

Jack London: Inspired Prospector

by Sarah Collinge

One of the most well-known American authors, Jack London published over 51 books in only 18 years, between 1898 and 1916. His most notable books, including *The Call of the Wild*, were adventure stories inspired by his experience as a prospector during the Klondike Gold Rush.

Jack left San Francisco for the Klondike when he was 21 years old. He traveled over the Chilkoot Pass with almost 2,000 pounds in equipment. Conditions were rough, but Jack's optimistic attitude kept him going. He staked a claim on Henderson Creek but did not discover much gold.

In May of 1898, Jack came down with scurvy—caused by a deficiency of vitamin C. He could no longer work his claim and eventually had to seek medical help. He sailed home in June. Jack had not struck it rich in gold, but he found his experiences in the Yukon to be of greatest value.

After returning home, Jack began writing 1,000 words a day and became the best-selling and most popular American author of his time.

Resources:

California State Parks Historians. (n.d.). *Jack London: His life and books*. Retrieved from <http://www.parks.sonoma.net/JLStory.html> on December 29, 2012.

Hartzell, D. (2008). *A short Jack London biography*. Retrieved from <http://www.jacklondon.net/shortbio.html> on December 29, 2012.

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