The history of Alaska dates back to the Upper Paleolithic period (around 14,000 BC), when foraging groups crossed the Bering land bridge into what is now western Alaska. At the time of European contact by the Russian explorers, the area was populated by Alaska Native groups. The name “Alaska” derives from the Aleut word Alaxsxaq (also spelled Alyeska), meaning “mainland” (literally, “the object toward which the action of the sea is directed”). Alaska’s history is unified by one simple but grand theme: people’s efforts to wrest a living from the region’s vast natural riches despite its extreme conditions. Nature endowed the Great Land with wealth, scenery, and a scope surpassed by few regions of the earth. Alaska is a virtual subcontinent: Twice the size of Texas, it contains 16 percent of the United States’ land area. But its population remains small. At the time of the U.S. purchase in 1867, Alaska had about 30,000 people, mo Alaska’s rich and cultural history comes to life in this vivid, take-along account. Travel to the Far North and discover the origins of Russian America and the effects of the fur trade, Native lifestyles before and after European contact, John Muir’s visit to Glacier Bay, the Klondike gold rush, exploits of Alaska Bush pilots, big game hunting in the North Country and famous fisheries, and more. Five new chapters cast light on more modern subjects, such as the strengthening stance of Alaska Natives in politics, the impact of a changing climate on the fish and wildlife, the future of an Alaskan Native people, whose traditional territory spans Norton Sound on the Bering Sea to the Canada-United States border. Tlingit, an indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America. Haida people, an indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America. The island was the site of the only World War II land battle fought on an incorporated territory of the United States (the Battle of Attu), and its battlefield area is a U.S. National Historic Landmark. state nickname. Land of the Midnight Sun, The Last Frontier, Seward’s Folly. Seward’s Folly. The Alaska Purchase was the United States’ acquisition of Alaska from the Russian Empire on March 30, 1867, by a treaty ratified by the United States Senate, and signed by president Andrew Johnson. Alaska books also offer a way to hear about the extreme peril that many Alaskans have found themselves in, which often celebrates human triumph over great adversity. Coming into the Country is an unforgettable account of Alaska and Alaskans. It is a rich tapestry of vivid characters, observed landscapes, and descriptive narrative, in three principal segments that deal, respectively, with a total wilderness, with urban Alaska, and with life in the remoteness of the bush. Where the Sea Breaks Its Back. This is one of the Alaska books that tells the harrowing adventures and tragedies of growing up in interior Alaska. Two in the Far North.