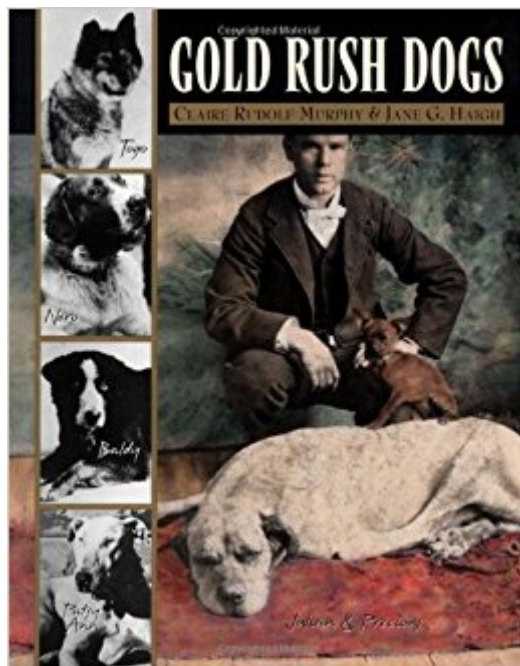


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Gold Rush Dogs



Synopsis

Dog lovers and history buffs will delight in this collection celebrating the beloved canines that offered companionship, protection, and hard work to their masters in the Far North.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1140L (What's this?)

Paperback: 120 pages

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 7 Up-This book offers a different perspective on the Alaska-Yukon gold-rush era by focusing on the dogs that played such a huge role in it. Each chapter presents the story of a particular dog. Readers may be familiar with some of them, such as Balto, a Norwegian reindeer dog that is famous for helping deliver diphtheria serum to Nome in 1925. However, there are many lesser-known and equally fascinating stories told here, such as that of Nero, a Saint Bernard that was the beloved pet and protector of the richest woman in the Klondike, and Patsy Ann, a bull terrier that made it her business to greet every boat that docked at Juneau. The chapters also feature insets with other information such as discussions of breed histories and brief biographies of some of the people who worked with the animals. Lots of fine-quality, black-and-white archival photos add greatly to the book's appeal. Action-filled stories; fascinating characters, both human and canine; and great photos should make this companion to the authors' *Gold Rush Women* (Alaska Northwest, 1997) and *Children of the Gold Rush* (Roberts Rinehart, 2001) a winner with both animal

lovers and history buffs. Teachers might also find this useful as a way to add some fun to their American history units. Arwen Marshall, formerly at New York Public Library Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Gr. 6-12. This canine collective biography highlights the accomplishments of nine dogs from the Yukon that worked as "packhorse, transit system, security guard, and pal rolled into one." Several have legendary reputations: John Muir's Stickeen explored glaciers with his master; Balto achieved motion picture fame; and Nero and Julian were said to be the inspiration for Buck in Jack London's *Call of the Wild*. Accompanying the main text are numerous sidebars on related topics, ranging from information on the Great Serum Run that took place in 1925 and the Canadian Mounties to background on dog breeds and the Iditarod. In fact, the sidebars sometimes threaten to overwhelm the primary accounts of canine loyalty and heroism. Still, there's a wealth of information here, along with some great black-and-white historical photos, if readers' eyes don't glaze over as they try to take it all in. Source notes, a bibliography, and an excellent index are appended. Randy Meyer Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

It's time people recognize the "true heroes" of the lifesaving Diphtheria Run to Nome which began on January 27, 1925 in Nenana, Alaska. The true heroes were not Balto and Gunnar Kaasen. The true heroes were members of twenty dog teams. Wild Bill Shannon left Nenana with 300,000 units of serum to be relayed a distance of 674 miles by twenty dog teams, before finally reaching Nome. On January 28, 1925, Leonhard Seppala and his dog team led by Togo, left Nome to collect the serum 254 miles away at Nulato for the final run into Nome. Togo was a small gray dog eager to be a sled dog. It was by chance that Leonhard Seppala discovered the leadership Togo displayed when first harnessed in the wheel position. Because of Togo's determination, he was moved in stages to the front of the line, soon becoming a once in a lifetime leader. Seppala entered and won every major race in Alaska, many of them several times, with Togo in lead position. Late in the serum run, Seppala was unaware that Nome had made the decision to send three additional dog teams to relieve Seppala. The teams were to space themselves every 20 miles outside of Nome. Rohn, Olson, and Kaasen...whose team was led by Balto...drove the three additional teams. Kaasen hit a blizzard at Solomon and was instructed not to go forward. Kaasen alleged there had been little wind that night in Solomon, visibility was good, and the Safety Roadhouse displayed the proper signal light acknowledging the waiting dog team. Kaasen continued on, bypassing Safety where the serum was to be turned over to Rohn, who in turn was to take the serum into Nome. Kaasen

reached Nome on February 2, 1925 with the serum. Kaasen had been accused of bypassing Safety in order to claim the honor of bringing the serum into Nome. The men of the "Great Race of Mercy" were awarded \$25.00 each from the Territory of Alaska along with citations of bravery and inscribed medals. Kaasen received an additional \$1,000.00 along with an offer to star with Balto in a Hollywood film. Kaasen traveled Outside to the lower 48 states giving lectures about the serum run. Balto not only received recognition as the "wonder dog" but was recognized for Togo's racing achievements as well. The city of New York erected a bronze statue of Balto in Central Park. The other nineteen dog teams and their vital part in the serum run were soon forgotten. Kaasen and Balto had carried the serum 106 miles. Seppala and Togo covered 260 miles in 40-degree below temperature through a raging storm, a distance longer than any team on the trail. Togo received permanent injuries during the serum run and would never race again. After the serum run, Seppala continued touring on the Outside. He later moved to Seattle where he died in 1967 at age 90...never forgiving the events that followed the serum run. Togo's remains are displayed at the Iditarod Headquarters in Wasilla, Alaska. The Leonhard Seppala Humanitarian Award is presented each year to the Alaska Iditarod musher displaying the highest care and concern for his or her team. Balto's bronze statue still stands in Central Park. Balto's remains are displayed at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Togo and Leonhard Seppala were the heroes of the serum run...along with the other eighteen dog teams that were soon forgotten amongst all the negative controversy. Please note: It is not my intent to take away the achievements of Balto; nor was it Balto's intent to dishonor the nineteen great dog teams. The one that finishes the race first is not always the winner. In this case it was the nineteen teams that brought Balto to the finish in Nome along with his fame and glory.

We purchased this book after our trip to Alaska & found it to be very interesting. We are dog lovers so we truly enjoyed this book. It was a great supplement to our trip to the Last Frontier.

Enjoyed this quick reading book. Wanted more on each chapter, but there isn't a lot out there if you want to read adult material on the dogs of the Klondike.

The authors of this book on several famous Alaskan gold-rush era dogs (and dogs who came after the gold rush, which they don't account for in the title of their book) have done only a minimal amount of research on the subjects they cover, and this book is full of glaring errors, and not worth the purchase price whatsoever. While I could go over it in detail, I only read the book while sitting in

the Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage, Alaska while awaiting a connecting flight, and repeatedly shook my head in disbelief at the shoddy research effort behind it. While it has some good information and decent photographs, it also contains errors such as one that I specifically recall, and which is even noted in the contents. Under the chapter covering Balto, it refers to him as a "lapphund". Common and accepted historical research and standards maintain that Balto was a Siberian husky. There has never been any reliable evidence to suggest otherwise. It is just one of the several outlandish claims made about him by those who do not approach history professionally and with a dedication to research and documentation (even the American Kennel Club, which refers to him as an Alaskan Malamute!). The authors of this book base their conclusions on unsubstantiated claims of Balto having been a Finnish Lapphund. These claims are based solely upon similar coloration and basic body type. But if you look at the standard for the Finnish Lapphund, while they can have coloration similar to what Balto had in life (mostly black with white markings), you also find that the standard refers to a physical size of "46 to 52 centimetres (18 to 20 in) at the withers for a male" (as noted on the Wikipedia page for the Finnish Lapphund). Anyone looking at confirmed pictures and descriptions of Balto can make the very obvious conclusion that he was much larger and fuller of body than that, with a less prodigious coat. Even someone not practiced in canine conformation. And, if one knows the Siberian Husky breed (even as it has changed physically over the last century, since Balto's time), one will note that there are mostly-black Siberians out there. They do exist, and are not terribly rare. Simply, this comes down to shoddy research by authors who should know better, and should have taken greater care before pounding out a half-baked effort. Don't waste your money.

I picked this up while on vacation and I paid full price for it and no regrets! Tho very short and sweet, I found it to be an enjoyable must read. Readers will learn about Alaskan dogs that have gone down in history, including, but not limited to Stickeen, Julian, Nero, Yukon, Faust, Baldy, Togo, Balto, my personal favorite, Patsy Ann. The book tells their stories. Some were brave and saved lives. Some were mining dogs or hauling or sled dogs. Some were just remarkable friends. The book even talks about a few dogs in early law enforcement, namely the Canadian Mounty dogs. Regardless of the canine's role, this book acknowledges their necessity and their importance in history. After reading about Patsy Ann, I immediately had to find her statue in Juneau and take a picture. Touching book with great dog pictures and entertaining stories. A must for dog lovers whether you make it to Alaska for your next vacation or not.

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