



The Strangest Town in Alaska : The History of Whittier, Alaska and the Portage Valley

Alan Taylor

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Picture Whittier, Alaska...

- A city barely 50 years old that had no road access for its first 50 years.
- A city where 90% of the population lives in a single building.
- A city of stark contrast, drab concrete buildings nestled within the beauty of Prince William Sound.
- A city built to house 30,000 (in an emergency) in two of the largest structures in Alaska, yet only 300 people live there now.

Whittier sits at a fascinating historical crossroads, traveled for hundreds of years by natives, traders, explorers, gold rushers, the U.S. military, and now visitors from all over the world. The area surrounding Whittier and Portage pass had significant roles in the expansion of Russian America, the Alaskan Gold Rush, World War II, and the Great Alaskan Earthquake of 1964.

The Strangest Town in Alaska chronicles the events that shaped Whittier and Portage Valley, and looks ahead toward new events that hold great promise, including a unique road system that has only now opened the doors to Whittier.

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