Life and Immortal Photographs of Edward Curtis*. Mariner Books, Boston and New York.

Huhndorf, Shari M.
2001 *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Jackson, Sheldon
1855–1909 *Sheldon Jackson Papers, Series V: Scrapbooks 1855–1909, Sheldon Jackson Collection*. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.
1877–1909 *Photographs of Sitka, Alaska., RG 239, Box 12, Folders 29–32 and Box 13, Folders 1–9, image no. 483-585, Sheldon Jackson Collection*. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.
1880 *Sheldon Jackson Papers, Series I: Correspondence Feb 1880, Sheldon Jackson Collection.* Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.
1884 *Sheldon Jackson Travel Correspondence and Pamphlet, June 13, 1884*. Chris Smith Private Collection, Vancouver, BC.
1973 *The North Star: A Monthly Publication on Alaskan Missions Dec. 1887 to Dec. 1892*. Shorey Book Store, Seattle.

Jackson, Sheldon, and Princeton Theological Seminary
1890–1892 *Sheldon Jackson Correspondence 1890–1892, Letters, vol. 8, Sheldon Jackson Manuscript Collection (Concerning Alaska).* Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton.
1880 *Sheldon Jackson Pioneer Missions 1880, Sheldon Jackson Manuscript Collection (Concerning Alaska).* Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton.

Jacoby, Karl
2006 *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves, and the Hidden History of American Conservation*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

Jensen, Anne M.
2014 The Archaeology of North Alaska: Point Hope in Context. In *The Foragers of Point Hope: The Biology and Archaeology of Humans on the Edge of the Alaskan Arctic*, edited by Charles E. Hilton, Benjamin M. Auerbach, and Libby W. Cowgill, pp. 11–34. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

McIntosh, Alison J., Tom Hinch, and Takiora Ingram
2002 Cultural Identity and Tourism. *International Journal of Arts Management* 4(2):39–49. http://www.jstor.org/stable/41064754

Miller, Robyn J.
2013 The Cultural Commodification of Gender and Identity in Alaska Native Imagery by the Non-Native Tourism Industry. M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Alaska Anchorage.

Nash, Roderick
1981 Tourism, Parks, and the Wilderness Idea in the History of Alaska. *Alaska Perspectives* 4(1):1–26.

Nosková, Jana, and S. Scholl-Schneider
2020 Ethnology and Tourism. *Český Lid* 107(4):395–397. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26975973

Pratt, Kenneth L.
1994 "They Never Ask the People": Native Views About the Nunivak Wilderness. In *Key Issues in Hunter-Gatherer Research*, edited by Ernest S. Burch Jr. and Linda J. Ellanna, pp. 333–356. Berg Publishers, Oxford/Providence.
2009 A History of the ANCSA 14(h)(1) Program and Significant Reckoning Points, 1975–2008. In *Chasing the Dark: Perspectives on Place, History and Alaska Native Land Claims*, edited by Kenneth L. Pratt, pp. 3–41. Bureau of Indian Affairs, ANCSA Office, Anchorage.

Raibmon, Paige
2005 *Authentic Indians: Episodes of Encounters from the Late-Nineteenth-Century Northwest Coast*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC.

Sabol, Steven
2017 Assimilation and Identity. In "*The Touch of Civilization": Comparing American and Russian Internal Colonization*, pp. 205–234. University Press of Colorado, Boulder. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1mtz7g6.10

USDA Forest Service
2023 *Welcome to Alaska's National Forests: Where Nature, People, and Tradition Come Together.* USDA Forest Service, Juneau.

Young, Samuel Hall
1927 *Hall Young of Alaska, the Mushing Parson: The Autobiography of Samuel Hall Young*. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York.