

Book About North

FAIRBANKS — William R. Hunt, associate professor of history on the University of Alaska's Fairbanks campus, has completed another book on the North, this one on the Bering Sea frontier and the peoples who have inhabited it from 1697 to the present. Charles Scribner's Sons will publish it in the fall.

The new book, "Arctic Passage," will be the second major work by Hunt. His comprehensive book on the various northern gold rushes, "North of 53," was published last year by the MacMillan Publishing Co.

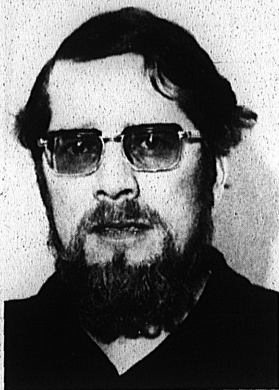
The history opens with an account of the conquest of the aboriginal people of Kamchatka by the Russians and of Russian explorations eastward to Alaska. Hunt details the impact of the Russian advance on the Aleuts and the coming of Yankee whalers to the Bering Sea and the destruction of their vessels after the close of the American Civil War by a Confederate raider.

Then here accounts of the abortive attempt to link Europe and America by telegraph by way of Bering Strait; the United States' taking possession of the Bering Sea region of Alaska; the discovery of gold there and the growth of a lively trade in liquor, firearms, fur and whalebone between Siberia and Nome; the international controversy over pelagic sealing; Americans in Siberia and the eventual sealing off of that region by Soviet Russia; and of World War II in the Aleutians and the present-day Bering Sea frontier.

"... The Bering Sea frontier has not been an historical backwater, though its human drama has been little chronicled," writes Hunt in the book's preface. "Man's knowledge of the world's less traveled regions is subject to the degree of literary exposure these regions have had. Historians have not been particularly attentive to northern realms, but their silence is hardly a measure of historic vitality..."

"Arctic Passage" includes a chronology of significant events from the formation of Bering Strait Land Bridge to the meeting of Siberian and Alaskan Eskimos on Bering Strait sea ice in 1973.

There are nearly 30 historic photos — of such things as the gold-rich miner-crowded beach at



WILLIAM R. HUNT

Nome in 1900, Siberian fur being landed at Nome in 1909, American soldiers at Kiska following that Aleutian island's capture from the Japanese in World War II, a trading post in Siberia with American flag flying, and whalers in arctic shore ice.

Hunt, head of the Department of History at Fairbanks, has been with the university since 1967. He worked on "Arctic Passage" for five years. It grew out of his preparation for a course he teaches in North Pacific history.