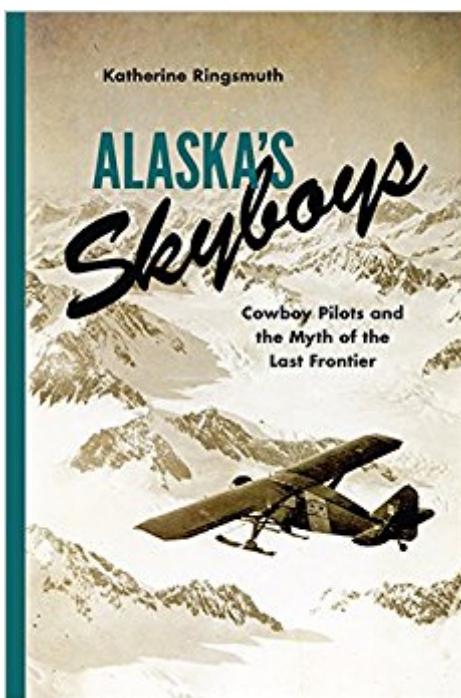


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# Alaska's Skyboys: Cowboy Pilots And The Myth Of The Last Frontier



## Synopsis

This fascinating account of the development of aviation in Alaska examines the daring missions of pilots who initially opened up the territory for military positioning and later for trade and tourism. Early Alaskan military and bush pilots navigated some of the highest and most rugged terrain on earth, taking off and landing on glaciers, mudflats, and active volcanoes. Although they were consistently portrayed by industry leaders and lawmakers alike as cowboys—*and their planes compared to settlers' covered wagons*—*the reality was that aviation catapulted Alaska onto a modern, global stage; the federal government subsidized aviation's growth in the territory as part of the Cold War defense against the Soviet Union.* Through personal stories, industry publications, and news accounts, historian Katherine Johnson Ringsmuth uncovers the ways that Alaska's aviation growth was downplayed in order to perpetuate the myth of the cowboy spirit and the desire to tame what many considered to be the last frontier.

## Book Information

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Ringsmuth's thoroughly engaging look at the development of this phenomenon is a fascinating peek at how uniquely American the Alaska bush pilot truly is.--Colleen Mondor"Alaska Dispatch News" (01/01/2016)Ringsmuth's thoroughly engaging look at the development of this phenomenon is a fascinating peek at how uniquely American the Alaska bush pilot truly is.--Colleen Mondor"Alaska Dispatch News" (01/01/2016)Ringsmuth's book is as thrilling and brilliant as the skyboys she writes about. . . Skyboys lays scholarly groundwork to further explore aviation as an interpretive framework necessary for understanding Alaska's multi-dimensional frontier history.--Russ VanderLugt"Alaska

"This is an important book that fills a vacuum in Alaska historiography, telling how early bush pilots transitioned from lone adventurers through the first consolidated air services to today's modern airlines. Initially chafing under FAA scrutiny, they soon recognized the need for performance standards and the safety regulations that generated consumer confidence, a critical chapter in Alaska's aviation history." Stephen Haycox, author of *Alaska: An American Colony*"This will be a 'must read' book for readers interested in the evolution of flight in Alaska. Ringsmuth presented this history magnificently and thoroughly documented it." Dan Hagedorn, curator, The Museum of Flight"The story of manned flight in the twentieth century is about rocketing into the future and going ever higher and faster. So why do Alaskans embrace a nostalgic past filled with daring bush pilots who stick their heads out the window to read the weather and terrain? Katherine Johnson Ringsmuth answers this important question in her fascinating and important book." Ross Coen, author of *Fu-go: The Curious History of Japan's Balloon Bomb Attack on America*

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