



Alaska

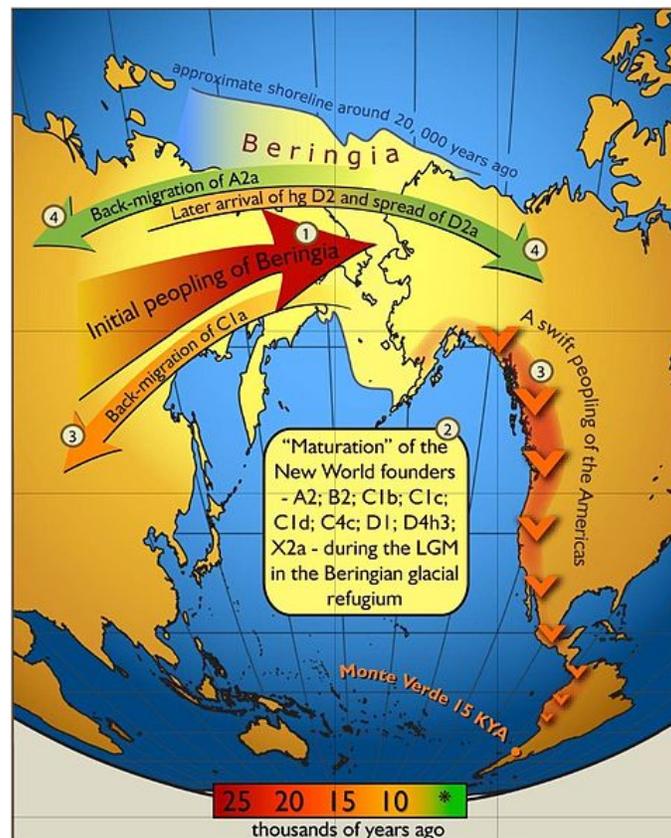
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This essay focuses on the settlement, cultural, and economic history of Alaska. Alaska is large in land area (375 million acres) but small in population (732,000 people, including 110,000 Alaskan Natives). I discuss how successive settlers – Athabascan and Tlingit Indians, Yuit and Inupiat Eskimos, Aleuts, Russians, and Americans – exploited Alaska’s natural resources and how the state has found an uneasy balance between development and conservation. I wrote these lectures for Stanford family trips in Alaska in 2008 and 2011.

I first discuss how Alaska was settled, how Native Alaskans have adapted, how the Russian American Company operated, and why Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867. I next examine the gold, copper, and salmon booms that triggered American settlement in Alaska and why the territory prospered during and after World War II. I then look at land-use trade-offs in Alaska after statehood in 1959 – the state’s goals for economic development and oil-and-gas production, the settlement of Alaskan Native land claims, and the status of conservation of Alaskan lands. I append a time line, a bibliography, and a description of the sites that I visited in Alaska and Siberia.

Alaskan Natives – Eskimos, Aleuts, and Indians

The Inupiat and Yuit Eskimos. The first humans entered Alaska about 13,000 BCE. Those migrants were the ancestors of the Athabaskan Indians of Alaska and of all other Amerindian peoples in North and South America. During the last glacial period, the sea level was lowered and exposed the Bering Land Bridge that connected Siberia and Alaska.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_gene_flow_in_and_out_of_Beringia.jpg>

Map of Gene Flow Into and Out of Beringia – 25,000-10,000 Years Ago

At the end of the Wisconsin Ice Age, the sea level rose and formed the Bering Strait between Siberia and Alaska. About 9000 BCE, the Eskaleut people crossed the Bering Strait and settled in Alaska. Both the Eskimos and the Aleuts descended from those early settlers. By the mid-18th century, about 76,000 Native peoples lived in Alaska. About 35,000 of those Alaskan Natives were Indians, who inhabited the eastern interior and the southeastern coast.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Taku.jpg>>

Chief Anotklosh, Tlingit Taku Nation – Wearing a Chilkat Blanket of Cedar Bark and Mountain Goat Wool, Juneau, Alaska, c. 1913

Another 16,000 Natives were Aleuts, who had been a separate ethnic group for several thousand years and lived in the Alaska Peninsula and on the Aleutian Islands.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greany_Attu_Woman.jpg>

Aleut Mother and Child, Attu, Alaska, 1941

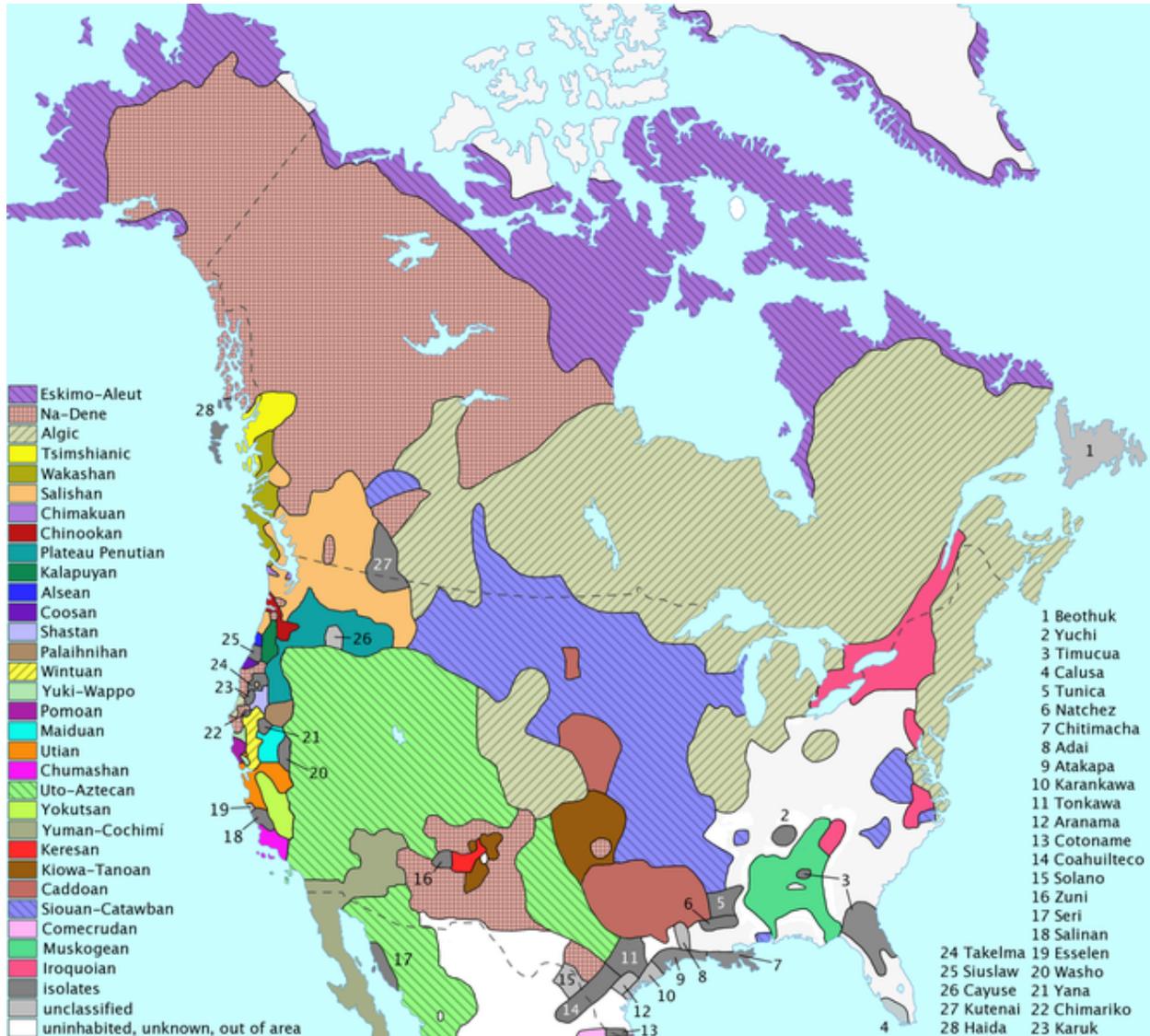
Perhaps 25,000 Alaskan Natives were Eskimos. After separating much earlier from the Aleuts, the Eskimos then split into two separate peoples. About 10,000 Inupiat (Northern) Eskimos inhabited the Arctic coast and the contiguous interior. The 15,000 Yuit (Southern) Eskimos lived on the islands and shores of the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean in western and southern Alaska. Although the two Eskimos groups had

separated ethnically, their subsistence bases were similar. Both Yuits and Inupiat hunted large sea mammals (seals, walruses, and whales), caribou, and birds and fished (salmon, cod, and herring). In all of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland, the highest number of Eskimo peoples probably did not exceed 150,000. Contemporary populations of Eskimo peoples total perhaps 150,000. Those peoples now refer to themselves as Yuit and Inupiat (in Alaska, 17,000), Inuit (in Canada, 65,000), or Greenlandic or Kalaallit (in Greenland, 51,000, or Denmark, 17,000). Those Eskimo populations are stable and growing slowly.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inupiat_Family_from_Noatak,_Alaska,_1929,_Edward_S._Curtis_\(restored\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inupiat_Family_from_Noatak,_Alaska,_1929,_Edward_S._Curtis_(restored).jpg)>

Inupiat Family, Noatak, Alaska, 1929



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
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*Indigenous Languages in North America –
 Eskimo-Aleut (Purple) and Na-Dene (Light Brown)*

The Eskimos' Economy. Eskimos migrated through the seasons of the year to diversify their food supplies. Their hunting methods were based on an intimate understanding of animal behavior. In the summers,

the Eskimos lived in skin tents and hunted caribou, whereas in the winters they lived in snow igloos and hunted seals.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inuit-Igloo_P.png>*

Inupiat Eskimos Building an Igloo Home – Northern Alaska, 1924

The Eskimos hunted caribou in the summers when they migrated north to natural tundra pastures. The techniques encompassed patient stalking and impersonation of the caribou as well as ambushes and construction of pitfalls into which the hunters would drive the animals. In both cases the kill was done with bows and arrows or spears. From caribou, the Eskimos obtained food (eaten immediately or dried for later consumption), weapons, tools, and toys (made from antlers, bones, or

hooves), skins (for tents), and, most important, clothing and bed robes (from the light, durable, and very warm furs).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T%C3%B8j_til_kvinde_fra_Rensdyr-inuit_i_arktisk_Canada_-_Woman%E2%80%99s_clothing_from_Caribou_Inuit_in_Arctic_Canada_\(15307253096\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T%C3%B8j_til_kvinde_fra_Rensdyr-inuit_i_arktisk_Canada_-_Woman%E2%80%99s_clothing_from_Caribou_Inuit_in_Arctic_Canada_(15307253096).jpg)>

Caribou Parka, Traditional Skin Clothing – Nunavut, Arctic Canada

During the summers, Eskimos hunted seals on ice floes by stalking and impersonating them, while in the winters, they hunted seals by waiting patiently on ice for hours or days at the breathing holes of seals. Two species of seals – the 180-pound ringed seal and the 600-pound bearded seal – were the mainstays. From seals, the Eskimos obtained food (for themselves and their sled dogs), skins (for durable boots and

tents), and blubber (rendered into oil used in soapstone lamps to heat, cook, dry clothes, and melt snow for drinking water). Their materials for implements came from the animals they hunted – skins, bones, and antlers. The Eskimos developed ingenious modes of transportation – kayaks (individual boats made of wood and skin), umiaks (freight boats made of wood and skin), and dogsleds (made of wood and ivory and pulled by teams of huskies).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bearded_Seal_Erignathus_barbatus.jpg>

*Bearded Seal (Erignathus barbatus) –
One of Two Seal Species Hunted by the Eskimos*

The Aleuts. On Anangula Island in the Bering Sea near the Alaska Peninsula, archaeologists have discovered a site of Aleut occupation that dates back nearly 9,000 years. Aleuts and Eskimos had formed separate ethnic groups by at least that time. An anthropologist who has specialized in studying the Aleut people estimates that there were likely 16,000 Aleuts in Alaska when the Russians arrived in the 1740s. By then the Aleuts had split into three groups, each speaking its own dialect of the Aleut language.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aleut_map.svg>

Three Regions of Aleut Settlement – Eastern, Central, and Western (Attu) – In the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula

Most of the Aleuts at contact, perhaps 10,000 people, lived in the Eastern zone (the western part of the Alaska Peninsula and the nearby Shumagin Islands). About 4,500 Aleuts inhabited the Central portion of the Aleutian Islands (the Fox and Andreanov Island groups), and the remaining 1,500 Aleuts lived in the Western Aleutians (the Rat and Near Island groups). The Aleutian Islands were rich in maritime resources, but otherwise were unattractive for human habitation and subsistence.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Group_of_steller_sea_lions_near_sea_coast.jpg>

Steller Sea Lions (Eumetopias jubatus)
– Aleuts' Favored Food Source

The Aleuts adapted their culture to become incredibly skilled maritime hunters. Their favored food animals were sea lions, and they

also hunted seals, sea otters, whales, walruses, and sea cows and fished for salmon and herring. Skilled Aleut artisans made kayaks (small, one-person boats for hunting) and umiaks (larger multi-person boats for hauling) from tanned walrus hide and crafted throwing boards from wood (to permit greater distance and thrust for harpoons hurled from kayaks). The Aleuts also developed ingenious techniques for maritime hunting in kayaks – scanning, stalking, killing, and retrieving sea mammals. The Aleut language stresses hunting terms, uses suffixes only (the Aleut and Eskimo are the only languages that do so), and contains terminology for numbers as high as 100,000.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iqyax_by_sergie_sovoroff.jpg>

Model of Aleut Three-Man Kayak (Baidarka)

The Athabaskan, Tlingit, and Haida Indians. The Athabaskan Indians, a group of twelve hunting-gathering tribes, numbered about 10,000 at the time of Russian contact. They lived in interior Alaska along the rivers, especially the Yukon River and its tributaries, and on the coast at Cook Inlet. The Athabaskans fished salmon in the summer, hunted caribou, moose, and bear in the fall, using bows and arrows and pitfalls, and gathered berries in season. Although that subsistence base generated little surplus, the Athabaskans held potlatch ceremonies to venerate the dead by exchanging gifts.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Clarence_Alexander_at_2004_ILA.jpg>

Athabaskan Gwich'in Grand Chief Clarence Alexander, 2004

In contrast, the Tlingit and Haida Indians, who inhabited southeastern coastal Alaska, used their rich resource base to create one of the world's wealthiest and most complex hunting-gathering societies. By the mid-17th century, at least 23,000 Tlingits lived on the islands and along the coast and about 2,000 Haidas inhabited Prince of Wales Island. Those Alaskan Indians constituted about one-fourth of the total population of Northwest Coast Indians at that time. The Tlingits and Haidas fished for salmon, cod, and herring and hunted deer, seals, sea otters, and elk.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Diane_douglas-willard_haida.jpg>

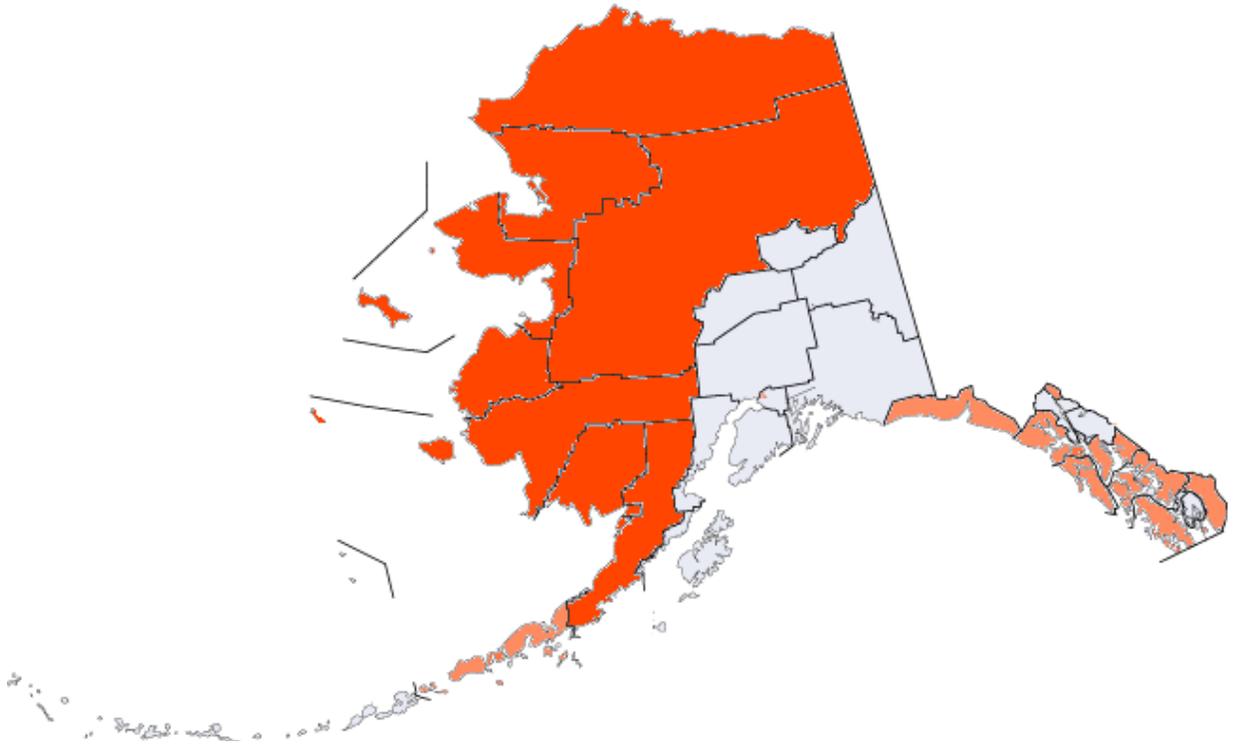
Diane Douglas-Willard, Haida Weaver – Ketchikan, Alaska

These marine and land resources provided extremely large food supplies that the Coast Indians processed in food factories for winter storage. Ample food supported high population densities, large, permanent villages, and a high degree of social stratification (clan-based hierarchies of freepersons and slaves). Like the other Northwest Coast Indians, the Tlingits and Haidas excelled in wood carpentry, producing impressive canoes, totem poles, gable-roofed houses, and kitchen implements. They evolved a distinctive art style, focusing on monumental homes and totem poles, and engaged in extravagant religious and social potlatch ceremonies.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tlingit_K%27alyaan_Totem_Pole_August_2005.jpg
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Tlingit K'alyaan Totem Pole, Southeastern Alaska, 2005



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Native_american_majority_and_plurality_in_Alaska_boroughs_and_census_areas.png>

*Dominance of Native Language-speakers in Contemporary Alaska –
Majority (Red) and Plurality (Orange)*

Russian Alaska (1728-1867)

Russia's Bering Expeditions (1728-1742). Vitus Bering was a Danish mariner in Russian service. In 1724, Tsar Peter the Great planned an expedition to chart the coastline of northeastern Siberia, discern whether Siberia was connected to North America, and lay claim to additional territory for the Russian Empire. He selected Bering to lead it.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%D0%92%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%83%D1%81%D0%98%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%91%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B3.jpg>>

Vitus Bering (1681-1741) – Discovered Alaska for Russia in 1741

The first Bering expedition took three years (1725-1728) to cross Siberia. In June 1728, Bering launched the *St. Gabriel* at Okhotsk, sailed around the Kamchatka Peninsula, and headed north to explore the North Pacific and Bering Sea coasts of Siberia. On that journey, Bering discovered and named the Bering Strait, proving that Siberia and Alaska were not contiguous, and the Diomedede and St. Lawrence Islands in the Bering Sea.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bering_Sea_sunset_-_NOAA.jpg>

Sunset on the Bering Sea, Near the Bering Strait

The ever-curious Tsar Peter had also laid plans for an extensive Great Northern Expedition that would explore and map Siberia's rivers and its Arctic coastline. Bering was given the additional task of exploring the northern coast of North America. On his second expedition, Bering crossed Siberia, again in three years (1738-1741). Bering launched two ships in Okhotsk – the *St. Peter*, which he captained, and the *St. Paul*, captained by Alexei Chirikov. In July 1741, Chirikov sighted land, at the tip of the Alexander Archipelago in southeast Alaska. Later that month, Bering's crew made the first landing in Alaska on Kayak Island, near Prince William Sound. Chirikov's ship returned safely to Kamchatka in October. But Bering and the *St. Peter* wintered on Bering Island (in the Commander Islands near Kamchatka), where Bering died of scurvy. Georg Steller, a German biologist, aboard the *St. Peter*, first described numerous animals and birds, including Steller's Sea Cow, Sea Lion, Jay, Eider, Sea Eagle, and White Raven.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Adult_Steller%27s_sea_eagle_fishing.jpg>

Steller's Sea Eagle (Haliaeetus pelagicus) – One of the Many Species Named After Georg Steller, Biologist on Bering's Second Expedition

Private Enterprise in Russian America (1743-1799). The Russian Government did not attempt immediately to colonize Russian America (Alaska). In the two decades following Bering's second expedition, private Russian fur traders (*promyshlenniki*) made 33 voyages to Alaska, seeking sea otters. Bering's crew had introduced sea otter pelts into the Russian fur trade. Those pelts were glossy, beautiful, durable, large, and thus worth far more than other furs, sometimes 40 times more than sable pelts. But hunting sea otters required special

skills. The *promyshlenniki* thus shamelessly exploited the Aleut men who were expert maritime hunters. They introduced the *yasak* (tribute) system from Siberia and took Aleut women and children hostage to force the Aleut men to deliver tribute quotas in sea otter pelts.

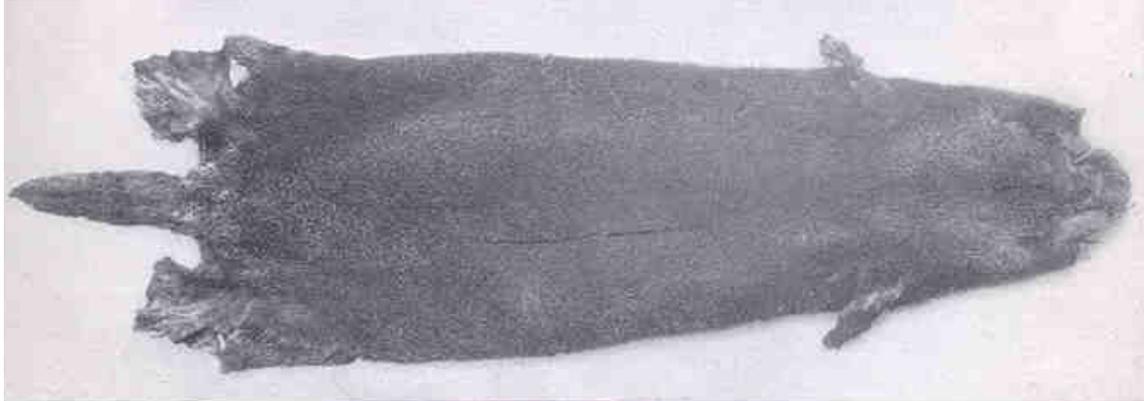


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sea_otter_cropped.jpg>

Sea Otter (Enhydra lutris) – Russians Exploited Its Valuable Pelts

The market for sea otter pelts was mostly in China. The Qing Dynasty Government permitted trade with Russia only through Kiakhta, a Siberian town south of Lake Baikal. The difficult marketing paid off handsomely because Russian fur traders received Chinese tea, porcelain,

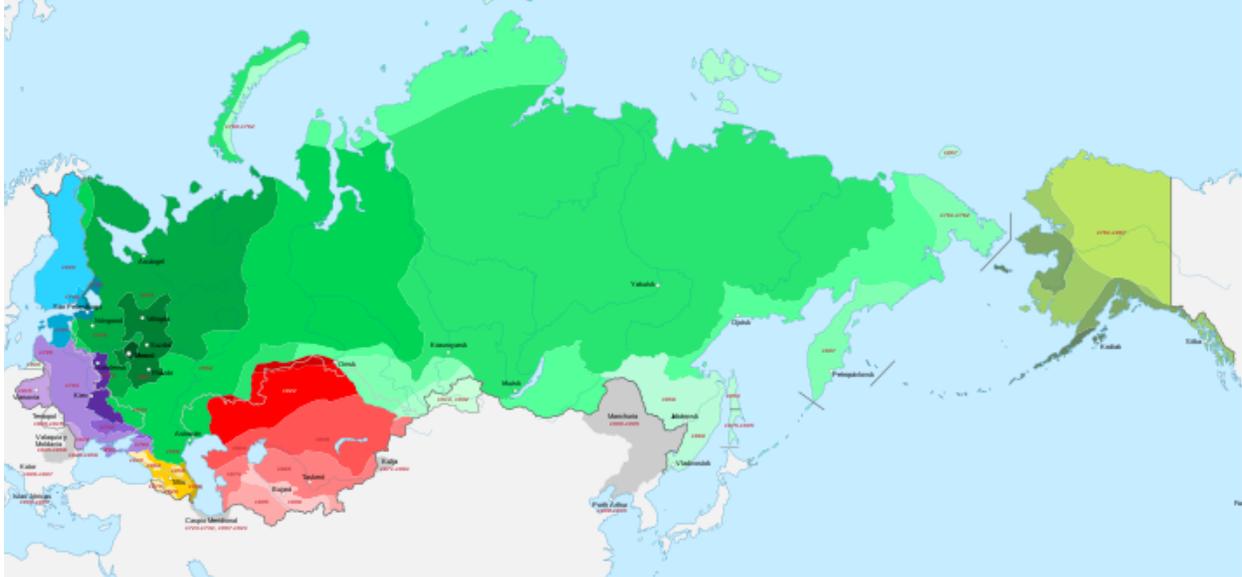
and textiles to sell in Russia. The Russian Government limited its role to collecting shipping records in Okhotsk and Petropavlovsk.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FMIB_33982_Sea-Otter_Skin,_Dressed,_Natural.jpeg>

Sea Otter Skin, Dressed and Natural – c.1901-1902

Forty private companies engaged in the trade in sea otter pelts. Each merchant voyage was a separate venture with different investors. In 1784, Grigorii Shelikov established the North East Company and built the first permanent trading post in Alaska on southwestern Kodiak Island. The Alaskan fur trade differed from the Siberian fur trade because the sea otter trade involved maritime (not land-based) hunting, the pelts were sold in the Chinese (not the European) market, and soon the Russian companies encountered foreign competition from English and American firms.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Expansi%C3%B3n_territorial_de_Rusia.svg>

*Russian Territorial Expansion, 1300-1945 –
Conquered Coastal Alaska By 1798 and Interior Alaska by 1855*

The Russian American Company (1799-1867). After years of lobbying by Shelikov, the Russian Government granted a charter to the Russian American Company (RAC) in 1799. The RAC charter was based on the Hudson's Bay Company's (HBC) charter. The RAC thus received the rights to monopolize trade in Russian America. Alexander Baranov, the first governor of the RAC colony in Russian America, ruled effectively for two decades. During that initial phase of RAC rule in Alaska, 1799-1819, Baranov expanded southward in search of sea otters and fur seals. He set up the RAC capital and fur-trading center in

New Archangel (Sitka) in 1808. In 1812, Baranov ordered RAC officials to establish an outpost at Fort Ross in Russian California to exploit the sea otters off coastal California and to grow or trade for foodstuffs for Russian Alaska.

In the second phase of RAC rule, 1819-1840, the chartered company expanded its search for furs northward into the Bering Sea and interior Alaska and westward into the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Kurile and Commander Islands. Because of the over-exploitation of sea otters and fur seals, the RAC was forced to shift from marine to land mammals and walrus ivory.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_New_Archangel,_1837.tif>

New Archangel (Sitka), Capital of Alaska for the Russian American Company (1808-1867) – Painting by Alexandr Olgin, 1837

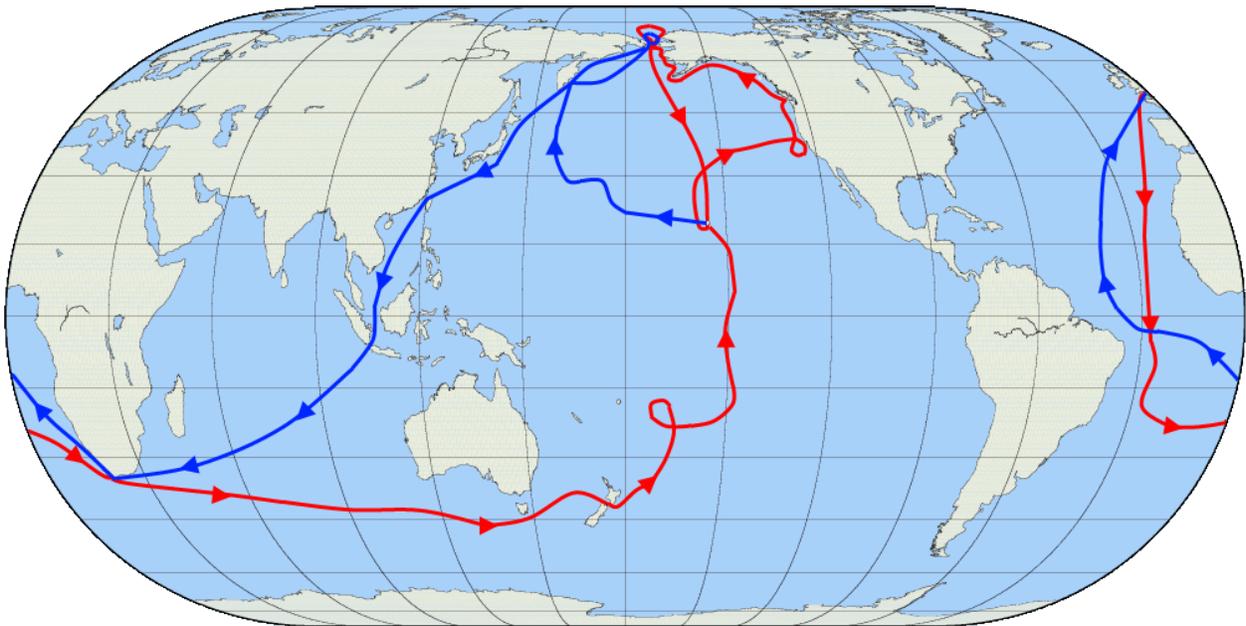
The final phase of RAC rule in Alaska, 1840-1867, was marked by decline as the company became increasingly unprofitable. The RAC struck a deal with the HBC in which the British company received monopoly rights to furs in Southeast Alaska in return for providing regular sales of foodstuffs to Russian America. That arrangement allowed the RAC to sell Fort Ross to John Sutter in 1841, since it no longer needed food supplies from California. In the 1850s, the Russian Government pressed the RAC to shift its attention to the Russian Far East and operate in the Amur Valley and Sakhalin.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:View_of_the_Hongs,_Canton.jpg>

Canton, China, c. 1850 – Market for Furs from Russian Alaska

Russian, Spanish, British, and American Strategic Interests in Alaska (1770s-1860s). The Russians faced two formidable challenges in Russian America – to forestall foreign incursions into trade routes or territories desired by Russia and to provide regular food and supplies for Russian settlements in Alaska. In 1778, the famed British explorer, Captain James Cook, visited Alaska. Seeking to sail through the Northwest Passage from west to east, Cook passed through the Bering Strait to Icy Cape before pack ice forced him to give up.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cook%27sThirdVoyage58.png>>

Captain James Cook's Unsuccessful Attempt to Sail the Northwest Passage, 1776-1780 – Outgoing (Red Line), Return (Blue Line)

In 1789 and 1790, two Spanish expeditions probed northward from Juan de Fuca Strait to Cook Inlet to examine prospects for Spanish expansion. The British returned in 1792-1794 when George Vancouver explored the Northwest coast to Cook Inlet. But two decades of war with France diverted British aims to expand in the Pacific Northwest.

Between 1803 and 1839, American fur traders, the Nor'westmen, competed uneasily with the Russians for sea otter pelts to trade in Canton. The American Government had designs on expanding northward up the Northwest coast. In the 1840s, the Russians, British, and Americans signed treaties to establish the borders of Alaska, Canada, and the United States.

Meanwhile, the RAC sought regular food supplies for Alaska. Its outpost at Fort Ross (1812-1841) was an unprofitable disappointment that supplied little food. Instead, the RAC imported beef and wheat from Spanish (Mexican, after 1821) California. The RAC agreement with the Hudson's Bay Company (1839-1848) worked well; the RAC received regular food shipments while the HBC monopolized the fur trade in Southeast Alaska. After the California gold rush (1855-1860),

American California supplied flour and beef to Alaska in return for ice and furs.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_of_an_American_Clipper_Ship.jpeg>*

*19th-century US Clipper Ship –
Painting by Lai Fong, Calcutta, India, late 19th century*

Russia's Sale of Alaska to the United States (1867). In 1867, Russia sold Alaska to the United States for \$7.2 million, only two percent of the annual revenue of the Russian Government. What were Russia's reasons for selling its American colony for such a modest sum?



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russian_Orthodox_Church.jpg>*

*The Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Michael, Sitka –
Constructed in 1848, Became American in 1867*

Several economic perspectives entered the decision. Alaska had become highly unprofitable, and the stock price of the RAC had plummeted. The revenue from the sale offset nearly half of the RAC's accumulated losses. Development prospects for Alaska appeared dim because the colony had a harsh climate, a location remote from St. Petersburg, and expensive transportation costs. Alternatives in Asia –

Amuria (obtained by Russia from China in 1858), the Lake Baikal region, and Central Asia – offered more attractive prospects for profits.

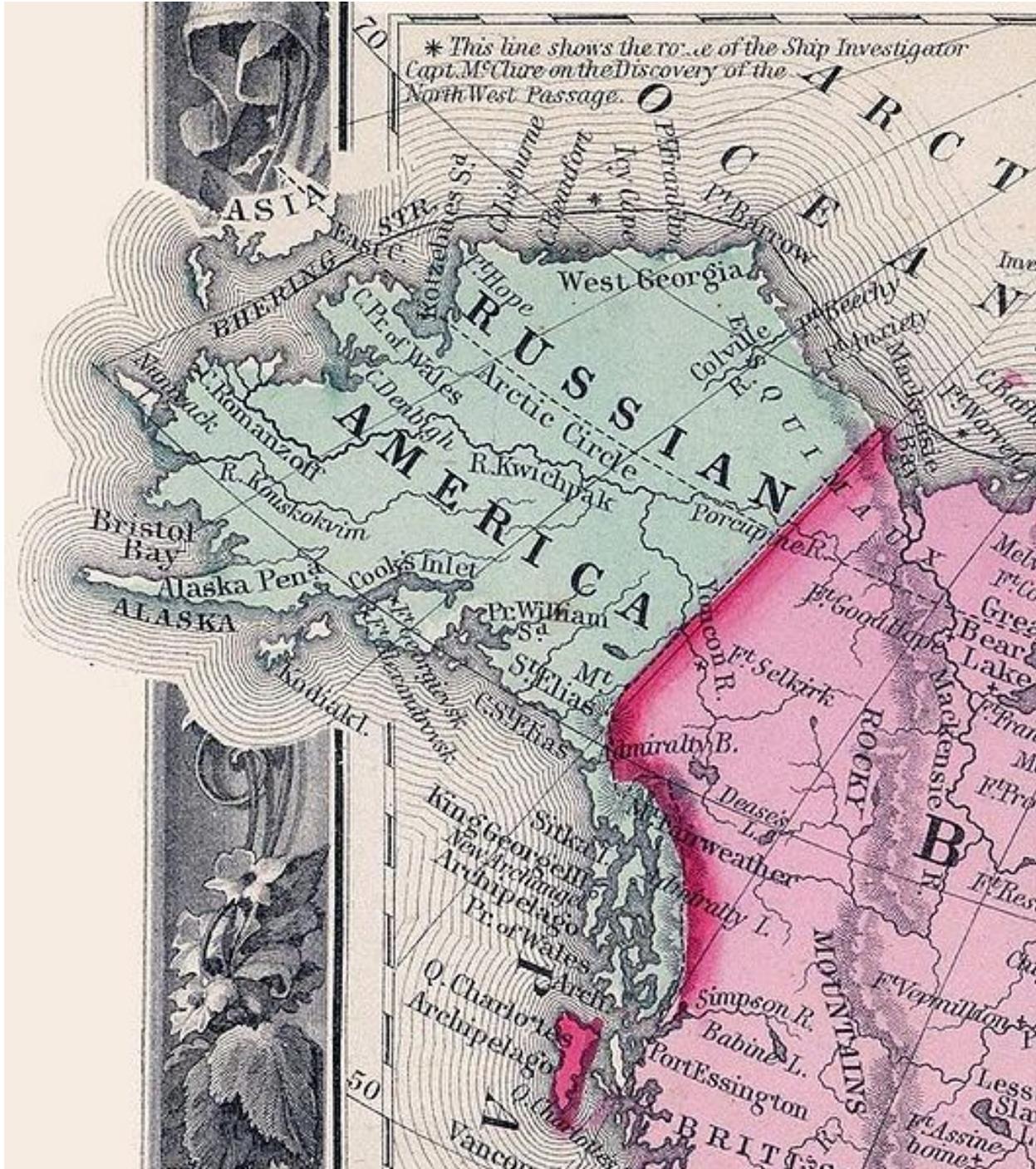


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russia_1533-1896.gif

Russian Expansion in Asia, 1533-1894 – Amuria, 1858 (Teal Blue)

The decision to sell Alaska also seemed sensible on political grounds. The Russian Government was heavily influenced by its defeat in the Crimean War (1853-1856). Although the RAC and the HBC had agreed that Alaska would not be invaded during that war, the Russians saw how vulnerable their American colony was to foreign military

takeover. The Russian Government also fully expected that the United States would eventually expand northward up the Northwest Coast and absorb Alaska. Recent North American gold rushes, notably the one in California, had convinced the Russians that Americans would swarm into Alaska if gold were discovered there. A final political argument in favor of the sale was that American Alaska would serve as a buffer zone between Russian Siberia and British North America. If Russia could not defend its Alaska colony, it was better that it be in the hands of Russia's American ally rather than controlled by its British foe.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1860-russian-america.jpg>>

1860 Map – Russian Alaska (Blue) and British North America (Red)

Gold, Salmon, and Copper Booms in Alaska (1867-1959)

Seward's Dream and Army-Navy Rule (1867-1884). William H. Seward, a powerful Republican politician from New York, was Secretary of State in 1867. Seward was the main advocate of the American purchase of Alaska. Although some American newspapers referred to Alaska as "Seward's Folly" or "Walrussia," most public opinion was supportive of expanding American territory. Seward was a visionary. He saw the purchase of Alaska as part of a wide scheme to enhance American naval power and maritime competitiveness in the new age of steamships.

Seward thus sought coaling stations in key locations – Russian America, Greenland and Iceland (which he also tried to buy), the Virgin Islands, and Hawaii. He wanted Alaskan coaling stations to service the great-circle Pacific trade route with Asia. Seward delighted in one-upping Great Britain by creating territorial pincers around British Columbia, and he hoped the Alaskan purchase would cement strong American relations with Russia.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alaska_purchase.jpg>

Signing the Alaska Treaty of Cession Between Russia and the United States (1867) – William H. Seward Seated To Left of Globe

Upon purchase of Alaska, the American Government made Alaska a military district. Between 1867 and 1877, the U.S. Army governed Alaska ineffectually and only in the two centers of white population, Sitka and Wrangell. The Treasury took over for the next two years, using its revenue cutters, but was even less effective. In 1879, the U.S. Navy began administering Alaska and did a good job in the panhandle, while ignoring the rest of the territory.

The principal American enterprise operating in Alaska then was the Alaska Commercial Company (ACC), which had purchased the assets (ships, buildings, and merchandise) of the RAC for \$155,000. The ACC received a 20-year, exclusive lease to kill 100,000 northern fur seals annually in the Pribilof Islands, the main fur-seal-breeding rookery, and made very high profits.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fur_seal_rookery_on_St._Paul_Island_\(6383866587\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fur_seal_rookery_on_St._Paul_Island_(6383866587).jpg)>

Northern Fur Seal Rookery – St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands

The Juneau Gold Strike (1880-1917). The first major discovery of gold in Alaska was the Juneau gold strike of 1880. In August 1880, two hitherto hard-luck prospectors, Joe Juneau and Richard Harris,

discovered gold on a creek entering the Gastineau Channel between the Alaska mainland and Douglas Island. Two months later, they found the mother lode at the creek's headwaters. Juneau quickly arose as a gold boomtown. The richest mine in the Juneau strike, the Treadwell Mine on Douglas Island, was discovered by an Auk Indian, staked by Pierre "French Pete" Erussard, and later sold to John Treadwell. The Treadwell mine produced continuously until 1922 when it closed following accidental flooding in 1917.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Treadwell_Mine.jpg>

*Treadwell Gold Mine, Douglas Island, Juneau, Alaska –
Produced Three Million Ounces of Gold Between 1881-1922*

Most of the gold in the Juneau strike was lode gold, which required corporate hard-rock mining techniques, although a bit was placer gold that could be mined by individuals. A total of \$17 million of gold was produced in Juneau between 1880 and 1900 when output began to decline. Gold production, and especially the Treadwell Mine, served as the economic base for the 2,500 people who had settled in Juneau by the turn of the 20th century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Treadwell_Miners.jpg>

Gold-miners Working in the Under-sea part of the Treadwell Mine, 1916

The inflow of white settlers into Alaska and the discovery of mineral resources quickly led to the end of military government. In

1884, Congress passed the Organic Act that created a skeletal territorial government for Alaska. The U.S. President appointed the governor, but the Act did not provide for a legislature, congressional representation, or the collection of taxes. The Act opened all of Alaska to mining claims by making the 1872 Mining Act apply in Alaska territory. The Act also provided for the protection of Alaskan Native rights in their areas of traditional residence. But mining claims thereafter were to take precedence over Native land rights.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChilkootPass_steps.jpg>*

*Klondike Gold-rushers Climbing the Chilkoot Pass,
Near Skagway, Alaska – En Route to the Klondike, 1898*

Gold in the Klondike, Nome, and Fairbanks (1896-1910s). The biggest gold rush in North America occurred in Canada, not in Alaska. But the discovery in 1896 of gold in the Klondike region of the Yukon Territory had major impacts on Alaska. More than 60,000 prospectors set out to make their fortunes in the Klondike, and 40,000 of them got there and became sourdoughs. Of that number, 28,000 made the climb over the Chilkoot or White Passes, creating a boomtown in Skagway, Southeast Alaska. But only about 400 Klondike gold rushers made sizeable fortunes. The value of gold produced in the Klondike was \$150 million, and production peaked in 1900 at \$22 million.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Klondike_Routes_Map2.png

Principal Routes to the Klondike (Near Dawson City), 1897

About 10,000 frustrated Klondike prospectors shifted to Alaska to search for gold there. Daniel Libby discovered gold on Alaska's Seward Peninsula in 1898, precipitating the Nome gold rush of 1899-1900. In 1899, gold was discovered on the beaches running for 80 miles north and south of Nome. From Nome's beaches and creeks, \$2 million of gold was produced in 1899 and \$4 million in each year between 1900 and 1906.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nome_prospectors,1900.jpg>

Beach Scene, Nome Gold Rush, 1900

The Fairbanks gold rush began in 1902 after the discovery of gold in the Tanana River Valley of central Alaska. Fairbanks emerged as Alaska's first important interior town and remained the largest settlement in Alaska for many years. Gold production in Alaska peaked in 1906, and in that year the Fairbanks region produced 3.8 million ounces, more than half of Alaska's total.



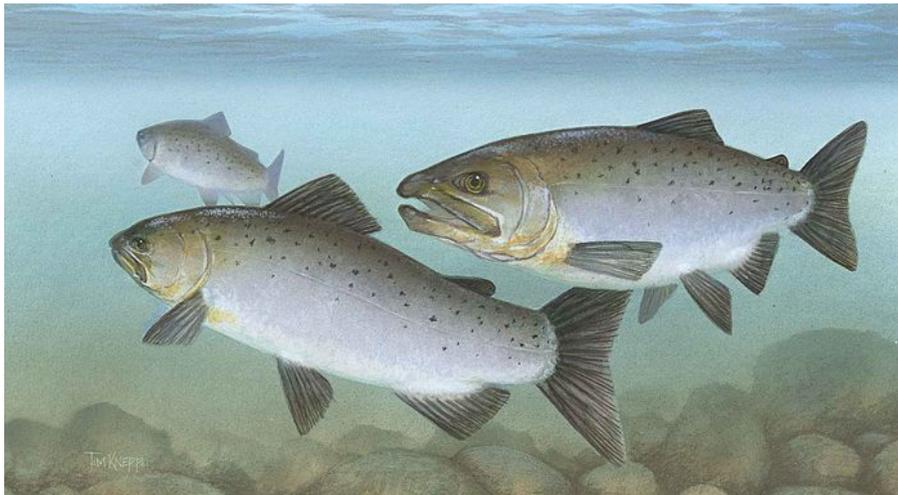
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Fairbanks_-_Gold_Dredge_No._8.jpg>

Gold Dredge No. 8 – Worked Creek Bottoms Near Fairbanks

The Klondike, Nome, and Fairbanks gold rushes helped Alaska's population to more than double. In 1912, Congress passed the Second

Organic Act, providing an elected legislature for Alaska, whose actions were subject to veto by the federally appointed governor or by the U.S. Congress, paving the way to eventual statehood.

The Salmon Fishery (1880s-1940s). Salmon fishing and canning underpinned the Alaskan economy during the interwar period, 1920-1940. The territorial government then received 75 percent of its revenue from taxing the salmon canneries. Fishing for salmon had long been a key part of subsistence for Alaskan Natives.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific_salmon_fish_underwater_oncorhynchus.jpg

>

*Pacific Salmon (Oncorhynchus) –
Abundant Resource Throughout Coastal Alaska*

Commercial salmon fishing began in 1879 when the first salmon cannery in Alaska was established in Klawock, a Tlingit village on

Prince of Wales Island. Because salmon are very perishable, they must be processed – dried, salted, canned, or frozen – shortly after they are caught. Companies thus set up large canneries near the sites of the main salmon fisheries. By 1889, there were 37 salmon canneries in Alaska, representing a total investment of \$4 million, which hired 6,000 employees to pack 700,000 cases of salmon. The firms consolidated into the Alaska Packers Association, which produced 80 percent of the Alaskan pack in the 1890s. By 1900, salmon canneries in Alaska produced 2 million cases of canned salmon worth \$10 million.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:APA_cannery_Nushagak_Bay_1900_NOAA.jpg>

*Alaska Packers Association Salmon Cannery –
Arctic Packing Company, Bristol Bay, 1900*

Originally the firms investing in the canneries were based in San Francisco, but by the 1890s the Alaskan salmon industry was Seattle-based. In 1924, Congress passed the White Act that provided open entry to the Alaskan salmon fishery but sought to retain at least a 50 percent escapement of migrating salmon. In 1948, the industry employed 12,000 workers and packed salmon worth \$60 million. Through its first eight decades, until Alaska gained statehood in 1959, salmon fishing and canning involved a political struggle between the Seattle canners, who wanted to use sophisticated traps and retain access to the fishery, and local interests, who hoped to outlaw the traps and control the fishery from Alaska.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hoonah_Packing_Company_plant.jpg>

*Former Salmon Cannery, Hoonah, Southeast Alaska –
Once Hoonah Packing Company, Now a Museum*

The Alaska Syndicate and James Wickersham (1900s-1920s).

The Alaska Syndicate was a confederation of large firms owned and operated by the Guggenheim brothers and J. P. Morgan. Formed at the turn of the 20th century, the Syndicate dominated the Alaska economy for three decades. The Syndicate formed the Kennecott Copper Corporation to mine copper ore. The Guggenheims had purchased the Bonanza Claim in Kennecott (200 miles north of Cordova in south-central Alaska). Bonanza ore was assayed at 75 percent pure copper. The Guggenheims contributed that claim and their mining experience and Morgan supplied the finance.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kennicott8.jpg>>*

Kennecott, Alaska – Abandoned Copper Mine and Town

The Syndicate formed the Copper River and Northwest Railway to move the copper ore (and small amounts of associated silver ore) from Kennecott to Cordova on the coast at Prince William Sound. The 200-mile rail line was constructed by 6,000 workers between 1907 and 1911 at a cost of \$29 million. Between 1911 and 1938, the railway moved \$200 million of copper and silver ore. The peak year was 1916 when \$30 million of ore was hauled. The richest copper vein was played out by 1922, and thereafter the Syndicate shipped lower grade ore.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Workers_with_wrecking_crane_for_the_Copper_River_and_Northwestern_Railway,_1908_\(HEGG_743\).jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Workers_with_wrecking_crane_for_the_Copper_River_and_Northwestern_Railway,_1908_(HEGG_743).jpeg)>

Copper River & Northwest Railway – Cordova, 1908

The Syndicate moved the ore from Cordova to the Guggenheim smelter in Tacoma, Washington on ships belonging to its Alaska

Steamship Company. The Syndicate also purchased the Northwest Fisheries Company that operated twelve large salmon canneries.

James Wickersham, Alaska's long-time territorial delegate and leading politician, criticized the Syndicate's operations for being anti-competitive. Wickersham's two leading achievements were obtaining Congressional approval of an Alaskan legislature (1912) and of building the Alaska Railroad (1914).



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hon._James_Wickersham.jpg>

*James Wickersham (1857-1939) –
Alaska's Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives (1909-1917)*

The Great Depression and the Matanuska Colony (1930s). During the Great Depression, Alaska received more federal expenditures per person from the New Deal than most of the 48 states. The primary New Deal agencies, such as the Public Works Administration and the Civil Works Administration, had many projects in Alaska. Prominent construction projects included a new federal building in Anchorage, a cross-channel bridge in Juneau, and a breakwater in Cordova.

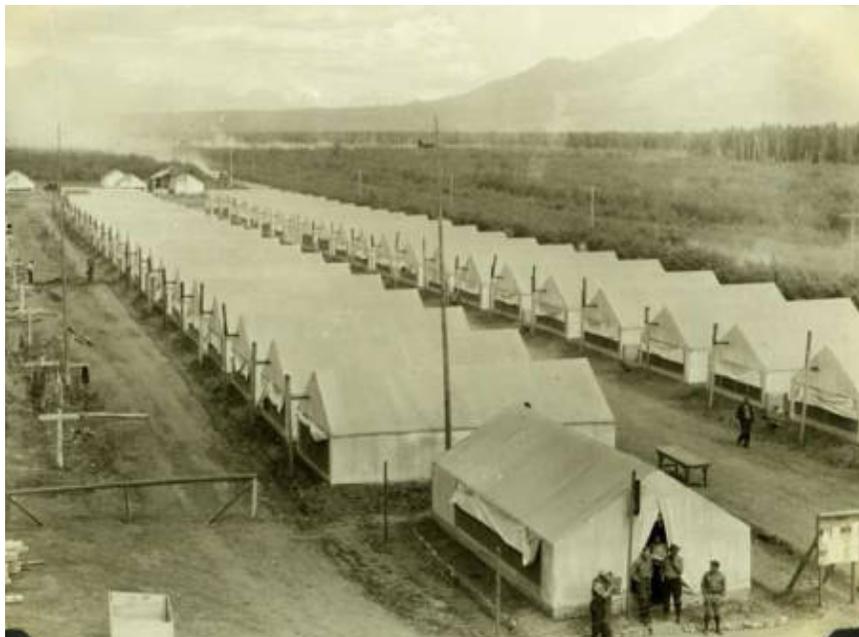


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cordova_Alaska_aerial_view.jpg>

Federally-funded Breakwater – Cordova, Alaska

The most unusual New Deal program in Alaska was the Matanuska Colony project. The federal government tried to resettle impoverished

American farmers in the Matanuska Valley north of Anchorage. The Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation was set up with headquarters in Palmer to supervise the Matanuska Colony and provide advice to the settlers on subjects ranging from agronomy to social activities. The plan was to resettle 200 farm families who had lost their farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The federal government spent \$200 million on land clearing, roads, rail connections, housing, credit that was not repaid, and general administration. In 1935, 202 colonists and 600 carpenters pitched tents in Palmer to begin construction of houses and barns.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Matanuska_Colony.jpg>

Matanuska Colony Tents, 1935

The experiment was doomed to fail. Half of the original settlers left after the unusually harsh winter of 1935-1936. In addition, the farm plots of only 40 acres were far too small, the soils were poor, transportation costs were high, the farmers were forced to plant different crops from those they were accustomed to growing, and many settlers resented government supervision. The settlers who remained in Matanuska were saved in 1940 when the government built Fort Richardson, an army base that provided a market for crops and off-farm jobs.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raymond_Rebarchek_Colony_Farm.jpg>

*Matanuska Colony Farm – Barn and Farmhouse of the Raymond
Rebarchek Colony Farm, Built in 1935*

Alaska in the Second World War (1940s). As part of the Naval Disarmament Treaty of 1922, the United States had no military fortifications on the Aleutian Islands when World War II began. After Pearl Harbor, the Americans scrambled to construct an air base at Dutch Harbor, Unalaska and defend the other Aleutians. In June 1942, Japan captured Attu and Kiska and raided Dutch Harbor in a diversionary tactic.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_Attack_at_Dutch_Harbor.jpg>

Dutch Harbor, Alaska – After the Japanese Raid, June 1942

Following the raid on Dutch Harbor, the U.S. authorities evacuated 881 Aleutians, who lived west of Unalaska, and forced them to move to

four abandoned canneries in Southeast Alaska. The living conditions were deplorable – no water, sewage, or medical facilities, and meager food. In 1992, Congress belatedly authorized monetary awards to affected Aleut families.

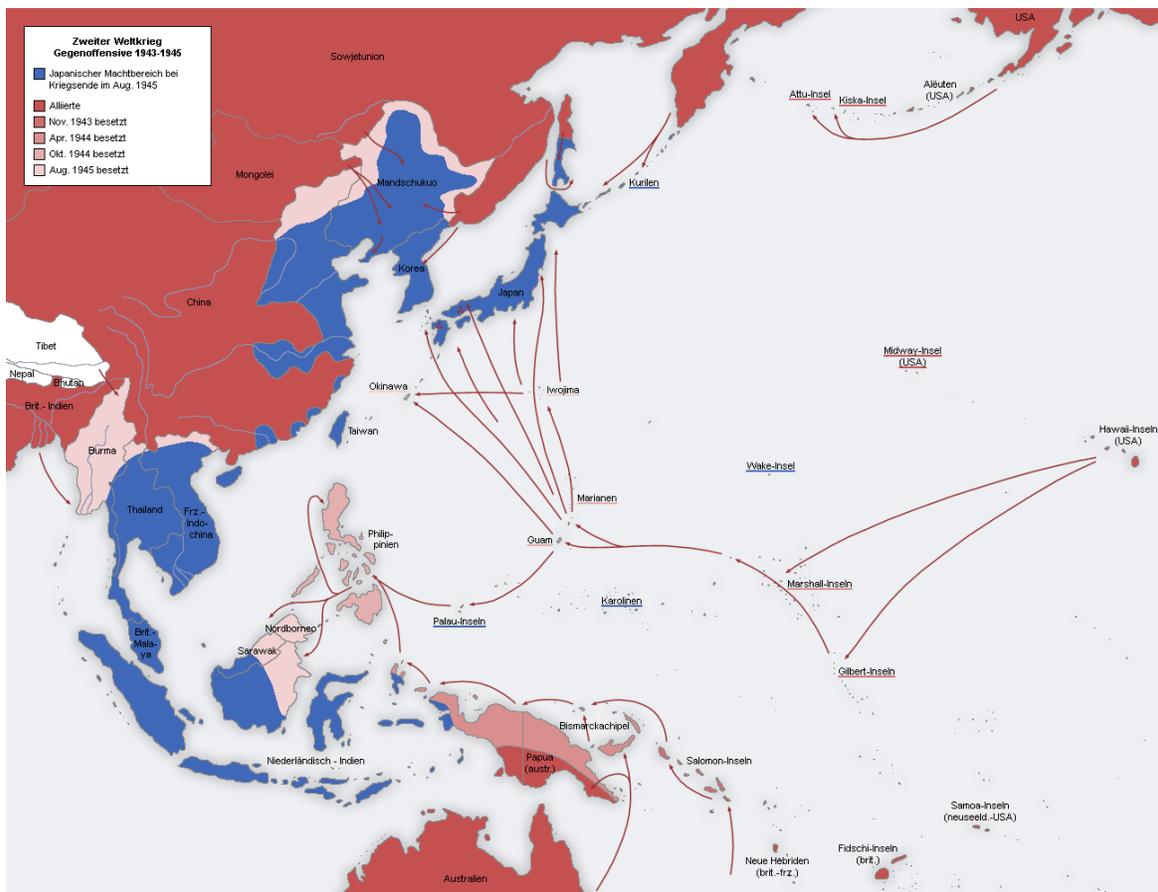
In May 1943, a joint force of American and Canadian troops regained Attu. The battle for Attu was the second bloodiest of the war in the Pacific, after Iwo Jima. Of the 11,000 Allied invading troops, 549 died and 2,100 were wounded. The 2,351 Japanese defenders of Attu refused to surrender, and only 28 survived.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:American-troops-have-breakfast-on-Attu-142348301241.jpg>>

*American Troops, Breakfasting in Holtz Bay, Attu Island –
After the Defeat and Evacuation of Japanese Forces, May 1943*

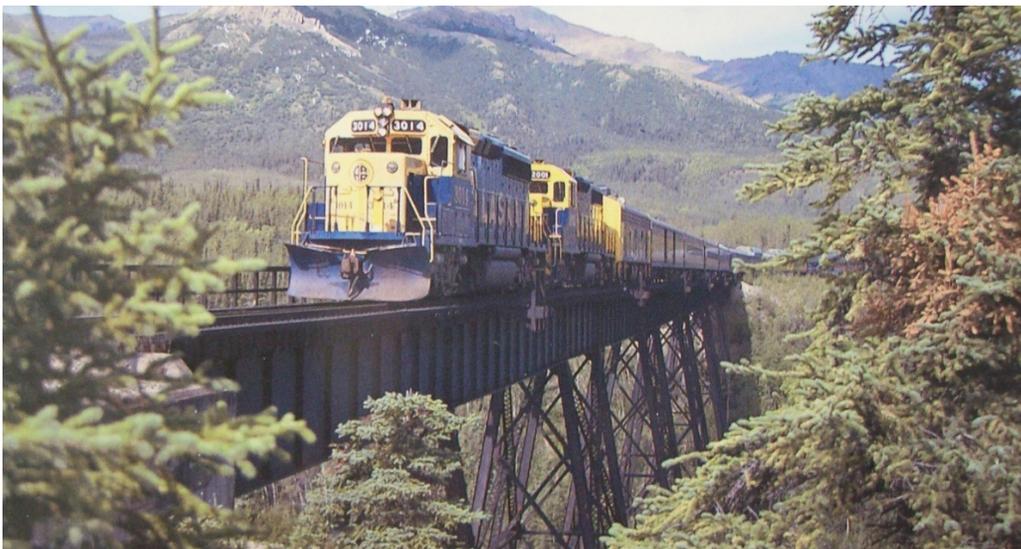
The reconquest of Kiska in August 1943 was tragic for a different reason. Under heavy fog cover, Japan had secretly evacuated all 5,138 of its troops from Kiska. The 35,000 Allied invading troops suffered 313 unnecessary casualties from friendly fire and booby traps. Those battles were the only conflicts of World War II fought on American soil.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Second_world_war_asia_1943-1945_map_de.png

Allied Counter-offensive Against Japan, 1943-1945

The war had an huge economic impact on Alaska. Allied military expenditures in Alaska amounted to \$3 billion, and much of that was spent on infrastructure – new roads, ports, airfields, and bases, and modernizing of the Alaska Railroad – that benefited the post-war Alaskan economy. The population of Alaska increased from 74,000 to 138,000 between 1940 and 1950.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Alaska_Railroad.jpg>*

Federal Military Spending Modernized the Alaska Railroad

The Cold War Construction Boom and Statehood (1950s). Alaska's remote geographic location became an asset in the Cold War era. Military strategists decided on a heartland concept for the defense of Alaska as they shifted emphasis from the Pacific to the Atlantic. Bases

on the vulnerable Aleutian Islands were abandoned in favor of huge, new bases constructed near Anchorage and Fairbanks.

The air force then decided to build the Distant Early Warning (DEW) system, consisting of a line of radar stations along the Bering Sea and the Arctic coasts of Alaska and Canada. That chain of stations was intended to protect against the possibility of trans-Arctic air attacks.

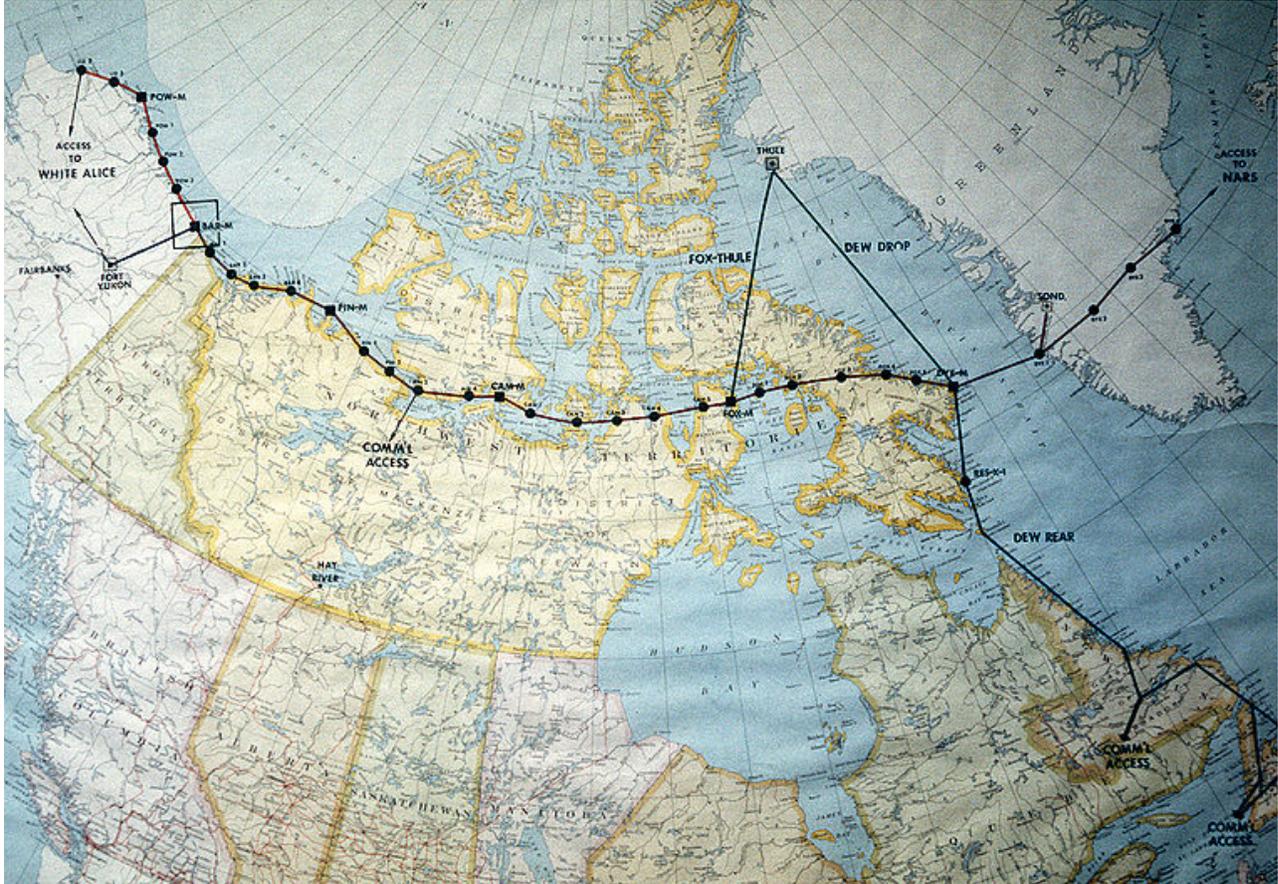


*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Former_DEW_Line_Radar_station.jpg>*

Distant Early Warning (DEW) Radar Station – Near Yukon, Alaska

Later facilities for the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System were built in Clear, Alaska (near Fairbanks), Greenland, and England. The new Cold War military construction in Alaska cost \$250 million per year in the 1950s. The economic impact in Alaska went far beyond any of the earlier natural resource booms – based on furs, gold, copper, and

salmon. The enhanced military importance of Alaska aided the territory's long-delayed quest for statehood.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Distant_Early_Warning_\(DEW\)_Line.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Distant_Early_Warning_(DEW)_Line.jpg)

*Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line Stations, 1987 –
Extended 3,600 Miles From Alaska to Greenland*

The in-state opposition to statehood had long been led by the canned salmon industry that feared state controls on traps and higher taxes. At the national level, many Republicans opposed statehood because they expected that Alaska would send two Democratic senators

to Washington and swing the Senate to the Democrats. In addition, some southern politicians feared that Alaska's senators and its one congressman would liberally favor civil rights legislation. Eventually those concerns were largely put aside, and in June 1958 the Senate voted 64 to 20 in favor of Alaskan statehood. On January 3, 1959, President Eisenhower signed the bill that admitted Alaska as the forty-ninth state.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alaska_Statehood_signing.jpg>

*President Dwight Eisenhower Signed Bill for Alaskan Statehood,
January 3, 1959*

Who Owns Alaska? Land Use Conflicts (1959-2012)

The State Government and Development (1959-present). Non-Native settlement of Alaska came in three waves, associated with the gold rush (1890s), World War II and the Cold War (1940s and 1950s), and oil development (1970s). Most settlers considered Alaska to be America's last frontier, migrated for personal independence, and expected to find good jobs or make fortunes. But when Alaska achieved statehood in 1959, non-Native Alaskans discovered that they were still dependent on the federal government, which owned nearly all of Alaska's land and natural resources.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sitka_NHP_trail.jpg>

Who Owns Alaska's Land and Resources? – Temperate Hemlock-spruce Rainforest, Sitka National Historical Park, Southeast Alaska

Three interest groups are at the center of the conflict over Alaska's land and resources. Most non-Native Alaskans feel that the state should own and use Alaskan land for economic development (oil development, mining, fishing, timbering, and tourism). Native Alaskans feel that they should own the land and resources that they traditionally used for subsistence. Some Alaskans and many other Americans feel that much of Alaska's land should be conserved to protect habitat for fauna and flora, preserve biodiversity, and permit controlled tourism.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:National-atlas-alaska.png>>

*Land-use Conflicts in Alaska –
State Development vs. National Conservation vs. Native Claims*

Those conflicts appeared in the Alaska Statehood Act of 1959. Section 6 allotted 103 million acres (28 percent of Alaska's 375 million acres) for state ownership and development. But Section 4 exempted lands held for traditional Native uses from state withdrawal. Also exempted were existing federal reserves of land (Mount McKinley National Park (Denali National Park since 1980) and military bases) of 50 million acres (13 percent). The proposal to construct a Rampart Dam on the Yukon River highlighted the land use conflict in the early years of statehood. That \$1.3 billion federal project would have created a lake the size of Lake Erie on lands inhabited by Alaskan Indians and generated twice the electricity of any extant dam. But the project was scrapped in 1965.

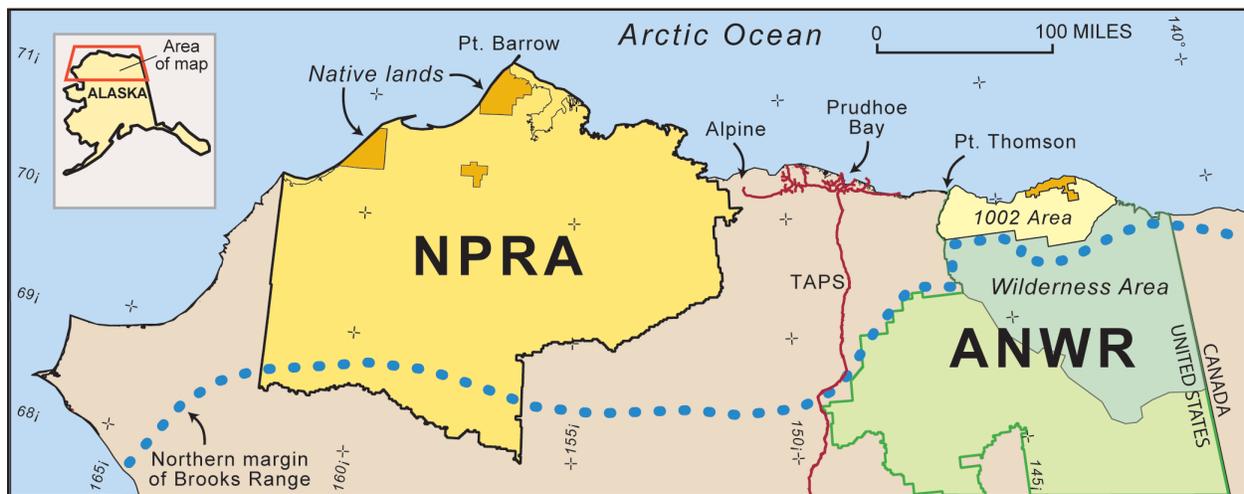


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Rampart_Dam_drainage.jpg>

Estimated Lake to be Created by the Proposed Rampart Dam on the Yukon River in Central Alaska – Proposal Was Scrapped in 1965

North Slope Oil and Gas and the Petroleum Industry (1967-present). The Richfield Oil Company discovered the first commercial deposits of petroleum and natural gas in Alaska in 1957 in the Kenai National Moose Range. In December 1967, the Atlantic Richfield Oil Company (ARCO) discovered the Prudhoe Bay oil field on the North Slope. The immense size of that field, America’s largest, was confirmed in March 1968. The Prudhoe Bay field covered an area of 45 by 18

miles, contained 15 billion barrels of oil and substantial quantities of natural gas, and was on state-owned land. It was bordered on the west by the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska (created in 1923) and on the east by the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (created in 1960).

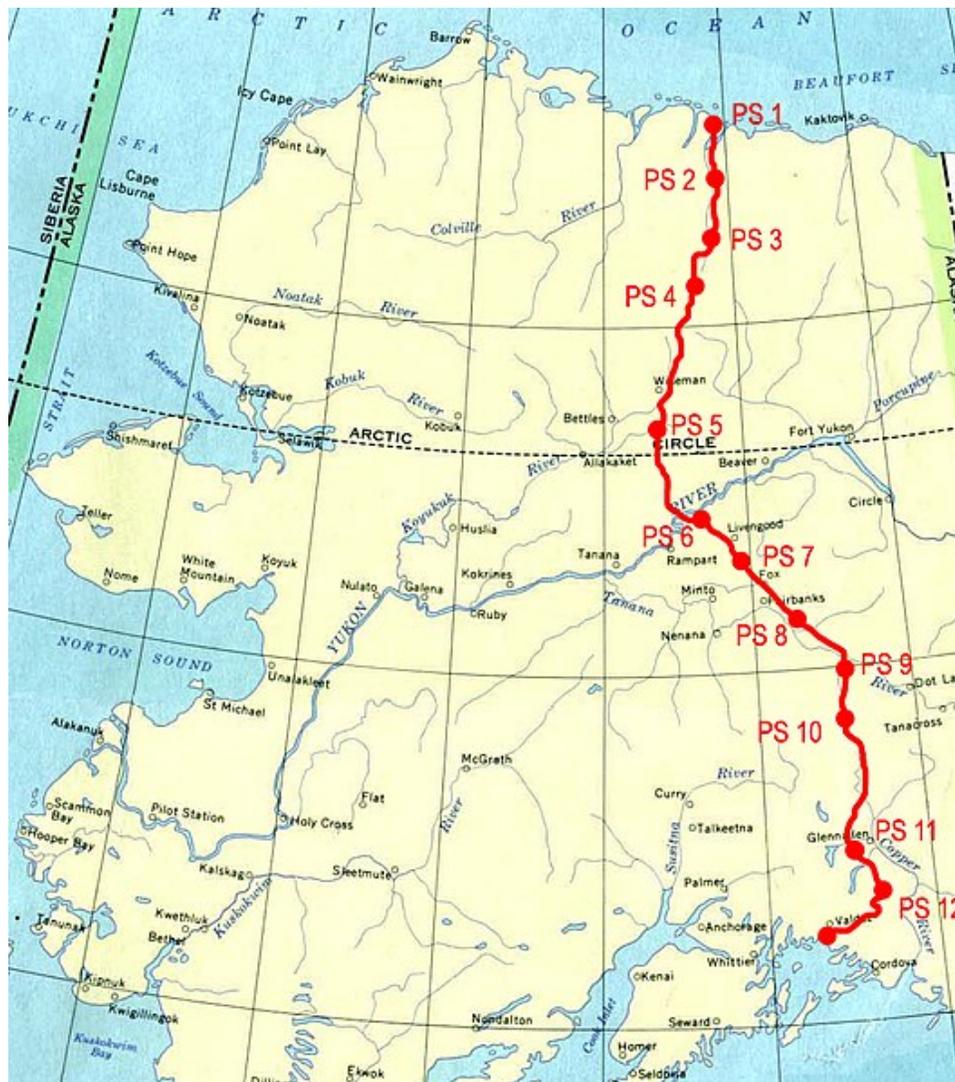


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NPRA_F1lg.gif>

*Prudhoe Bay Oil Field –
Bordered by the National Petroleum Reserve–Alaska (NPRA) on the
West and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) on the East*

In 1969, the Alaska state government held an oil lease sale of North Slope properties near Prudhoe Bay and earned \$900 million, three times the state budget. But no North Slope oil could be produced without a pipeline to transport it to market. Despite strong opposition from environmental groups, Congress authorized construction of the

trans-Alaska pipeline in late 1973, shortly after the quadrupling of the world price of oil. It took 28,000 workers and \$7.7 billion to build the 48-inch pipeline, which opened in 1977. The pipeline ran for 798 miles from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez on Prince William Sound.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trans_alaska_international.jpg>

The Alyeska (Trans-Alaska) Oil Pipeline System With Its Twelve Pump Stations – Opened in 1977

Between 1977 and 2019, the Alaska state government received \$180 billion of oil tax revenue, 80 percent of general fund revenues. ARCO merged with British Petroleum-Amoco (BP) in 2000. The shares of North Slope production are BP (managing operator, 26 percent), ConocoPhillips (36 percent), ExxonMobil (36 percent), and others (2 percent). Federal studies of the prospects for oil in the ANWR indicate a 46 percent probability of finding as much as 10 billion barrels.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Aerial_View_of_Prudhoe_Bay.jpg>

Oil Production, Prudhoe Bay – Aerial View, 2018

Conservation Organizations and Alaskan Wilderness (1960s-present). National interest in conserving the natural resources of Alaska

began when Theodore Roosevelt created the Tongass and Chugach National Forests in 1907. The Tongass Forest covered nearly all the Southeastern panhandle. The Katmai National Monument was established in 1912, Mount McKinley National Park in 1917, and Glacier Bay National Monument in 1925. By that early date, 50 million acres, about 14 percent of Alaska, was conserved.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Mount_McKinley_Denali_Closeup_2800px.jpg>

Mt. Denali (formerly McKinley), Highest Mountain in North America

During the 1960s, a strong national environmental movement emerged and lobbied effectively for the Wilderness Act of 1964 (setting

aside 50 million acres) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (requiring environmental impact assessments). The creation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in 1960 precipitated an intense struggle between environmental and developmental interests in Alaska. The environmentalists' worst fears were realized in the winter of 1968-1969 when Governor Walter Hickel authorized the disastrous "Hickel Highway," a 390-mile scar of ripped mountain and tundra.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hickel.gif>>*

*Walter Hickel, Governor of Alaska (1966-1969, 1990-1994) –
Creator of the Environmentally Disastrous "Hickel Highway"*

To protect wilderness in Alaska, oppose construction of the oil pipeline, and limit logging in the Tongass National Forest, twelve

leading conservation organizations, led by the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club, formed the Alaska Public Interest Coalition (APIC) in 1971. That highly effective national lobby had 10 million members at its peak. Alaskan promoters of development and oil production strongly resented the coalition's influence in Washington. President Jimmy Carter shocked Alaskans in 1977 by reserving 154 million acres of Alaskan land for conservation uses. The battle lines over the use of Alaskan lands thus were firmly drawn.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2008_Juneau_Steller_Sea_Lion_Haram_\(810162922_5\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:2008_Juneau_Steller_Sea_Lion_Haram_(810162922_5).jpg)>

*Strong American Public Interest in Conservation in the 1960s –
Protection of Habitat for Steller's Sea Lions*

Alaskan Natives and Native Land Claims (1920s-present). The political movement favoring Alaska Native land claims began in 1929. The then leading group representing Alaskan Natives, the Alaska Native Brotherhood, adopted an argument that James Wickersham, the long-time territorial delegate to Congress, had proposed. Alaska Natives were not considered by federal law to be members of American Indian tribes, very few lived on reservations, they had received no payments when Russia sold Alaska to the United States in 1867, and they had not signed treaties yielding land rights. Therefore, the federal government should compensate Alaskan Natives for lands taken from them. That argument later held up in the American courts and provided the basis for the eventual compensation of the Alaskan Natives.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inupiat_drummers_at_Eskimo_dance.jpg>

Inupiat Drummers – Demanded Native Land Rights

In 1959, when the new state began to withdraw federal land in Alaska, the Natives objected. They argued that the state withdrawals violated their aboriginal land rights, which had not been extinguished by treaties with the federal government. In 1965, the newly organized Alaska Federation of Natives began filing land claims on behalf of Natives, and those overlapping claims soon covered virtually the entire land area of Alaska. Those actions effectively blocked future land development and created political deadlock.

A year later, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall placed a moratorium on state land withdrawals, instituting a “land freeze,” until the Native land claims were settled. Meanwhile, a federal government team was carrying out a careful study of Native economic conditions and land rights. Their report, *Alaska Natives and the Land*, published in 1968, concluded that Alaska’s Natives were disadvantaged, had been denied equal opportunity, and had rights to their land.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Celebration_byCH_JNU_38.jpg>

Tlingit Girl – Alaska’s Land Is My Land

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) (1971).

The U.S. Congress enacted the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

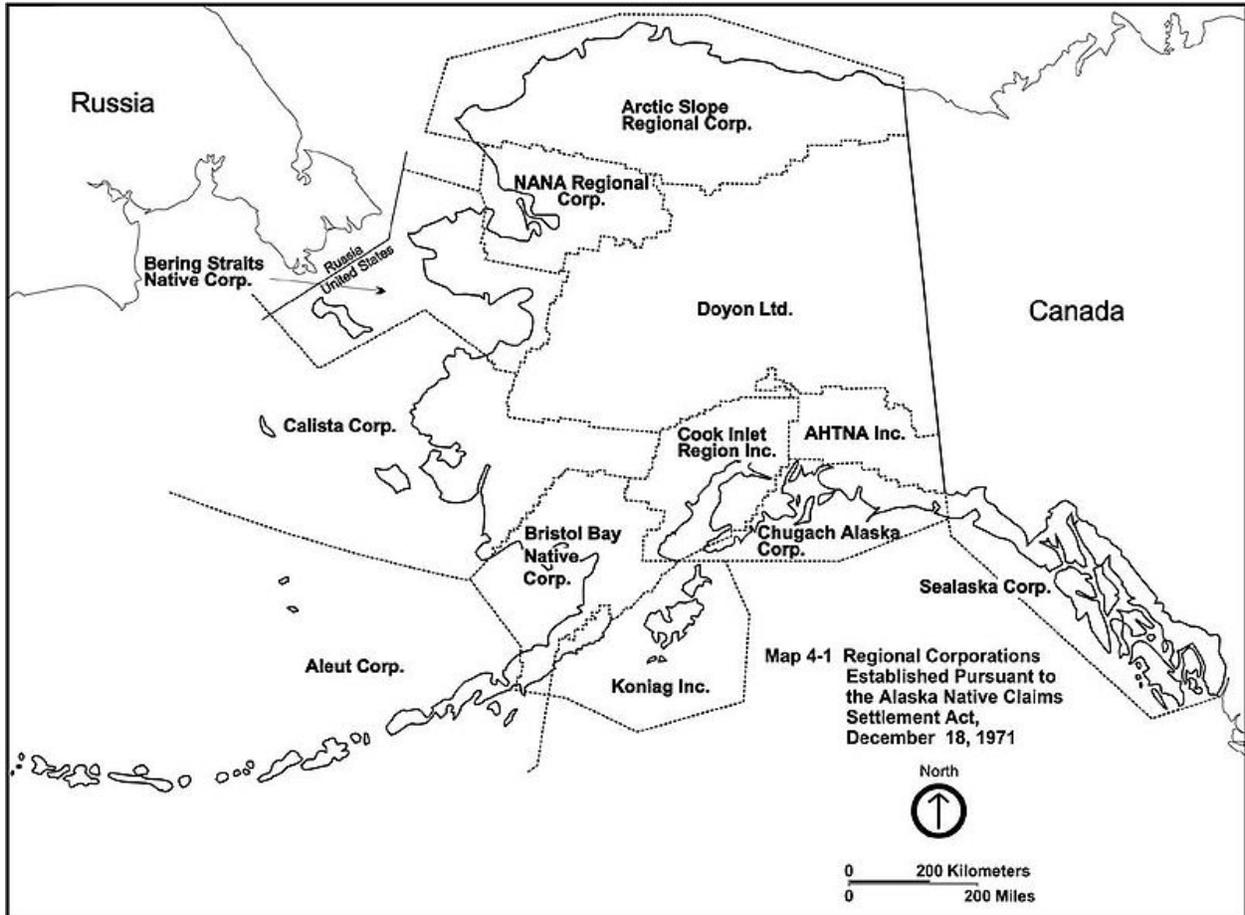
(ANCSA) in December 1971. ANCSA was the most generous settlement for aboriginal land claims in American history and the most important legislation in Alaska's history. The act benefited Alaskan development, Native rights and welfare, and American conservation. ANCSA provided Natives with land and capital for development, freed the trans-Alaska oil pipeline (and future Alaskan development) from the threat of Native lawsuits over land rights, and assured that a significant amount of Alaska's land would be allocated to conservation uses.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nalukataq_Blanket_Toss_Barrow.jpg>

Inupiat in Barrow, Alaska – Celebrated the Passing of the ANCSA in 1971 with a Traditional Blanket Toss

The ANCSA act established 12 Native regional economic development corporations and as many Native village corporations as desired (about 220 were established). Each Alaskan Native (with at least 25 percent Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut ancestry) received 100 shares in one corporation. As compensation for the Native land claims, \$962.5 million was allocated to the Native corporations; \$462.5 million was paid from the U.S. Treasury over 5 years, and \$500 million was paid by the state over 20 years (from federal mineral royalties). Forty-four million acres of federal land were deeded permanently to the corporations. An additional 80 million acres of land were targeted for conservation uses.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ANCSA_Regional_Corporations_Map.jpg

Twelve Native Regional Corporations – Established by ANSCA (1971)

Many Native corporations had difficulty managing those assets. To offset net operating losses suffered by the Native corporations, Congress enacted legislation in 1986 permitting the Native corporations to sell their losses to American companies desiring tax offsets against profits. Native corporations sold \$1 billion of losses for about \$300

million. Because the cost to the Treasury was \$400 million, the program was ended in 1988.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sealaska_Corporation_734.jpg>

Many Native Corporations Mismanaged Their Assets – Sealaska Corporation (Southeast Alaska Native Regional Corporation), Juneau

The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act

(ANILCA) (1980). ANCSA had stipulated that Congress must make its selections of 80 million acres for conservation use by 1978. In anticipation, President Jimmy Carter in 1977 had reserved 154 million acres of Alaskan land for potential conservation uses. After extending the deadline twice, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands

Conservation Act (ANILCA) in 1980. The main purpose of ANILCA was to provide permanent protection for 104 million acres of land in Alaska, additional to the 50 million acres of Alaskan land already reserved as national parks, forests, and monuments. Other goals of that landmark legislation were to permit the state of Alaska to complete its 103 million acres of land selection and to confirm the Natives' uncontested ownership of their 44 million acres.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lake_Clark_National_Park.jpg>*

Lake Clark National Park – Created Under ANILCA

The provisions of ANILCA on the surface appeared to be more generous for conservation than the 80 million acres mandated by ANCSA. Of the 104 million acres transferred in ANILCA, 56 million acres were specified for wilderness areas and the remaining 48 million acres were targeted for national parks and national forests. The act created five new national parks and added to three existing ones. It expanded the Tongass National Forest and designated 5.4 million acres of that forest as wilderness. It protected a large, contiguous region south of the Brooks Range and north of the Yukon River.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooks_Range-400px.jpg>

Brooks Range, Northern Alaska

However, Alaska’s senators and congressman were able to riddle the legislation with exceptions. A new designation, “preserves,” allowed sport hunting. Backcountry uses – snow machines, floatplanes, and cabins – were permitted even in wilderness areas. ANILCA thus disappointed most conservationists who had hoped for more complete protection.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Float_plane_at_Kanuti_NWR.jpg>

Sport Hunting with Float Plane, Kanuti, Interior Alaska

Current Land Uses in Alaska and the Alaska Permanent Fund.

After decades of political conflict and compromise legislation, Alaska's pattern of land uses at last seems settled. Development, Native, and conservation interests have reached an uneasy balance. Alaska's 375 million acres were almost all owned by the federal government during the territorial era, 1867-1959. Today, the state government owns 103 million acres (28 percent of the total), obtained in the Statehood Act of 1959. The state has attempted to select lands with the highest potential for development. The Native corporations own 44 million acres (12 percent), transferred by ANCSA in 1971. The Natives received lands that mostly surround their villages or are traditional hunting areas. The federal reserves for conservation uses amount to 154 million acres (40 percent). The first 50 million acres of protected land arose from Presidential decisions to create national parks, monuments, or forests in Alaska between 1907 and 1960. The remaining 104 million acres were designated for wilderness, park, or forest use in ANILCA in 1980.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Alaska_Public_Lands_Map4000x2255.png

Ownership of Alaska’s Land – Federal Reserves (40 percent), Bureau of Land Management (20), State of Alaska (28), and Alaskan Natives (12)

Through a constitutional amendment passed in 1976, Alaskans created the Alaska Permanent Fund and repealed the state income tax. Ten percent of tax revenue and 25 percent of oil revenues are invested in that fund. Following conservative management and inflation proofing, the Permanent Fund’s principal stood at \$64 billion in late 2019. A law passed in 1982 required that half of the dividends earned be distributed

to Alaskan citizens. Starting at \$1,000 per person, the annual dividend peaked at \$2,072 in 2015 and was \$1,606 in 2019. The Fund is untouchable politically. Suffering a severe budget shortfall in 1999, Alaskans chose to reduce public services rather than invade the Fund.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Line_Graph_Illustrating_the_Alaska_Permanent_Fund_Annual_Individual_Payout_by_year.png

Annual Individual Payments from the Alaska Permanent Fund, 1982-2020 – Peaked at \$2,072 in 2015

Continuing Land Use Conflicts. The economy of Alaska is highly dependent on natural resource extraction, especially of petroleum.

Recently, over four-fifths of the jobs in Alaska have been associated

with oil production or federal spending. A continuing conflict between economic development and environmental conservation thus seems inevitable.

Two recent incidents highlight the severity of that conflict. In March 1989, the 987-foot long *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker ran aground on Bligh Island while avoiding icebergs in Prince William Sound. One-fifth of its cargo, 10.8 million gallons of crude oil, spilled into the Sound, oozed onto the pristine beaches, and floated all the way to Kodiak Island, 470 miles distant.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons available at*
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exxon_Valdez_in_Prince_William_Sound,_Alaska_\(15011152497\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exxon_Valdez_in_Prince_William_Sound,_Alaska_(15011152497).jpg)>

*Exxon Valdez Oil Tanker –
Struck Prince William Sound’s Bligh Island on March 24, 1989*

That oil spill created more environmental damage than any (prior to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010). At least 250,000 seabirds, 2,800 sea otters, 250 bald eagles, and countless other birds, sea mammals, and fish died. Exxon spent \$2.1 billion in the clean up afterward, settled a civil suit for \$900 million, and paid a \$100 million fine. But the Prince William Sound region has yet to recover. The spill was caused by a fatigued crew, a possibly inebriated master, weak supervision by Exxon, a poor navigational traffic system, and a lack of pilot services.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Exxon_Valdez_Cleanup.jpg>

Initial Clean-up Following the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill in 1989

The story of timber exploitation in the Tongass National Forest is almost as discouraging. The Tongass Timber Act of 1947 set output targets for timber production and provided huge subsidies to meet them. Virgin timber was nearly given away to create a few jobs. The Tongass Reform Act of 1990 finally removed the targets and ended the subsidies. The two sawmills, in Ketchikan and Sitka, soon closed largely because of huge fines for pollution. Both communities made smooth transitions, aided by a \$110 million federal subsidy.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tongass_NF_-_map_of_wilderness_areas.jpg>

*Tongass National Forest (Light Green) –
and Tongass Wilderness Areas (Dark Green), Created in 1990*

Time Line for Alaska

[bpd = before the present day]

25,000 bpd	ancestors of modern Arctic peoples lived in the Eurasian Arctic – hunted large mammals, including mammoths, and gathered eggs, plants, and berries
15,000 bpd	ancestors of Native American peoples began migrating from northeastern Siberia to North America
11,000 bpd	Eskaleut people crossed the Bering Strait and settled in Alaska – both Eskimos and Aleuts descended from the Eskaleuts
9,000 bpd	Aleut occupation of Anangula Island – In the Bering Sea near the Alaska Peninsula
1670	English Crown chartered the Hudson’s Bay Company – fur trading monopoly in more than half of the territory of British North America (later Canada)
1725-1728	Vitus Bering’s first expedition – <i>St. Gabriel</i> – discovered the Bering Strait, the Diomedede and St. Lawrence Islands in the Bering Sea
1738-1741	Vitus Bering’s second expedition – <i>St. Peter</i> and <i>St. Paul</i> – sighted the Alexander Archipelago – landed on Kayak Island – Bering died of scurvy in Commander Islands

mid-18 th century	about 76,000 Native peoples lived in Alaska – 25,000 Eskimos, 16,000 Aleuts, 35,000 Indians
mid-18 th century	25,000 Eskimos – 2 groups – Northern, Inupiat, Arctic coast and contiguous interior – Southern, Yuit, islands and shores of the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean
mid-18 th century	16,000 Aleuts – 3 groups – Eastern (Alaska Peninsula and Shumagin Islands), 10,000 – Central (Fox and Andreanov Islands), 4,500 – Western (Rat and Near Islands), 1,500
mid-18 th century	35,000 Native Alaskan Indians – 3 groups – Athabaskans, interior, 10,000 – Tlingit, southeast coast, 23,000 – Haida, Prince of Wales Island, 2,000
1776-1780	Captain James Cook, English explorer, tried to sail the Northwest Passage from west to east – pack ice blocked his progress at Icy Cape in the Beaufort Sea
1784	Grigorii Shelikov established the North East Company – built first permanent trading post in Alaska on Kodiak Island
1792-1794	George Vancouver, British naval officer – explored the Northwest coast to Cook Inlet
1799	Russian Government granted a charter to the Russian American Company (RAC) – rights to monopolize trade in Russian America

1799-1819	Alexander Baranov, governor of RAC colony in Russian America – exploited sea otters and fur seals – expanded southward
1808	Baranov set up the RAC capital and fur-trading center in New Archangel (Sitka)
1812	Baranov established Fort Ross in Russian California – exploit sea otters off coastal California – grow or trade for foodstuffs for Russian Alaska
1819-1840	RAC expanded northward into the Bering Sea and interior Alaska, westward into the Kamchatka Peninsula, Kurile/Commander Islands – sea otters, fur seals. walrus ivory
1839-1848	RAC agreement with Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) – RAC gave HBC a monopoly of fur trade in Southeast Alaska – HBC supplied food to RAC
1840-1867	RAC declined, became unprofitable
1841	RAC sold Fort Ross to John Sutter – no longer in need of food supplies from California
1853-1856	Crimean War – Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire soundly defeated Russia
1855-1860	American California supplied flour and beef to Alaska in return for ice and furs
1867	Russia sold Alaska to the United States for \$7.2 million – offset half of the RAC’s accumulated

- losses – Russian Asia (Amuria, Lake Baikal, Central Asia) more attractive
- 1867-1877 U.S. Army governed Alaska ineffectually – only in the two centers of white population, Sitka and Wrangell
- 1877-1879 U.S. Treasury Department governed Alaska ineffectually – only in Sitka and Wrangell
- 1879 first salmon cannery in Alaska established in Klawock, Tlingit village on Prince of Wales Island – began commercial salmon fishery
- 1879-1884 U.S. Navy governed Alaska effectively – only in southeastern panhandle
- 1880-1917 Juneau gold strike – Treadwell mine on Douglas Island – \$17 million of gold
- 1884 U. S. Congress passed First Organic Act – created skeletal territorial government for Alaska – U.S. President appointed the governor – opened Alaska to mining claims
- 1891 Alaska Packers Association established – Seattle-based manufacturer of Alaska canned salmon – became largest salmon-packer in Alaska
- 1896-1900 Klondike gold rush – Yukon Territory, Canada – 40,000 sourdoughs – 400 made fortunes – \$150 million of gold
- 1898-1906 Nome gold rush – 80 miles of beaches and creeks – \$26 million of gold

1902-1906	Fairbanks gold rush – Tanana River valley – \$8 million of gold
1906	Alaska Syndicate formed by J. P. Morgan and Simon Guggenheim – formed the Kennecott Copper Corporation to mine copper ore
1907	U. S. Congress created the Tongass and Chugach National Forests
1907-1911	Alaska Syndicate constructed the Copper River and Northwest Railway – 200 miles from Kennecott to Cordova port – \$29 million
1909-1917	James Wickersham (1857-1939) – Alaska’s Delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives – Alaskan legislature – federal funding of Alaska railroad
1911-1938	Copper River and Northwest Railway moved \$200 million of copper and silver ore
1912	U. S. Congress passed Second Organic Act – gave elected legislature for Alaska – actions subject to veto by federally-appointed governor or by U.S. Congress
1912	U. S. Congress created the Katmai National Monument
1917	U. S. Congress created Mount McKinley National Park (now Denali National Park)

- 1924 U. S. Congress passed the White Act – provided open entry to the Alaskan salmon fishery – sought to retain at least a 50 percent escapement of migrating salmon
- 1925 U. S. Congress created the Glacier Bay National Monument
- 1935 U. S. Congress created the Matanuska Valley Colony – re-settled 203 farm families from Midwest to Alaska – project saved by construction of Fort Richardson in 1940
- 1942 during World War II, Japan captured Attu and Kiska, the two western-most islands in the Aleutian Islands – raided Dutch Harbor in a diversionary tactic
- 1943 Battle of Attu – 11,000 American and Canadian troops regained Attu – nearly all 2,500 Japanese occupiers died – Allies lost 549 men
- 1943 Battle of Kiska – 35,000 Allied troops invaded – all Japanese occupiers had secretly evacuated – 313 unnecessary deaths from friendly fire and booby traps
- 1954-1993 Distant Early Warning (DEW) system active – line of radar stations along the Bering Sea and the Arctic coasts of Alaska and Canada
- 1957 Richfield Oil Company discovered the first commercial deposits of petroleum and natural gas in Alaska – in the Kenai National Moose Range

- 1958 U. S. Senate voted 64 to 20 in favor of Alaska statehood
- 1959 Alaska statehood – on January 3, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed the bill that admitted Alaska as the forty-ninth state
- 1959 Alaska Statehood Act passed – allotted 103 million acres (28 percent of Alaska) for state ownership/development – but exempted lands held for traditional Native uses and federal reserves from state withdrawal
- 1960 U. S. Congress created the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge – on the North Slope, east of Prudhoe Bay
- 1966 Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall placed a moratorium on state land withdrawals – instituted a “land freeze,” until Native land claims were settled
- 1967 Atlantic Richfield Oil Company (ARCO) discovered the Prudhoe Bay oil field on the North Slope – 45 by 18 miles – contained 15 billion barrels of oil – on state-owned land
- 1968-1969 Alaska Governor Walter Hickel authorized the disastrous “Hickel Highway” – a 390-mile scar of ripped mountain and tundra
- 1969 Alaska state government held an oil lease sale of North Slope properties near Prudhoe Bay – earned \$900 million, three times the state budget

- 1971 Alaska Public Interest Coalition (APIC) formed – 12 conservation organizations, led by the Wilderness Society and the Sierra Club – 10 million members at its peak
- 1971 U.S. Congress enacted Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) – 12 Native regional economic development corporations – \$962.5 million – 44 million acres of federal land – plus 80 million acres of land targeted for conservation uses
- 1973 U. S. Congress authorized construction of the trans-Alaska pipeline – ran for 798 miles from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez on Prince William Sound
- 1973-1977 trans-Alaska pipeline constructed – 48-inch pipeline – \$7.7 billion cost – 28,000 workers
- 1976 Alaska state constitutional amendment – created Alaska Permanent Fund – 10 percent of tax revenue and 25 percent of oil revenues – repealed the state income tax
- 1977 President Jimmy Carter reserved 154 million acres of Alaskan land for conservation uses
- 1977-2019 Alaska state government received \$180 billion of oil tax revenue – 80 percent of general fund revenues
- 1980 U.S. Congress enacted Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) – provided

- permanent protection for 104 million additional acres of land in Alaska
- 1984 first land claim settlement involving Inuits in Canada – 2,500 Inuvialuit people accepted 91,000 square kilometers of land and \$152 million – relinquished land claims
- 1986-1988 U.S. Congress permitted Native corporations to sell their losses to American companies to use as tax offsets – Native corporations sold \$1 billion of losses, earning \$300 million
- 1989 *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker ran aground on Bligh Island in Prince William Sound – 10.8 million gallons of crude oil, spilled into the Sound – Exxon spent \$3 billion in clean-up
- 1990 U.S. Congress enacted the Tongass Reform Act – removed output targets for timber production and ended huge subsidies to meet them
- 2020 populations of Eskimo peoples total about 150,000 – Yuit and Inupiat (Alaska, 17,000) – Inuit (Canada, 65,000) – Kalaallit (Greenland, 51,000, and Denmark, 17,000)

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Sites Visited in Alaska and Russian Siberia

A Voyage in Alaska and Siberia Aboard *The World*

***The World*, Residences At Sea**

July 27-August 18, 2012

Ship-based, Aboard *The World*

Wrangell

Sandra and I boarded *The World* in Wrangell, a fishing community of about 2,000 residents. Wrangell is named for Baron Ferdinand von Wrangell, who was the governor of the Russian American Company (RAC) in the 1830s. The island town is sited in the Alexander Archipelago near the mouth of the Stikine River. In 1840, the RAC permitted the Hudson's Bay Company to build Fort Wrangell and trade furs in return for regular supplies of food for Russian America. When the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, Wrangell and Sitka were the only towns with non-Native residents. Wrangell soon boomed as a supply center for gold rushers using the Stikine to reach the Cassiar (British Columbia, 1872-1874) and the Klondike (Yukon, 1896-1900). We thoroughly enjoyed visiting Wrangell's excellent museum and learning about the town's frontier history.

Petersburg

Petersburg feels like a small fishing town in coastal Norway. The Norwegian-Americans there proudly display a renovated Viking ship next door to the beautifully-maintained Sons of Norway hall, built in 1912. An immigrant from Norway, Peter Buschmann and his son, August, started Petersburg in 1897 and built the town's first fish cannery the next year. Located on Mitkov Island, Petersburg was settled mainly by immigrants from Norway. Today, the prosperous town of nearly 3,000 residents is one of America's twelve leading producers of fish and seafood products – principally salmon, halibut, crab, and herring. Its locally-owned fish plants export more than \$60 million of fresh, frozen,

or canned seafood annually. Sandra and I toured the attractive town, visited its modest museum, and hiked the Hungry Point Trail (named in the depressed 1930s).

Haines

Haines was once a Tlingit village, sited alongside beautiful Lynn Canal in the northern part of the Alaska panhandle. Haines, now a small town with 1,800 residents, including about 200 Tlingits, gained importance during the Cold War when the US government built the Haines Highway and Pipeline to provide coastal access to military bases near Fairbanks in central Alaska. Today, the economy of the port town is based on commercial fishing, supply services, and tourism. *The World* anchored near Haines for a day and one-half of unusually gorgeous weather – little rain and some sun. Sandra and I escorted a ship's tour to Chilkoot Lake and followed Speedy, a 7-year-old female brown bear, as she cavorted for several miles down the Chilkoot River. We also joined a sturdy small group on a challenging 4-hour, 6-mile hike up 1800 feet to the top of Mount Riley.

Hoonah (Icy Strait Point)

Hoonah is a Tlingit town with 750 permanent residents – three-fourths of them Hoonah Tlingit. The attractive town's renovations have been made by the Hoonah Native Village Corporation, formed after the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Located on the northern side of Chichagov Island, 30 miles south of Glacier Bay, Hoonah relies on salmon fishing and tourism. The Hoonah Packing Company celebrated its centennial this year. The Hoonah Tlingit, whose ancestral home is in the area now occupied by Glacier Bay National Park, have received park funding to build and decorate a tribal house in the park. Sandra and I visited the workshop of the three talented Hoonah wood-carvers who are creating the story-panel, house poles and totem poles for the project. We also attended a dance and raven-story performance and a local seafood feast.

Cordova

Cordova once was the port that exported the most copper in the world. The Kennecott copper mines, linked to Cordova by 200 miles of rail, produced \$300 million of copper ore between 1911 and 1938. The copper ore, assayed at 75 percent pure, was the world's richest. Cordova boomed as the ore was shipped onward to the Alaska Syndicate's smelter in Tacoma, Washington. Today, Cordova is a prosperous fishing town with 2,000 permanent residents. Local fishermen harvest the plentiful salmon runs up the Copper River and other salmon streams in Prince William Sound. The scenery surrounding Cordova is stunning. Sandra and I hiked up the Mt. Eyak Trail to reach an overlook of the town and its nearby islands and coasts. At the museum, we learned about the disastrous effects on seabirds and sea otters of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in 1989.

Anchorage

Two out of five Alaskans live in Anchorage, a sprawling city of 290,000 residents. Anchorage was founded in 1915 to serve as a base for workers building the Alaskan Railroad – the only rail line in the United States constructed by the federal government. Located strategically on the Cook Inlet in south-central Alaska, Anchorage has expanded to become the state's only large city. Many of the oil-industry workers on the North Slope live in Anchorage and commute to work by plane. I escorted a tour of the Alaska Native Heritage Center and enjoyed exhibitions of Native homes, meeting houses, and dances. Sandra and I spent a delightful evening with a dozen Alaskans at the home of a naturalist friend, hiked eight miles along the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, and climbed near Flat Top, Anchorage's most popular viewpoint (at an elevation of 3,150 feet).

St. Paul Island, Pribilof Islands

On the following day, we arrived at the historic Pribilof Islands in the southern Bering Sea. The Pribilofs, St. Paul and St. George, have breeding rookeries for northern fur seals. They were uninhabited until 1786, when a Russian fur trapper, Gavriil Pribilof, found them teeming with fur seals. The Russians forced a number of Unangan (Aleuts) to set up a village on St. Paul to hunt the fur seals. Today, St. Paul has 550 permanent residents, mostly Unangan, who fish for halibut in small boats and practice the Russian Orthodox religion. St. Paul also houses a large crab fishery in the winter and spring. We were blessed with rare and balmy 66-degree weather in St. Paul. We visited the icon-rich, Russian Orthodox Church and the modest museum. Later, we hiked out to a large fur seal rookery, where male beach masters guarded their territories, harems, and pups.

Provideniya, Russian Siberia

Provideniya, a sea of contradictions, was founded by the Soviets in 1937 to serve as a port at the eastern end of the maritime Great Northern Route along the Arctic Ocean. When the Cold War began, the USSR established a military base in Ureliky, across the bay from Provideniya. The town grew to house 6,000 permanent residents who survived the harsh climate to provide services to the port and military base. The Soviets also forced some of the Chukchi reindeer herders and the Siberian Yupik Eskimo sea-mammal hunters to move to Provideniya and become laborers. When the Soviet Union imploded in 1991, Provideniya collapsed. The port closed, and the town lost 1,000 jobs. In 1996, the Russians closed the Ureliky military base, removing the region's other economic pillar. Today, Provideniya has 2,200 residents, about half Native (Siberian Yupik and Chukchi) and half European-Russian. They put on an amazing performance of songs and dances for our group, incorporating Russian, Native, and American motifs. Near the shining statue of Lenin, the town also has a nice little museum amid pastel-painted restored buildings and abandoned wrecks.

Nome

Nome is a port city of 3,500 (mostly Native) residents and a regional center for the scattered Inupiat communities in western Alaska. Nome had a gold rush in 1898, and 20,000 hopeful prospectors were panning for gold on 40 miles of beach in 1900. Gold production peaked in 1906, and Nome survived as a small regional hub on the southern side of the Seward Peninsula. Today, Nome relies largely on government work and expenditures. It no longer looks like a boom town. A new hard-rock gold mine opened in 2007 and provided 100 jobs, but it has not triggered another boom. Nome serves as the terminus for the renowned Iditarod dog-mushing race. Sandra and I hiked around the fascinating little town during the last afternoon of our expedition aboard *The World*. We enjoyed Nome's excellent Carrie McLain Museum and historic Board of Trade Saloon.

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Alaska Family Adventure
Stanford Travel/Study Program
July 30-August 9, 2011
Land-based

Anchorage and Seward

Sandra and I flew into Anchorage a day before the Stanford trip began so that we could meet with our Alaskan colleagues, make final trip plans, and introduce Abigail and Nate Seevak, our grandchildren, to Alaska's major city. We paid a lengthy visit to the excellent Anchorage Museum, where the adults admired the exhibitions on Alaskan cultures and the kids loved the interactive scientific exhibits. We spent half a day strolling around the city, finding good ice cream in a mall, and watching salmon fishermen in a river. The next day, with the Stanford group, we visited the impressive Alaska Native Heritage Center and were introduced to all of the state's principal cultures through exhibitions of Native homes and meeting and storage buildings.

We then drove to Seward and hiked up to the face of the Exit Glacier, one of the more than 40 glaciers that come off the vast Harding Ice Field. Seward – named for Secretary of State William Seward who arranged the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867 – is a small port town on the Kenai Peninsula, south of Anchorage. Because its harbor is ice-free all year, Seward is the terminus of the Alaskan Railroad.

Kenai Fjords National Park

The Kenai Peninsula juts southwestward from Anchorage into the north Pacific Ocean. In 1980, the federal government enacted legislation that tripled the area of Alaskan land devoted to conservation (parks, wilderness, and preserves), bringing the total to 40 percent of Alaskan land. The Kenai Fjords National Park was one of the five new national parks created by that important act. Located in the southeastern part of Kenai Peninsula, the new park contains spectacular fjord scenery and features wondrous glaciers, all emanating from the Harding Ice Field. Alaska Wildland Adventures constructed a beautiful eco-tourism lodge, the Kenai Fjords Glacial Lodge, on land leased from the Port Graham Native Village Corporation, which opened in 2009. The lodge is sited on a tidal lagoon and on clear days has a spectacular view of the Pederson Glacier.

Our group cruised from Seward to the lodge on a new AWA boat, designed for that run. We sailed at a leisurely pace to observe the park's numerous marine mammals – orcas (killer whales), Dall porpoises, Steller's sea lions, sea otters, and harbor seals – and seabirds (puffins, cormorants, gulls, and terns). We then spent three idyllic days at the fabulous lodge – ignoring the pelting rain (eight inches fell in one day). The lodge had magnificent food, a congenial and well-informed staff, and comfortable accommodations. Abigail twice identified large black bears loping outside our cabin. One bear crawled into a lodge canoe on the deck. We hiked on nature walks to the glaciers, and we kayaked and canoed on the lagoon and along the seashore among sea otters and

harbor seals. While drying out, we enjoyed the ambience of the lodge with lectures and games.

Denali National Park

Denali (originally McKinley) National Park was established in 1917 – to protect Dall sheep habitat and to commemorate Mt. Denali (then McKinley), the highest point in North America (at 20,320 feet elevation). In the landmark conservation legislation of 1980, the area of Denali Park was tripled – from 2 million acres to 6 million acres. The original park is now designated as a wilderness region, and much of the expanded park area is designated controversially as a “preserve,” which means that it is open to both subsistence and recreational uses, including hunting. Along with the stunning scenery of the snow-topped Alaska Range, Denali Park contains prime habitat for Alaskan wildlife that live on tundra shrubs and grasses. Access to the park is limited to one 91-mile-long road, located north of the Alaska Range and the two highest Denali peaks.

Before Denali Park was expanded, three lodges were built on private land at the end of the current road. Our group stayed in the Kantishna Roadhouse, the smallest of the three (32 cabins). In a visit to Denali, the journey is as important as the destination. During our 11 hours of bussing to and from the Roadhouse, we were entertained by a 38-year-veteran driver/guide with very impressive animal-spotting skills. We observed a fascinating by-play featuring a large grizzly (Alaska brown) bear protecting a recently-killed caribou carcass from a wolf and a raven with intermittent charges. We stopped to enjoy sightings of moose (including large-antlered bulls), caribou, and Dall sheep (at far distances on mountains). One care-free wolf sauntered down the road by our stopped bus. From the roadhouse, we hiked to see magnificent Mt. Denali on a sunny day.

Fairbanks

Between 1880 and World War I, Alaska had three large gold rushes, centered on Juneau (starting in 1880), Nome (1898), and Fairbanks. The Fairbanks gold rush began in 1902 after the discovery of gold in the Tanana River Valley of central Alaska. Fairbanks emerged as Alaska's first important interior town and remained the largest settlement in Alaska for many years. Gold production in Alaska peaked in 1906, and in that year the Fairbanks region produced 3.8 million ounces, more than half of Alaska's total. Later, the Alaskan Railroad connected Fairbanks with Anchorage and Seward. Today, Fairbanks has about 30,000 permanent residents plus a large itinerant population of university students. The University of Alaska-Fairbanks is the state's premier university, housing scholars focused on scientific study of Alaskan and Arctic issues.

Our Stanford families drove northward from the Denali Park entrance to Fairbanks and spent our last day there. We had two main objectives during our visit to Alaska's second largest town. The first was to see the University of Alaska-Fairbanks' marvelous Museum of the North, housed on the main campus. That museum has a remarkable collection of exhibits from all cultures of Alaska, categorized by region, and an interesting collection of paintings by Alaskan artists. We observed 25,000-year-old tusks from mammoths and mastodons, 19th-century Tlingit totem poles, and recent toys used by Inupiaq and Yupik (Eskimo) children. We wrapped up our wonderful family visit to Alaska with a farewell banquet and related festivities – a Family Jeopardy competition, certificates for all Young Explorers, songs, skits, and remembrances.

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Alaska Family Adventure
Stanford Travel/Study Program
August 2-August 10, 2008
Ship-based, Aboard the *National Geographic Sea Bird*

Juneau

Juneau, a pleasant port town of 30,000 permanent residents, is the capital of Alaska. Today, the town depends on government jobs and seasonal tourism from large cruise ships and small expedition ships. But in the 1880s, Juneau was a boom town – the site of Alaska’s first gold rush and the first sizeable non-Native settlement in the new American territory. When a territorial government was formed in 1912, Juneau became the territorial capital. We visited the worthwhile Juneau City Museum and the excellent Alaska State Museum, which contain accessible exhibits of Alaskan Native (Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut) culture and resource booms. We ventured outside Juneau to observe the spectacular Mendenhall Glacier. The Mendenhall was retreating at a rate of 80 feet per year in the 1990s, but that annual rate has accelerated to 200 feet in the past decade.

Endicott Arm

Overnight, we sailed southward into Endicott Arm, a fjord in the mainland portion of Southeast Alaska. We awoke to see our first large iceberg, which had calved off the huge Dawes Glacier. We sailed to the end of the arm to observe Dawes Glacier from a close, but safe, distance. Like all glaciers, Dawes was a magnificent bright blue, because the dense ice refracts only the blue color of the rainbow’s seven. En route, our geologist pointed out a classic hanging valley, formed where a subsidiary glacier had entered the main Dawes field, prior to the melt back at the end of the Wisconsin glacial age (about 13,000 years ago). Along the edges of the fjord were gorgeous waterfalls. In the afternoon, we went ashore at Williams Cove in nearby Holkham Bay and began our exhilarating daily program of nature hikes and kayaking (in one- or two-person kayaks).

Thomas Bay and Petersburg

We divided our second day between a morning hike near Thomas Bay (a fjord off Frederick Sound) and an afternoon in Petersburg (on Mitkof

Island). The spectacular sunny weather permitted endless photos of mountains and waterfalls and their reflections in the fjord waters below. We embarked on our most challenging hike of the trip, a steep and muddy climb alongside Cascade Creek. Those of us older than 16 years often had a difficult time keeping up with the energetic youngsters. The misty light through the temperate rainforest gave unforgettable images, and somehow we avoided injurious falls. Petersburg looks like a small fishing town in coastal Norway. The Norwegian-Americans there proudly display a renovated Viking ship next door to the beautifully-maintained Sons of Norway hall. In a hardware store, I was able to buy a full-sized Norwegian flag.

Chatham Strait

During the night, we sailed westward to Chatham Strait, which runs north-and-south between Baranof and Admiralty Islands. We cruised along the shore of Baranof Island, searching for wildlife, and then anchored in the afternoon at Hanus Bay on Baranof. After going ashore, we continued our active program of nature hikes and kayaking. Nearly all of Southeast Alaska is part of the Tongass National Forest. Our naturalists pointed out the two dominant species of trees in the Tongass, western hemlock (70 percent) and Sitka spruce (20 percent), and explained that these two species won the race to have their trees grow fast and reach the sunlight at the top of the temperate rainforest's canopy. The temperate rain forest, with only one canopy at the top, is lighter than the tropical rainforest, which has multiple layers of canopy that provide more shade.

George Island and Inian Islands

The *Sea Bird* next sailed northward to the Icy Strait and westward to the Pacific Ocean, through the main outlet for the northern part of Southeastern Alaska. In the morning we went ashore on George Island, a tiny speck of land that once had great perceived strategic importance. During the Second World War, Japan (in mid-1942) invaded and

captured the two westernmost islands in the Aleutian chain, Attu and Kiska. American military leaders feared a Japanese invasion of other parts of Alaska. Among numerous installations, they placed a 16-inch artillery gun on George Island, hoping to protect Cross Sound – the key entry to Icy Strait. We climbed George to observe that weapon, which never was fired at a Japanese ship, and other war detritus. We later cruised by numerous hauled-out Steller's sea lions in the neighboring Inian Islands.

Glacier Bay National Park

John Muir, the famed conservationist, was introduced to Glacier Bay by Tlingit Indian guides in 1879. The English explorer, George Vancouver, had sailed to the mouth of Glacier Bay in 1794 and noted a large glacier there. In less than a century, the glacier had retreated nearly 50 miles and opened Glacier Bay to Muir. Today, the glaciers fed by ice fields near the Pacific Ocean, which receive exceptional amounts of snowfall, are advancing, whereas those fed by leeward ice fields are retreating. In a beautiful day of cruising through Glacier Bay National Park, we saw six brown bears and five mountain goats on our northward journey. Our destination was the spectacular Johns Hopkins Glacier (named by a researcher/explorer for his employer). We cruised through small icebergs and observed several significant calving actions at the face of Johns Hopkins.

Pavlof Harbor

We returned to Chatham Strait to visit Pavlof Harbor and explore for humpback whales. At 6 AM and again after lunch, our whale expert called us to the deck to observe an incredible sight. In both instances, a dozen humpbacks were engaged in cooperative feeding. They began by diving several hundred feet below the surface. Beneath a massive school of herring, one humpback blew a wide circle of bubbles and made a bubble-net to scare the fish. Others trumpeted frightening sounds to disorient the fish further. Suddenly, all twelve of the whales

shot simultaneously to the surface with their mouths open to catch the herring. They repeated this pattern about every four minutes. The photographs of this behavior were stunning, since about half of each 40-ton whale shot out of the water, often near our ship. Bubble-netting was the highlight of our trip.

Sitka

Sitka, with only 9,000 permanent residents, is Alaska's fifth largest town (after Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Ketchikan). Sitka originally was a Tlingit Indian village and later the capital of Russian Alaska (1808-1867) and the territorial capital of American Alaska (1867-1912). In the six-day Battle of Sitka (1804), traders from the Russian American Company and their Aleut allies defeated the Tlingits and established Sitka as a Russian trading base. The Russians shifted their operations southward from Kodiak Island to exploit the sea otters of Southeast Alaska. After disembarking the *Sea Bird*, we visited the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Michael (many Alaskans still practice Orthodoxy), the Raptor Center (which rehabilitates injured birds of prey), and the Sitka National Historic Park (which features Tlingit culture and totem poles).

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**Wild Alaska – The Bering Sea and Alaska
Zegrahm Expeditions
July 3-July 16, 2006
Ship-based, Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey***

Nome

On the morning of the 4th of July, we took a charter flight to Nome. We arrived after the 4th of July parade was over, but we were in time to see the traditional celebratory Inupiaq blanket toss in the town square. We panned for gold on the beach and observed an old, abandoned gold

dredger at close range. Nome survives largely on government work and expenditures. It no longer looks much like a boom town. Late in the afternoon of the 4th, we boarded the *Clipper Odyssey* and began the at-sea phase of our expedition.

Little Diomed Island

After leaving Nome, we sailed northwestward to Little Diomed Island in the heart of the Bering Sea. A resilient group of about 120 Inupiaq Eskimos live on the island, which is 47 miles off the coast of mainland Alaska. Their means of subsistence is largely traditional, and they hunt walruses, seals, whales, and birds with the same *umiak* boats and other equipment that they have used for centuries. Our group observed meat of bearded seals hung out to dry and new *umiaks* under construction, each requiring the skins of four walruses. We happened to be there on the day when the helicopter comes from the mainland with mail and supplies. The Inupiaq people on Little Diomed were incredibly welcoming and open about their culture and problems.

Five years ago, everyone over 18 years in the island's only village, Inalpak, voted on whether to stay on Little Diomed or relocate the village on the mainland of Alaska. They chose overwhelmingly to stay put. But there is no assurance that the younger members of the village will choose to continue the traditional lifestyle. Many have learned the Inupiaq songs and dances, as we observed, but few know the language and most of the younger folks had voted to relocate the village. The remarkable little community is free of crime (they have no policemen), has few alcohol problems (the village has been dry for three decades), and the leaders claim that their Native Corporation has invested its assets profitably. Nevertheless, the villagers lived at a very basic level. They had radio and Internet connections but received no television service. The prices in their only grocery store were about three times higher than those in California.

Big Diomed Island, Russian Siberia

After departing from Little Diomedede, we sailed four miles west to Big Diomedede Island, part of Russia because it is on the western side of the International Date Line. The only inhabitants of Big Diomedede are Russian border guards, because all of the Inupiaq people left that island by the 1960s. We observed walrus hauls on rocks, but saw no sign of the Russian border guards. We then headed straight north up the Date Line to the point where it crosses the Arctic Circle. There we had a champagne celebration, and a few hardy (and foolhardy) staff and passengers dove into the 32-degree Arctic Ocean water that the Captain had nicely pumped into the ship's swimming pool. En route we bathed in the warm sun on deck and watched spouting gray whales quite near the ship. We then headed the ship south and west and ran down the coast of the Chukchi Peninsula in Chukotka Province of Russia.

Gambell, St. Lawrence Island

Overnight, we sailed eastward to the large village of Gambell, St. Lawrence Island. Although the Zodiac landings on a pebbled beach were difficult, Gambell provided a delightful contrast to Provideniya. St. Lawrence Island is populated by about 1,500 Siberian Yupik Eskimos. About half of them live in Gambell, and the other half inhabit a village called Savoonga, which spun off from Gambell about 90 years ago when some of the Yupik people decided to herd reindeer. The St. Lawrence Yupiks are so proud of St. Lawrence Island that they used their Native claims settlement to obtain ownership of the entire island rather than to receive a partly cash settlement. Their lifestyle is a mixture of traditional and modern practices. They subsist mostly on seals and walrus. Each April, they hunt bowhead whales. The International Whaling Commission allots them a quota of eight bowheads a year, but they rarely manage to take more than three.

The Yupik people move around their impressive village in three-wheeled All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs) because the beach gravel is very difficult to walk on. They also have electricity, television, Internet

connections, a well-managed health clinic, elementary and secondary schools, and a sewage system. The St. Lawrence Yupiks teach their language and culture to their children. We observed a diverse song-and-dance performance and had an interesting discussion of local culture in their recreation hall. The drummers also explained how they make their Eskimo drums out of the stomachs of walruses and imported hickory wood. Many of the men made extra income by hunting and carving walrus tusks. The village appeared to be thriving, and very few of the villagers had any desire to leave St. Lawrence Island. It was an uplifting experience to see a group of remotely-located Alaskan Natives thriving and promoting the preservation of their culture.

Hall and St. Matthew Islands

We continued our southward sailing direction through the night and arrived the following morning in the most remote part of Bering Sea Alaska – Hall and St. Matthew Islands – both uninhabited. These two nearby islands were paradise for the birders in our group. In the morning, we made two Zodiac cruises along Hall Island with half of the passengers on each cruise. We sailed next to two cliff breeding and nesting sites for several of the Bering Sea’s pelagic bird species (the ones that spend all of their time at sea except for the breeding cycle on land) – common and thick-billed murre, black-legged and red-legged kittiwakes, and pelagic and red-billed cormorants. I was fortunate to be in one of the two Zodiacs that found three young male Steller sea lions frolicking in the open sea. After repositioning the ship during lunch, we landed the Zodiacs at a beach on St. Matthews Island for an afternoon of hiking and bird- and whale-watching. I was one of the leaders of the “survival-of-the-fittest” long walk – three and one-half hours up and down hills in soft, mushy tundra. When we returned to the beach, we watched two gray whales, a sow and her calf, rolling around in the shallow water. Our cetacean expert estimated that the sow probably weighed 40 tons.

St. George, Pribilof Islands

On the following day, we arrived at the historic Pribilof Islands in the southern Bering Sea. The Pribilofs, St. Paul and St. George, have long been the site of most of the breeding rookeries for northern fur seals. We visited St. George, the second main island in the Pribilof group, whose only village has about 100 year-round, mostly-Aleut residents. There we were greeted with more typical Bering Sea weather – cool temperatures, biting winds, and chilling rain. We braved the elements to see another fur seal rookery, an exquisite Russian Orthodox Church, and a rich bird cliff featuring tufted puffins, red-legged kittiwakes, and crested auklets. The women fed us tasty traditional Aleut foods – halibut pie, reindeer stew, and seal meatloaf. The people in the Pribilofs work mainly in government jobs or for environmental research projects, although a few still fish for halibut or crabs.

Dutch Harbor, Unalaska Island, The Aleutian Islands

Our first Aleutian stop was Unalaska Island. We spent a very pleasant half-day in Dutch Harbor, formerly an important American air base and now Alaska's main fishing port and the leading fishing port in the United States in terms of volume of fish processed. Dutch Harbor processes about \$150 million of fish each year. The most profitable catches are crab in the winter and halibut and pollock in the summer. Pollock is now the most valuable fish species in Alaska's total catch and is used in low-cost fish fillets, mostly for fast-food restaurants. The port has about 4,000 year-round residents, including 400 Aleuts, the booming fishing industry provides full employment, and the small progressive community prides itself on its excellent school system and local musical groups.

We visited the excellent Museum of the Aleutians, an interesting museum focused on World War Two in Alaska, and a fascinating Russian Orthodox Church that contained fabulous Russian icons from the 16th century. The American air base in Dutch Harbor had been bombed in June 1942. Japanese military leaders had hoped to divert

American forces to the Aleutians before the Battle of Midway. But the Americans had broken the Japanese naval code and thus kept their navy intact for the victory at Midway that turned the War of the Pacific in favor of the Allies.

During lunch, we steamed eastward to the Baby Islands and went through Baby Pass to observe hard-to-find whiskered auklets and ancient murrelets. The seas were high and the weather foul, so we abandoned the plan to have Zodiac cruises in the Baby Islands. We sailed on to Akutan Island, east of Unalaska Island, and found an idyllic beach to explore. Suddenly, the weather had turned balmy, and we shed our warm jackets and walked along a beautiful black-sand beach as sea otters and Steller's sea lions swam in the kelp-filled bay. Surprising discoveries like Sarana Beach make expedition cruises exciting and fulfilling.

Unga Island, Shumagin Islands, The Aleutian Islands

We spent the next day on Unga Island, one of the nineteen islands in the Shumagin Island archipelago, located at the end of the Alaska Peninsula. We waited for low tide in the morning so that we could visit a petrified forest at Unga Spit. About 23 million years ago, the vegetation of this region of Alaska was a forest of mega-sequoia trees. A massive volcanic eruption and years of gradual intrusion of minerals into the surrounded organic material created a petrified forest. We observed petrified tree trunks up to 100 feet high with diameters of 10 feet and more. A bald eagle sat on its nest high above us on a cliff, curiously observing our exploration of petrified stumps and tide-pools.

Over lunch, our captain re-positioned the ship for an afternoon landing at the abandoned village of Unga at Delarof Harbor on the southeastern corner of Unga Island. Unga Island, like all of the Aleutian Islands, had been settled by Aleut people for thousands of years. Unga Island was uninhabited when Captain James Cook stopped there briefly in 1778 during his unsuccessful attempt to find the Northwest Passage. Russian

fur traders arrived six years later and established a trading village, which they named Greko-Delarovskoe, after their leader, Captain Delarof. The village was nearly destroyed by a tsunami in 1788, but the Russians resettled more Aleuts, rebuilt the village, and maintained the port as a way station between their key fur-trading ports on Kodiak and Unalaska Islands.

After the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, gold was discovered on Unga Island. The Apollo Consolidated Gold Company, headquartered in San Francisco, built a company town at Unga village. During the 1880s and 1890s, Apollo created a planned community replete with a school, Methodist church, dance hall, general store, post office, and numerous two-story homes in the idyllic beach-and-mountain setting. The gold boom ended before World War One, and the bustling community began a long decline. Fox farming sustained the village in the 1920s and then failed in the Great Depression. A salmon cannery was built in Sand Point, in neighboring Popov Island, in the 1920s, and people from Unga began moving away. The population of Unga fell to 150 by 1930. The last residents abandoned Unga village in the 1960s. Today, the village ruins serve as a microcosm of resource exploitation in boom-and-bust Alaska – furs, gold, salmon, and decline.

Chignik, Alaska Peninsula and Aghiyuk Island, Semidi Islands

We sailed eastward through the last of the Aleutian Islands and landed next at Chignik on the Alaska Peninsula. Chignik is a village of about 500 inhabitants, mostly Alutiiq people. The Alutiiqs, who primarily inhabit Kodiak Island, are genetically related to the Aleuts and culturally akin to the Yupik Eskimos and the Tlingit Indians of Southeast Alaska. The Alutiiqs moved to Chignik from Katmai in 1916, after the disastrous volcanic eruptions at Katmai. Traditionally, they subsisted on salmon fishing and caribou and bear hunting. Today, Chignik's major economic base is fishing for salmon and halibut and processing fish for export at a large fish-processing plant (once a cannery and now a flash-freezing operation).

We strolled through the village and along the pebbled beach, enjoyed the views of mountains, rivers, and waterfalls, and made a mandatory stop at the Donut Hole, where we tasted some of Alaska's finest doughnuts.

Twenty years ago, my daughter, Sarah, spent six weeks as a public health volunteer in Chignik Harbor, a neighboring fishing village. Using wet-suits, Sarah and another Harvard undergrad taught Alutiiq teenagers how to swim, since drowning accidents were a major cause of teenage deaths for Alaska's Native peoples. The team spent the second half of that summer in Bethel, in the Kuskokwim River delta, teaching swimming to Yupik Eskimo teenagers.

The *Clipper Odyssey* sailed during lunch to Aghiyuk Island, the northern-most island in the Semidi Islands, which lie south of the Alaska Peninsula. Aghiyuk is uninhabited and beautiful. Several of us climbed to the top of the island's highest ridge and luxuriated in the sights beneath us. The tundra mosses were so thick that our feet bounced as we hiked, and they provided a soft mattress when we sat down to rest along the way up and down the verdant hills.

Kodiak, Kodiak Island

Kodiak is an impressive and scenic Alaskan fishing port, located on Kodiak Island (the second largest island in the United States after Hawaii). The town of 10,000 residents is Alaska's second most important center for fish processing (after Dutch Harbor). A favorite local quip is that Kodiak has four seasons – salmon, halibut, crab, and herring. Kodiak once was densely populated by Alutiiq people, relatives of the Unangan (Aleut) people, who were heavily influenced by the Unangan, Yupik Eskimo, and Tlingit Indian cultures. Today, only about 4,000 Alutiiqs live on Kodiak Island, and many more have moved to other parts of Alaska or to Seattle. Between 1793 and 1808, Kodiak, then called Pavlovsk, was the headquarters of the Russian American Company and thus the most important Russian center in Russian America (Alaska).

Then a center for the export of sea otter and fur seal pelts and walrus ivory, Kodiak has been a fishing center for more than a century. We saw the highlights of the bustling town in a half-day visit. Our rapid tour included Fort Abercrombie (an American military base during World War Two), the new center for fisheries research and Alutiiq Museum (both built largely with funds obtained from Exxon after the disastrous Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989), the Baranov Museum (featuring historical artifacts from Russian Alaska and sited in the oldest Russian building in Kodiak), a US Coast Guard base (which has 2,500 servicemen and 1,000 dependents), and an eclectic cultural performance by a group of Russian Orthodox Christian high school and seminary students. In Kodiak, we purchased a huge order of Dungeness crab, which served as the basis for the best meal that we had on our expedition.

After departing from Kodiak, we encountered several pods of orcas (killer whales), containing perhaps 40 whales. The orcas cavorted around our ship for more than an hour to the delight of all passengers. Our cetacean expert explained that the matriarchal orcas normally travel in pods led by the senior female, but occasionally gather together in groups while migrating or hunting.

Geographic Harbor, Katmai National Park

The final day of our cruise was spectacular. Geographic Harbor, in Katmai National Park on the south coast of southwestern Alaska, is one of the best places in the world to observe wild brown bears (sometimes called grizzly or Kodiak bears). We put our Zodiacs in the water for five hours, cruised around the shores and beaches of Geographic Harbor, and saw more than two dozen of those magnificent creatures. The brown bears on the coast dig in the sand for clams, crack open the shells by pressing on them, and slurp in the clam innards. We waited until the tide was low, cruised quietly up to several of the clamming bears, and observed this fascinating process at close hand (within 20 feet). We saw

1,000-pound boar bears as well as sows with cubs. It was exciting to watch the bears swim between islands and spits of land, dog-paddling with their backs entirely out of the water.

None of the bears was agitated by our presence, probably because they are protected in Alaska and few tourists are able to visit them in the way that we did. All of this excitement occurred in incredibly beautiful surroundings, marked by mountains, waterfalls, misty clouds, and forested islets. It was a perfect way to end a marvelous journey. On the following day, we cruised into Homer, took a short flight from Homer to Anchorage, and connected onward to return home, exhilarated by our observations of scenery, fauna, and culture. We still cannot believe how good the weather was on this wonderful trip.

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**The Bering Sea and Alaska
Clipper Cruise Line
June 21-July 13, 2003
Ship-based, Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey***

Petropavlovsk, Kamchatka, Russian Siberia

We took a charter flight from Anchorage to Petropavlovsk, a port city and capital of the Russian Siberian province of Kamchatka. The highlight of our day in Petropavlovsk was a helicopter flight-seeing tour to the Valley of the Geysers in southern Kamchatka. The concentration of major geysers there is the densest in the world, although the height of the eruptions is less than in Yellowstone Park and Iceland. On the flights to and from the geysers, we observed spectacular vistas of volcanoes, crater lakes, snow-capped mountains, and Pacific Ocean shores.

Attu, Kiska, and Adak, The Aleutian Islands

The first leg of the cruise on the *Clipper Odyssey* took us from Siberia across the Aleutian Islands to Seward in south-central Alaska. Because of Russian naval exercises, we had to miss our scheduled stop in the Russian Commander Islands (located between the Kamchatka Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands). We then island-hopped along several of the larger Aleutian Islands, proceeded on to the Alaskan Peninsula, and made a few stops on the western Pacific coast of the mainland of Alaska. We had incredibly good fortune with the weather, avoiding high seas and enjoying rare sunshine. The primary features of interest were rare birds and sea mammals, scenic volcanoes, and memorabilia from battles in the Second World War.

Our first Aleutian stop was Attu, the site of the second bloodiest battle of the Pacific theatre in World War II (after Iwo Jima). Attu now houses 20 Coast Guard volunteers and numerous birds, including vagrants from Siberia that especially interest American birdwatchers. We went on to Kiska, the other Aleutian Island that Japan occupied for a year in 1942-1943. Our two veterans of the Aleutian battles regaled us with their memorable stories of fighting and serving in these remote western islands more than 60 years ago. Our next Aleutian stop was Adak, which was the major American naval base in the North Pacific until 1997 (with 5000 residents) and is now nearly deserted (with 67 hardy souls). We saw numerous sea otters and Steller sea lions offshore this volcanic island. We cruised by several small, steep-cliffed islands that serve as seabird rookeries, notably Chagulak.

Prince William Sound, Valdez, and Kayak Island

On the second leg of the cruise, we sailed from Seward – east through Prince William Sound and south through the Inside Passage of Southeast Alaska – and ended our journey eleven days later in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada. Bright sun shone nearly every day, and it rarely drizzled rain. In Prince William Sound, we explored the Harriman and Harvard Glaciers on zodiac cruises, marveled at the blue ice being calved from the glaciers, and observed sea otters, Steller sea

lions, harbor seals, puffins, murrelets, and countless other seabirds. We spent half a day in Valdez, the port that is the southern terminus of the Alyeska pipeline, and enjoyed a tour of Keystone Canyon and its magnificent waterfalls. Next we sailed on to Kayak Island in the Gulf of Alaska, where Vitus Bering and Georg Steller made the first European landfall and land claim in Russian America.

Chichagof Island and Tracy Arm

We made a delightful short visit to Elfin Cove on Chichagof Island in Southeast Alaska, a tiny and charming fishing community that is reluctantly converting to tourism as fishing income declines. We sailed more deeply into Southeast Alaska to enter Tracy Arm and observe the spectacular calving of the South Sawyer Glacier and the overhead soaring of bald eagles.

Misty Fjords Wilderness Area, Metlakatla, Annette Island, Ketchikan, and Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada

We interrupted our tours of towns to spend a beautiful day of zodiac cruising in the Misty Fjords Wilderness Area within the Tongass National Forest, highlighted by close-up observations of a black bear sow with her three two-year-old cubs. On the penultimate day of our cruise, we spent a morning in Metlakatla on Annette Island, Alaska's only Indian reservation, inhabited by Tsimshian Indians who migrated there from British Columbia in 1887 to establish a utopian Christian community, and an afternoon in Ketchikan, a depressed town of 8000 people who are hoping that tourism will replace jobs lost through the decline of forestry. In both communities, we observed Northwest Coastal Indian culture, including dances, totem poles, canoes, homes, and art objects. Our last morning was spent in Prince Rupert, British Columbia, where we toured a magnificent museum containing exhibits of Tsimshian Indian clothing and artifacts. We then took a chartered flight to Seattle and connected onward to return home, exhilarated by our observations of scenery, fauna, and culture.