



# **Call of the Klondike: A True Gold Rush Adventure**

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## Call of the Klondike: A True Gold Rush Adventure Details

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# From Reader Review Call of the Klondike: A True Gold Rush Adventure for online ebook

## Tricia F. says

True story of two young men who heard the call of adventure and risked all to head north to seek their fortunes. The reader is transported to the 1840's, as the book recounts the climb up the steep ascent of the Chilkoot Trail to reach Dawson City.

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## Renata says

I feel like I recommend this only under a specific set of circumstances, ie: you are a middle school teacher teaching a unit about the Gold Rush OR Call of the Wild and you want some primary sources.

I picked it up with an eye to booktalk it for fans of nonfiction survival stories, but I just don't think it's... exciting... enough for the average young reader to pick up and read cover to cover. It has these great primary sources, family letters of 2 gold prospectors (Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond), with great details about their lives, but the problem is... like... they don't find gold... and not that much happens to them really. Which I understand is extremely typical--the book says only 0.5% of gold rushers actually got rich on gold. But it's also uhh kind of a letdown, narratively speaking. Like, they go to Alaska (which: yes! Was a hard journey), they get some bad gold claims, they don't find very much gold, they leave Alaska and die from other reasons.

Also: the effect of the gold rush on First Nations and Native Americans is literally an afterthought, like literally the last page is about how the gold rushers "were clearly not aware of or concerned about the potentially detrimental effects of their actions on the land, animals, or Native people, who had already been living there for thousands of years." Like ok sure, the gold rushers didn't think about them, but you, the author, could have maybe mentioned this sooner.

Anyway, as a historical document of these 2 specific Gold Rush dudes, this is great--great use of the letters, maps, old photos etc! And sort of good job contextualizing the Gold Rush. But it feels like kiind of a stretch to call this "an adventure."

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## Hilary says

3.4 Stars

Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond were in Seattle when a steamship returned from Canada in 1897. The steamship was carrying miners who had found gold in the Klondike. Very quickly they pooled money and acquired supplies and set off on the next ship out. This is the story of their arduous journey through Canada and Alaska in search of their riches. They tell not only their story, but the story of thousands of others as well. And though the two were not the luckiest of the miners they were not the worst off either.

I like the pacing of this story, it was fast moving and interesting. I also liked the use of letters and diary entries. It helps the reader to feel as if they are inside the minds of the two travelers. I also thought that the

pictures added really well to the text in telling the whole story. By no fault of the author, I just didn't really like Pearce and Bond. I felt like they were very selfish and manipulative. They tended to think of no one but themselves, even as they watched many face greater hardships than themselves. Also, despite the fact that I am not a huge fan of Jack London, I did enjoy his cameo, and learning about his life and the origins of Buck the dog! I found myself disappointed that the end did not have a big climactic (negative or positive) ending. It just ended, and it left me with no real emotion about the pair. However, it made me want to learn about stories of different people who embarked on similar journeys.

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### **Jenreiter says**

A treasure trove of primary sources that help drive home the story of the stampeders who didn't strike it rich. A great resource to share with kids!

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### **Jan says**

In 1897, a steamship arrived in Seattle carrying miners returning from northern Canada. A crowd gathered when they saw the miners carrying large quantities of gold. It had been 40 years since the California gold rush, and men had learned some things. Gold discoveries were finite; as quickly as they appeared, they could fizzle. The only way to make money in gold was to be there at the beginning. This is the story of two men who were in Seattle at the port that day, and how they raced hundreds of other men to get to the Klondike region immediately.

Acquiring money, food, winter clothing, medicines, mining equipment, building materials, and transportation to the Klondike, 1500 miles away, was a daunting task, but Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond managed to be on the very next steamship headed north. Their adventures, travels, and hardships are told in letters, journals, and photos, and put the reader on the front line of a true gold rush adventure.

Although adults are fascinated with Pearce and Bond's adventure, I found that middle-grade students were not. Perhaps they just don't have enough background in what hardship feels like, or perhaps they are used to historical fiction, with its dialogue and pacing, rather than historical nonfiction, which usually lacks both. Definitely a winner for adults, and selected teens 12 and older.

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### **Alicia says**

The presentation makes it a very unique adventuring experience as told in this epistolary informational text. It focuses on Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond and their quest for gold in the Northern Territories/Klondike of Canada. What was billed as a way to make millions by traveling and mining became men nursing wounded pride and egos as many only made it halfway before competition, scarce resources, treacherous conditions, and health issues turned them back before the journey began.

Between the pictures, text, and letters, the book tells a great tale that doesn't sugar-coat the issues between possible scurvy to the death of thousands of horses the men used trying to make it up certain trails to the Klondike. As an added bonus to traveling with these two men by learning about their conversations and

issues up north, the men spent some time with Jack London before he was made famous for his novels *Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*. Interestingly, one of the dogs from *Call of the Wild* was based on one of the men's dogs when they were "sour doughs" (the originals from the gold rush there) up in the Klondike. Between how claims were claimed to their diet and digging there's just enough information to want to know more and from different perspectives without making it too dense or unfocused.

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## **Mike says**

Survival stories resonate with readers on so many levels. They present challenges in the grandest of fashions. They create heroes who overcome obstacles we can only dream about. They compel our youngest readers to imagine adventures that can only seem foreign to their regimented lives. *Call of the Klondike* is a special kind of survival story. Primarily because it didn't start out as one. *Call of the Klondike* began as a treasure hunt.

Stanley Pierce and Marshall Bond were the right people in the right place at the right time. Sixty-Eight miners had just arrived from a little known region in northern Canada on a steamship with four thousand pounds of gold, worth around a million dollars at the time. Both boys, in their mid-twenties from well-to-do families, telegraphed their parents right away for the funding to launch their own expedition to the Klondike. They would have to move quickly because 30,000 others had the same idea as Pierce and Bond.

Normally, we'd expect that two "city boys" who hastily threw together a trip into one of the most unforgiving environments in the world wouldn't fair too well. They would have to transport thousands of pounds of gear up and over mountain passes that were yet to be completed. Once that seemingly unsurmountable task was complete, they would need to build boats that could sail on lakes that acted more like oceans and through river that acted more like washing machines. Then there was the matter of actually discovering gold.

*Call of the Klondike* is a riveting account of Pierce and Bonds' trip, but what sets it apart from other tales of treasure hunting is that you hear the story directly from Pierce and Bond. After setting out to retrace the harrowing trek through Alaska and the Yukon, author David Meissner uses sparse, descriptive narrative to weave together a litany of primary source documents chronicling the duo's experience.

Kim Richardson, great-great-nephew of Stanley Pierce, received a bag full of letters, telegrams, and newspaper articles from a relative. Meissner happened to be good friends with Richardson. Thus, the story is presented through; letters home assuring parents, "Should I not find fortune, this trip will make a man of me, and should I get through this trip I shall be able to undertake anything in the world;" journal entries, "Took boats out of water and put them on top of ice. Piled cargoes ashore. Spent day reading and chatting;" and even mining agreements. One, signed and witnessed by a young adventurer, goes by the name of Jack London, who was particularly intrigued by Pierce and Bonds' sled dog, Jack, who later became the inspiration for *Call of the Wild*'s Buck.

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## **Becca Kirkman says**

I knew that there was a gold rush in Alaska, but that was about it . What was it like? What did people go through? This book describes what it was really like for two hopeful friends hoping to strike it rich!

I want to call this a mix-media historical non-fiction. It had photos, journal entries, newspaper clippings, and maps. The mix-media broke up the text and I think that students would really like that. It is a true adventure story- I think this would pair up great with Call of the Wild.

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### **Cosette says**

While gold might be scarce nowadays, the theme of the gold rush is far from tapped out. Many people have interest in it even today. Some of the towns along the trails to the Klondike have historical places dedicated to the rush. There are also many books written about the gold rush. The one I focused on was the call of the Klondike. The Call of the Klondike follows the path of two gold hunters and their path to find gold. The book is told through a range of journal entries, letters home, newspaper clippings and third person accounts. The book features two main characters, Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond. They were friends and business partners before the rush and, upon hearing about the prospect of gold in Alaska, decided to try their luck together. They asked their fathers to help fund their travels because buying the needed supplies. Pearce became a correspondent for his local newspaper, the Denver Republican, providing first hand experiences about his trip to the Klondike. Bond kept a diary and both wrote letters home about their adventures. Pearce once wrote "Words could not describe it...The scenery was by far the grandest I have ever seen.... Bond and I spied a bear while floating down the river and tried to land but failed. Wild swans, geese, and ducks were everywhere. Indian camps by scores..." (The call of the Klondike page 54).  
(view spoiler)

I thought this book was a little slow to grab my attention but once I got into it, it was easier to read. I still didn't exactly enjoy it but it had many pictures and big headlines that took up lots of space. This book is definitely aimed a people who want to learn about the gold rush and are passionate about history.

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### **Karen says**

Brought back memories of our trips to this area in 1998 and 2014! 2017 Reading Challenge - A book with pictures.

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### **Abby Johnson says**

Looking for an adventure? Pack your bags, bundle up, say goodbye to your loved ones (just in case) and join Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond on their journey to the Klondike region of Alaska in search of riches beyond your imagination.

Using primary sources (letters, journals, and newspaper articles passed down within Stanley Pearce's family), David Meissner illuminates the hardships and risks of this fantastic adventure. In 1897, miners arrived back in Seattle with millions in gold, mined in the Klondike. Thousands of people then rushed to this remote area in hopes of making their fortune. It would NOT be easy. Pearce and Bond spent thousands outfitting themselves for their journey and it took them months to even reach the Klondike. Before planes, before train

tracks reached the area, adventurers had to travel by steamship to Alaska, on foot up the hazardous mountain passes, and by boat down rocky rivers to reach Dawson City.

The primary sources included give the reader a play-by-play of this dangerous adventure. Highly recommended for thrill seekers and history buffs.

Readalikes:

Chasing Lincoln's Killer by James Swanson for its similar action-packed history adventure style.

Call of the Wild by Jack London. The dog Buck was actually based on Pearce and Bond's dog Jack. Jack London met them in the Klondike and they spent some time together there.

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### **Ms. Yingling says**

In 1897, prospectors brought back a fortune in gold, and set off another gold rush. Two men who made the decision to try to make their fortunes were Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond. Obtaining funding from their wealthy parents and making good preparations, the two set off for the gold fields, willing to work, and fairly realistic about their prospects. They do fairly well for themselves, hanging out with Jack London and working a decently productive claim, but they soon realize that they won't begin to recoup the money invested in their scheme, and return home. What makes this book so interesting is that wealth of primary source documents which make up the bulk of it. Knit together beautifully with some narration, this tale is told through letters, telegrams and journal entries of the two men, which had been handed down to Mr. Richardson, a descendent of Stanley Pearce's. The reproduction of these documents, along with period photographs, makes for a riveting account. There is also information about the rest of the lives of these two men, who did their best to succeed, but lacked the luck necessary for being really successful at this venture. I love that the end papers are metallic. This is definitely a must have for most libraries-- highly information AND readable!

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### **Sunday Cummins says**

I'd recommend this book for a nonfiction literature circle in grades 5 (savvy readers) through 8 (striving readers). It would also be worthy of doing a book talk and placing in a prominent space in the classroom library --in hopes that a student will pick up for independent reading. The authors have done a fabulous job of tapping and integrating primary sources "to tell the story of" two men's journey to the farthest reaches of the gold strike in the late 19th century -- territory near the rugged Dawson City in rural Canada.

In the summer of 1897, Stanley Pearce and Marshall Bond, two college friends, were in Seattle when gold diggers returned with a plethora of nuggets. They immediately touched base with family about financing a trip up north. Bond kept a diary and both wrote to their parents. These primary sources along with telegrams and news articles (written by Pearce) were preserved by family members and landed in the hands of Kim Richardson, a co-author.

The text is almost equal parts narrative/informational text written by the authors and primary sources--woven together in a seamless narrative along with maps, photographs, and other 19th century sources of print. The appeal of the narrative is in the harrowing moments of Bond and Pearce's party's trek across the White Pass Trail (where there was not a clear path and it was already snowing) and the ride down the treacherous Whitehorse rapids--all with a year's worth of provisions! Then there's the continuous exposure to severe weather and the many times futile attempts to discover any gold -- all with a ton of work and an unexpected ending.

This book would be a great way to immerse students in reading primary sources -- sources that are a little more accessible than say the Declaration of Independence -- without a ton of support from you, the teacher. This is an important part of the Common Core ELA/History-Social Studies standards like -  
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.9

Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

In addition, it's just a rigorous text to challenge students to read, and as part of the experience, students can engage in the type of thinking the CCSS ELA Reading Informational Text standards require. Questions I might ask students to contemplate as they read and write responses or as they read and write in preparation for literature circles discussions:

What is the role of the primary sources in telling this narrative? Why is this important to consider?

How does photograph [insert page #] support your understanding of the text? Include specific details in the photograph and the text as part of your response.

What is a central idea in this text? What is evidence from the secondary (text written by the authors) and primary sources that support this idea?

Would you take this trip? Why or why not? Use textual evidence to support your reasons.

These questions could conceivably be asked at multiple points in the text.

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## **Melissa says**

I only like to read historical books if they're well written and really captivating - and I could not put this one down! The use of actual letters, diary entries, newspaper clippings, and especially the photographs from the time worked well to keep me interested in the true story of two stamperers of the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897. As we've had a cold snap here at home (highs only in the 20s which is cold for Maryland!) reading this book made me appreciate those temperatures - I was not sleeping in a drafty cabin and working outdoors all day where the sun doesn't rise and the temperatures hover around 40 below! It got especially interesting when our two heroes met Jack London - and the fact that one of the heroes' dogs was the inspiration for Buck in "Call of the Wild" (a favorite of mine!) I liked too, that the book wrapped up at the end with a brief summary of how the men spent the rest of their lives.

My only complaint is about the photographs included - in the captions they would only point out the two men, but as other people were discussed in the story and I'm sure they're also in the pictures (and even if not)



it would have been nice to have labelled all of the known occupants. (Although I do know that oftentimes old family photos aren't labelled and no one knows anymore who's in there!).

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## Jess says

Interesting, concise, readable: this is great high school (and junior high) NF. You've graduated? Yes, you'll like it, too.

The book is full of letters and log-book entries of gold rush partners Marshall Bond and Stanley Pearce. Indeed, it owes much to the strength of their writing. Well-written and detailed without being boring, I'm pleased by how much of their writing is included. Meissner did a fine job mixing primary sources with his writing. His book is well organized. Plus, he traveled to Dawson, made his way to Stagway and hiked Chilkoot. I like that.

Kudos to Richardson's family for saving the letters and journals and to Kim to seeing their worth and sharing.

Well chosen photos. All in all, a perfect thing to read on this snowy day!

Easily paired with Jack London, who shows up! WHAT. I love connections like this. London based Buck on Pearce and Marshall Bond's dog Jack. London confirmed in to Bond in a letter. He send a copy of The Call of the Wild to Louis Bond with the handwritten inscription "Here is the book that never would have [been] written if you had not gone to Klondike in 1897 and taken Buck [Jack] along with you. In fond memory of Sour Dough days, Jack London" (143)

"We were off again before daylight it being still colder, the thermometer reading in town 60 below that morning. The dogs were anxious to go fast and we tore up the Klondike. It was most exhilarating. The sun does not show itself now, but when we reached the creek we were bound for we could see the "rockies" in this distance tinted with the most beautiful colors. Everything was solitude,--not an animal, not a sound and Bond and I both paused from hard work we had in hand to comment on the grandeur of it all and wonder what unknown thing made this Godforsaken barren country so fascinating to us. Perhaps it was the feeling akin to that which explorers in unknown countries have; but the fact remains with all its hardships there is a certain indescribable ghastly fascination about it all. We were obliged to break away from our meditations and make our way up the lonely creek." (92)

From a letter by Stanley H. Pearce to his mother. As you can see, excellent source material.

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