Welcome to a 7th (!!) whirl at understanding behaviors and traits that earn the designation “scoundrel” in certain circles of analysts. After the previous six semesters of considering scoundrel-hood with a number of distinguished colleagues, I am still intrigued by the statistical question: are there more scoundrels per capita (humans) in the North than elsewhere, or more scoundrels per unit time in history here?

This should be the last time I lead discussions asking these questions for a group of UAF-OLLI members. Certainly other discussants can carry on at least as well as I could. It’s time for me to retire to writing up some of the intriguing results of what we have learned—and just as importantly, unlearned—from history about northern scoundrels.

To demonstrate that the subject can certainly go on without me, Joan Skilbred and Bill Stringer have graciously agreed to help with this spring’s frolic, each by talking about a scoundrel candidate. Joan will discuss the Blue Parka Man, and Bill will introduce us to Immanuel Velikovsky.
The list here denotes candidate-scoundrels about whom we have talked in previous semesters—46 in all—with the names in red here and the next slide indicating people about whom one or more of us will talk. I intend to revise earlier understanding about Robert FitzRoy, Elisha Kent Kane, Charles Francis Hall and Frederick Schwatka on this page…
29. General Umberto Nobile, 20th Century, airship Italia disaster
30. Dr. Frederick Cook, 20th Century, claimant, North Pole and Mt Denali (Cook-Peary controversy)
31. E.T. Barnette (& accomplices), 20th Century trader, banker, founder of Fairbanks, fugitive
32. Judge James Wickersham, 20th Century, judicial and congressional careerist in Alaska
33. Senator Ernest Gruening, 20th Century, MD, journalist, dissenter, whom FDR "exiled" to Alaska
34. Mad Trapper of Rat River, 20th Century, Yukon Territory, mystery-man
35. Alfred Wegener, 20th Century, proponent of Continental Drift (proto-Plate Tectonic) Theory
36. J Harlen (Harley) Bretz, 20th Century, discoverer of catastrophic floods, Columbia River watershed
37. Nellie "Black Bear" Bates, Wm. Schermeyer, 1923 mail robbery, Iditarod-McGrath
38. Prof. Otto Ulevich Schmidt, 20th Century, USSR visionary on sea ice dynamics
39. General Douglas MacArthur, 20th Century, critic of Pacific WWII military strategy
40. Vilhjalmur Stefansson, 20th Century, Canadian and U.S. Adventurer and Arctic visionary
41. Dr. Edward Teller, 20th Century, nuclear power and arms tech promoter, Chariot and SDI plotter
42. Prof. (?) Louis Rey, 20th Century, wealthy French-Swiss scientific huckster (Comité Arctique)
43. Stanley Haas, 20th Century, Project Manager, Humble Oil & Refining's Manhattan Voyages
44. *Leonard LeSchuck, 20th Century, Coldfoot CIA & ONR spy—the ultimate immaculate scoundrel?
45. **"Dr." Nick Begich, 21st Century, Conspiracy Theorist and the HAARP field, Gulkana AK
46. Blue Parka Man (Joan Skilbred)
47. Velikovsky (Bill Stringer)
48. Charles Wilkes (Dave Norton, time permitting)

* alive at the end of 2016 CE

…and on this page, Joan and Bill will introduce us to their new candidates (i.e., NOT previously addressed in this course) for the pantheon of scoundrels. No promises, but I may have a chance to do the same for a third newcomer, the all-but-forgotten Charles Wilkes.
For this first week’s discussion, it is fitting to introduce three giant figures in the history of northern affairs. It is unthinkable to have lived for any length of time in the North without having heard the names Franklin, Beaufort and Barrow, at least a few times, and at least in association with a place, a point, or a community designated by one of these names.

Sir John Barrow served as Second, or permanent, Secretary to the British Admiralty from 1808 to his retirement in 1847.

Sir John Franklin was Barrow’s greatest hope, success and ultimately also his greatest failure as an expedition leader in what I have called Britain’s “Hydrographic Mandate” to explore the world, and make the honest results of that exploration available to all nations.

Sir Francis Beaufort was a Napoleonic War hero who advocated quantitative and reliable measurements of environmental conditions by seagoing observers.

Note that not one of these three historic figures is among the 49 candidate-scoundrels. A case could be made that UAF-OLLI consider candidacy for each of them.
Franklin’s 3rd Expedition de-confused

1. Expedition to Coppermine River, 1819-1822.
2. McKenzie Expeditions 1823, when Franklin ventured west to Return Reef (Oliktok Pt)
3. “Lost” or Northwest Passage Expedition, 1845-47+

Both the highwater mark and the concluding tragedy to the British Admiralty’s 19th century hopes to find a NW Passage. Probably the second strongest dis-inducement (next to the Crimean War) for Britain to purchase the Territory of Alaska from Russia.
The newsworthy events of the 19th century exerted and still exert enormous influence over the North, what we think about this part of the world, and how the rest of the world thinks about this part. Out of lifelong fascination, I have gone back over some 19th century events, and discovered new angles on matters and situations that I thought I understood pretty well. Wow!

First, the story (history) of any individual’s life at a time (a biography or autobiography) can seduce a listener or reader into believing that such an account provides a balanced view of history. But the better, more challenging approach, is to consider several life stories of people whose trajectories overlap, intertwine, and influence one another to various extents.

Just as you learn more about the 20th century by studying Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt together, I submit that you can get a fuller picture of the 19th century by considering several of its key performers, and how they interacted with one another. It is astonishing to explore the degree to which these several 19th century performers tended to know one another, interact, and shape one another’s ideas.

Some people taking the course on History of Ocean Exploration, will recognize this.
Second, I’ve been reminded that history can be understood by picking a key moment or a key stretch of time, then moving forward or backward in time, to illustrate threads of ideas and circumstances.

A not-quite random choice of half a decade, 1850-1855, is shown here for discussion and to give ourselves a “mooring or anchor” from which to move in either direction.
Sir John Franklin’s failure to return after setting off to find the North West Passage in 1845 occasioned an extensive search officially lasting 11 years, involving some 44 vessels from several nations, and a seagoing commitment of well over 600 officers and crewmen between 1848 and 1859. (As we shall see, even after the hope of rescuing survivors waned, efforts to solve the mystery of Franklin’s fate lasted well beyond those 11 years, even into the 21st century.)

Henry Grinnell was the foremost source of deep-pocket philanthropy in his day, having made his money from the whaling industry. That industry increasingly became an Arctic venture, and Grinnell was a soft touch for supporting efforts to explore and understand Arctic regions. In the mid-19th century, government-sponsored exploration, including search and rescue expeditions, were not as customary as they are today. Grinnell found himself underwriting adventures in which the actors wore Army or Navy uniforms, too.

U.S. Army-trained surgeon Elisha Kent Kane survived adolescent rheumatic fever and heart damage, went on to become the most admired military and Arctic-explorer hero in the U.S. before his heart gave out on him at age 37. He wrote two best-sellers about his Grinnell-supported Arctic search expeditions for Franklin between 1850 and 1855.
A little refresher on eastern Arctic geography. Bear in mind that the British started bashing their heads against the daunting geographic complexities of the Canadian Archipelago as early as the 16th century, when Martin Frobisher convinced Queen Elizabeth I that he had discovered a shortcut to the Far East (1576). Here, from Frobisher’s Bay, Fury and Hecla Strait, King William Island, Bellot Strait, and Baffin Bay-Lancaster Sound, you draw 5 geographical features that variously tantalized explorers from Frobisher and Hudson to Franklin, to John Bockstoce and to the voyages of the icebreaking supertanker SS. *Manhattan* in 1969 and 1970. That quick look at geography covers almost 4 centuries worth of geographic challenge!

Note that the distance between Frobisher Bay and King William Island is about 2,000 km (1200 miles) a daunting distance to travel by boat or by dogsled.
Frobisher’s second voyage (1576) to what we now know as Baffin Island resulted in armed conflict with Inuit natives of Frobisher’s Bay, several deaths, the loss of 5 British seamen, and the kidnap of two Inuit who were taken back to England, as captives and exhibited there, much as exotic animals would be.