Further Reading: Primary Sources

There are many good resources for studying the history of the Iditarod National Historic Trail (INHT). This bibliography is by no means exhaustive. Its purpose is to introduce the primary sources used in the creation of the INHT Comprehensive Management Plan, as well as a few other useful pieces.

The main categories of primary sources for the INHT are: Journals, historic newspapers, oral testimony, and government reports.

The main source for information regarding Alaska before the U.S. purchase is *Lieutenant Zagoskin's travels in Russian America, 1842-1844 : the first ethnographic and geographic investigations on the Yukon and Kuskokwim Valleys of Alaska,* published for the Arctic Institute of North America by University of Toronto Press, 1967. This book is an excellent read, detailing the reconnaissance conducted by Zagoskin on behalf of the Russian American Company. His travels up Alaska’s major river systems in an effort to survey sites for trading posts led him to many encounters with Alaska native communities and their trade routes. Many of these traditional routes would later be used by miners traveling to the Iditarod district, and would become part of the INHT. Zagoskin also provides information on the evolution of dog mushing, detailing Russian influence on the popular means of travel. It was Russian influence that provoked the use of a lead dog with symmetrical harnessing and the creation of the modern sled design. This book is available at ARLIS.

When locating historical sites on the INHT, BLM researchers often turn to the *1908 Goodwin Report,* which is provided here in PDF format. Here, Goodwin documents existing roadhouse sites, future roadhouse sites, potential sites, and the mileage between all of them. Within the report it is mentioned that several entrepreneurs followed the American Russian Company expedition in hopes of establishing roadhouses along the way. This report was very accurate, and often BLM researchers were led to site locations by following the information found in this report. This report is included in the digital collection.

*10,000 Miles with a Dog Sled* is another journal used extensively by BLM researchers. Hudson Stuck, an [Episcopal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Episcopal_Church_in_the_United_States_of_America) Archdeacon, traveled extensively throughout the interior of Alaska, encountering many of the areas gold rush towns and native communities. The records found here are compared to those provided by Goodwin and others to measure the accuracy of place locations and events.

Wherever gold brought a rush of people, there is always an opportunity for journalism. This proved true in the early communities of Nome, Seward and Iditarod, to name a few. Newspapers in these communities often were short lived, but the information they carried, while entertaining for miners, provides researchers today a wealth of knowledge about local traditions, politics, and culture. Many of these newspapers can be found on microfiche at UAA. A few of the most prominent include *Iditarod Pioneer, Iditarod Nugget, Seward Gateway,* and *Nome Nugget.* Additionally, magazines such as the *Alaska Yukon Journal, Alaska Sportsman*, and *Alaska Magazine* carry original stories told by men and women who lived along the Iditarod National Historic Trail.

The oral histories collected by the BLM are infinitely valuable, particularly since the people interviewed are often not authors, and having their stories caught on tape may have been the only way to permanently preserve their past experiences. It is also a completely different experience to hear the words of an original miner spoken, with all its nuances and inflexions that are often lost in the printed word. Oral history recordings, and transcripts of same, are available as part of the Iditarod Collection in mp3 and PDF format.

For reports on the gold fields of the Yukon and Alaska, see three accounts by Josiah Edward Spurr, available in print at ARLIS.

*Through the Yukon gold diggings; a narrative of personal travel*. Boston: Eastern publishing company, 1900.

Spurr, Josiah Edward and Harold Beach Goodrich. 1898. *Geology of the Yukon gold district, Alaska.* Washington: Government printing office, 1898.

Spurr, Josiah Edward, and F. C Hinckley. 1900. A reconnaissance in southwestern Alaska, in 1898. Washington, D.C. : Govt. Printing Office.

Spurr’s reports are in the ARLIS collection; some are also available on Google books.

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