

# The Frontier Romance: Environment, Culture, and Alaska Identity

Judith Kleinfeld

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Anyone curious about what drew people like Christopher McCandless (the subject of Into the Wild) and John Muir to Alaska will find nuanced answers in Frontier Romance, Judith Kleinfeld's thoughtful study of the iconic American love of the frontier and its cultural influence. Kleinfeld considers the subject through three catagories: rebellion, redemption, and rebirth; escape and healing; and utopian community. Within these categories she explores the power of narrative to shape lives through concrete, compelling examples—both heart-warming and horrifying. Ultimately, Kleinfeld argues that the frontier narrative enables Americans—born or immigrant—to live deliberately, to gather courage, and to take risks, face danger, and seize freedom rather than fear it.



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