

1986

Millie Stymann
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32



A L A S K A

Seattle ferry

ALASKA'S FLAG

EIGHT STARS OF GOLD ON A FIELD OF
BLUE.

ALASKA'S FLAG, MAY IT MEAN TO YOU
THE BLUE OF THE SEA, THE EVENING SKY
THE MOUNTAIN LAKES, AND THE FLOW'RS
NEARBY;

THE GOLD OF THE EARLY SOURDOUGH'S
DREAMS,
THE PRECIOUS GOLD OF THE HILLS AND
STREAMS;

THE BRILLIANT STARS IN THE NORTHERN
SKY,
THE "BEAR", THE "DIPPER", AND SHINING
HIGH

THE GREAT NORTH STAR WITH ITS STEADY
LIGHT

O'ER LAND AND SEA A BEACON BRIGHT,
ALASKA'S FLAG - TO ALASKANS DEAR,
THE SIMPLE FLAG OF A LAST FRONTIER.

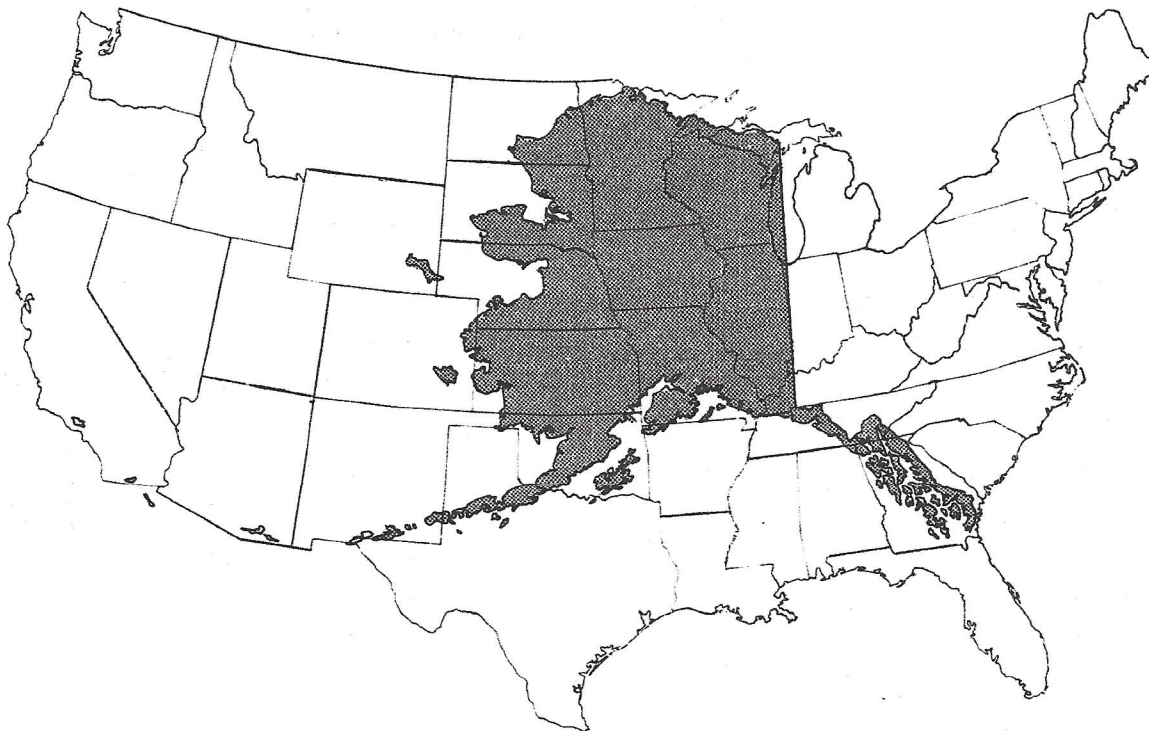
General Features

SIZE

Alaska derives its name from the Aleut word "al-ay-ek-sa," probably meaning "the great land" or mainland. It is one-fifth the size of the continental United

States and contains 586,400 square miles. Its size can be shown by the map overlay of Alaska and the continental United States.

Alaska Superimposed on Contiguous States



SONGS OF A SOURDOUGH

THE SPELL OF THE YUKON

I've stood in some mighty-mouthed hollow
That's plumb-full of hush to the brim;
I've watched the big, husky sun wallow
in crimson and gold, and grow dim,
Till the moon set the pearly peaks gleaming
And the stars tumbled out, neck and crop;
And I've thought that I surely was dreaming,
With the peace o' the world piled on top.

The summer---no sweeter was ever;
The sunshine woods all athrill;
The greyling aleap in the river,
The bighorn asleep on the hill.
The strong life that never knows harness;
The wilds where the caribou call;
The freshness, the freedom, the fairness--
O God! how I'm stuck on it all.

The winter! the brightness that blinds you,
The white land locked tight as a drum,
The cold fear that follows and finds you,
The silence that bludgeons you dumb.
The snows that are older than history,
The woods where the weird shadows slant;
The stillness, the moonlight, the mystery,
I've bade 'em good-bye--but I can't.

Robert W. Service

A L A S K A

Some 30,000 to 50,000 years ago people crossed from Asia to Alaska. Whether there was a land bridge or they crossed the ice we don't know. It's only 56 miles and wouldn't be an impossible feat even in summer by boat.

These people spread south and east and became the Eskimos, the Aleuts and the Indians of Alaska and Canada. The Aleutian Islands had inhabitants 8,000 years ago. Most people settled near the coasts because they depended on the sea for food and clothing. They were hunters and gatherers and lived off the land. The Eskimo ate fish, whale, seal and walrus meat. Sometimes they were able to kill polar bears, wolves, foxes, caribou or reindeer. Their clothing was made from furs and skins. They learned to make rain-protective parkas and caps from the split intestines of larger animals sewed into garments in much the same way as pioneer women sewed small pieces of material together for quilts. They made needles of bone, used gut for thread and constructed trousers, blouses, parkas, hoods, footwear and gloves. They made sleeping bags of reindeer, otter, seal or rabbit skins and decorated their footwear with porcupine quills, ivory and bone embroidery. In summer they picked berries and, depending on where they lived, were able to harvest grass seeds, wild oats, a wide variety of greens such as pig weed, ferns, dandelion greens and cattail shoots.

The women learned to dry and smoke meat and fish, to pulverize the dried protein and mix with dried berries and fat from animals to make a pemmican that was nourishing and easy to carry. They used whale blubber and seal oil with a piece of moss for a wick for heat and light. They made storage containers from cleaned seal intestines, stomachs and bladders and whole skins. They built homes from pieces of driftwood found on beaches, from willows and small trees, from blocks of snow or ice, from sod. In southern parts they built shelters from logs chinked with moss and plastered with mud, tepees of poles and skins. Most of the small groups were made up of extended families and lived a semi-nomadic life style.

Even in such primitive living there was time for art and literature. Artists carved ivory, bone and wood, drew designs of animals, trees and people, recorded family and tribal histories on totem poles and skins, made jewelry from ivory, bone and colored stones. They made inks and dyes from berry juices, mosses and bark. They built tools from bone, flint and stone. They developed music and dances.

In 1741 Vitus Bering landed in the Copper River Delta and claimed Alaska as Russian territory in spite of the fact that there were 75,000 people living there.

The Russians came to exploit. They enslaved Aleuts as hunters of sea otters and traded in furs. The Tlingit Indians resisted and forced the Russians to live in walled, fortified towns and give fair value for their furs.

The Russians brought the Russian Orthodox church that still has an influence in native lives. They left place names in much the same manner that the Romans left the Christian influence and place names in England.

In 1778 Captain Cook sailed up to Alaska and Cook's Inlet bears his name. He also named Turnagain Arm when he discovered there was no outlet except the way he had come in. Turnagain Arm has the second highest tide bore in the world.

In 1867 the Czar sold Alaska to the United States for \$7,600,000.00 dollars and trappers, hunters and fishermen from the United States invaded the land. They brought metal tools and utensils, coffee and tea, wheat and corn products and such dried foods as prunes, apples and raisins as well as beans and rice. They brought smallpox, influenza, measles, T.B. and V.D. that sometimes wiped out whole villages until native populations dropped to 40,000 people.

About 1880 Americans began to settle Alaska. They built two salmon canneries in 1878 in southeastern Alaska. In 1880 Joe Juneau and Richard Harris discovered a whole mountain of low grade gold ore and big time mining came to Alaska. The 1897 gold strike in the Yukon brought thousands to exploit the gold fields and prospectors soon were working rivers and streams and beaches all over Alaska. As well, Robert Service, Jack London and Rex Beach wrote popular novels and poems about the area. Magazines and news papers reported vividly about gold strikes and Alaska became the land of romance. When the placer claims proved less productive prospectors located quartz mines.

In the early 1900's Alaska was opened to settlers by homesteading laws and farmers came into the Tanana and the Matanuska Valleys and families began to arrive. Fresh vegetables were added to the diet. Kerosene replaced whale oil for light, coal mines were opened and coal was added to wood for fuel. Towns were settled, first in 1880 Juneau, Circle 1893, Nome in 1898, Fairbanks 1902. Seattle became "The Gateway to Alaska" though Portland also became a transportation hub for fishing, mining and logging activities for the "Last Frontier."

When the Panama Canal was completed the U.S. Government shipped much of the equipment to Alaska and started to build the Alaska Railroad from Seward to Fairbanks. This opened up the country and brought new settlers. A tent city was built in 1914 at Anchorage and railroad yards were built. The railroad pushed northward and in 1923 was completed.

Life was still primitive in most of Alaska. Except in the larger towns there was no electricity until the late 1940's. Water was carried from lakes or streams or in some cases, pumped by hand from wells. A house that had a sink and a hand pump in the kitchen was modern. Most houses outside of the towns were equipped with outhouses for sanitary facilities, wash tubs on the kitchen floor for bathing, and a counter to hold a bucket of water and wash basin with a 5 gallon bucket for water disposal. Cooking was done on wood or coal stoves, heating mostly with wood, and light with kerosene or gasoline lamps or lanterns

Roosevelt encouraged the colonizing of Alaska as an answer to the hard times caused farmers by the dust bowl and the depression and in 1935 several

hundred colonists arrived at Palmer to settle the Matanuska Valley, the largest farming district of Alaska. Colonists were also settled in the Tanana Valley out of Fairbanks. Tent cities sprang up overnight and each colonist family was furnished with a house, a barn and 40 acres, and such animals, chickens, horses, cows, pigs, etc. as they wished to have. All of these things were available at the government commissary. Most families were \$4000-\$6000 in debt by the time they were established. The population of the Matanuska Valley doubled overnight and facilities to supply the needs of the people were built by the federal government: a hospital, community hall, school and commissary were erected in a matter of months after operating from tents in the first months.

A plot of land was set aside for churches and a protestant minister and a Catholic priest arrived at the same time as the colonists. The first mass in the valley was celebrated in a tent May 26, 1935 and Rev. Bingle held protestant services in another tent the following week. Within a year the church land held three log churches. The United Protestant, the Catholic and the Lutheran. Other denominations soon formed congregations and operated from tents or peoples' homes. Before the arrival of the colonists there were no church services in the Matanuska Valley though most denominations had churches in Anchorage soon after the railhead reached there.

Prior to the building of the railroad missionaries established missions in a number of native villages across Alaska. The first church built in Alaska was the Russian Orthodox church in Sitka. Soon after Seward arranged for the U.S. to buy Alaska churches were established at Juneau, which later became the capitol of Alaska.

The federal government in 1884 set about absorbing the native population. The Alaska Organic Act of 1884 stated that ... The Indian must "conform to the White Man's Ways, peacefully if they will, forcibly if they must." Government schools were established which native children were required to attend. This forced a breakdown in the nomadic lifestyle which the people were used to. Today the return to the traditional way of life is encouraged but it is too late. Many of the old skills have been forgotten, too much oil money, liquor and drugs have destroyed the old tribal families and government policy discourages cooperation with the rest of the population.

STATEHOOD

The conditions that led up to statehood were taxation in some sense similar to those that caused the Boston Tea Party - chiefly, without representation; added to that, the infuriating spectacle of Alaska's natural wealth being drained off by outsiders in the Lower 48. The rich fisheries were all owned and run by Outside firms, mainly in Seattle. They owned the canneries, hired all Outside help, who came up for the season and were paid on their return to Seattle. Thus not only the salmon but the jobs returned Outside and Alaska profited not at all.

So as more and more people settled in Alaska, not only the homesteaders but also businessmen and investors, the demand became much more vocal and insistent for statehood. It was a long, hard battle, for as might be expected, those Outside who had profited exceedingly from Alaska's fishing industry, fought tooth and nail to defeat statehood. But our destiny finally prevailed.

This writer will never forget July 7th, 1959, the day Congress finally passed the statehood bill. All over Alaska there was wild celebration. In Anchorage an enormous flag hung from the third story of the Federal Building clear to the ground with the forty-ninth star much in evidence. There was hoopla and singing and bonfires and speeches and music and dancing and joy unconfined.

After that, Alaska began to boom. Outside money was invested, cities and towns expanded, roads began to be paved, and then, oil was discovered, at first in moderate quantities on the Kenai Peninsula, and afterward the huge fields near the Brooks Range.

Alaska was going strong. The building industry was thriving; transportation flourished. Much freight came up over the new Hart Highway by truck; more came by barge from Seattle. Supermarkets brought their products in by air.

The military presence is a large one, especially near Fairbanks and Anchorage, it has benefited the economy by an increased demand for off-base housing and outdoor recreation.

The soldiers and airmen and their families greatly enriched the local churches, and joined in the community activities such as square and folk dancing, community chorus, little theater and Philharmonic orchestra.

And during the great quake they really rallied to Alaska's aid. Not only did they patrol the business and wholesale districts to prevent looting, stationed thru out all districts were mobile kitchens where one could obtain hot water (there was no water after the quake), hot soup and hot K-rations.

The military also provided thousands of oil drums marked with a yellow X for collecting and picking up human wastes. (And thousands of porta-potties had been flown in.)

They really earned Alaska's gratitude. Not surprisingly, many men who served a tour of duty in Alaska have returned, as civilians to make their homes there and build up the infant state. A love of adventure and of the out-of-doors are strong lures, and the University of Alaska at Fairbanks has a highly respected course on mines.

Alaskans became dissatisfied with the territorial government, and in the late 1940's started agitating for statehood. The process involved a large percentage of the people in politics, mostly the newcomers who arrived in Anchorage and Fairbanks with the cost plus military contracts in the forties and early fifties when the military airfields, the early warning systems and various defense systems were built.

On July 7, 1958, Congress passed the Alaska statehood act and Alaska became a state on Jan. 3, 1959. Then people became involved in all the details of setting up a state government, establishing governing districts, called burroughs rather than counties, school districts, etc. A larger percent of the people are involved in the political process than in most states and most Alaskans are still

hostile to the control of their land and their resources from Washington D.C. which has removed more than 90% of the land from use, putting it into National forests, parks, wilderness areas and reserves. While most Alaskans are conservationist and care deeply for the land and its resources they resent national controls and feel that many of the enviromental controls do more harm than good because the people who make the rules have never actually lived in Alaska.

ALASKA TODAY

Today's population is in the neighborhood of half a million people, about half of which live in the Anchorage area. The principal industries are still fishing, timbering, mining. The gold mining is at a standstill due to increased cost of mining operations, but Alaska is rich in many minerals.

Tourism is a large source of income but its' oil from the North Slope that makes Alaska the richest state in the union today. There are no state taxes of any kind. The oil revenues not only pay the expenses of government but Alaska is building a permanent fund. About 40% of oil revenues go into a trust fund that is set aside for the future when the oil wells go dry. Part of the interest of the trust fund is distributed each year to the residents. Each year every man, woman and child who has been in Alaska six months or more receives a check for \$350-\$450. Every person over sixty has their local property tax on his home and his car tax paid by the state and receives a monthly check for \$250 from state oil funds.

The state also operates beautiful retirement homes and geriatric hospitals. The first Pioneer Home was built in Sitka before the pipeline but new ones have been built in Fairbanks, Palmer and Anchorage. Each inhabitant in the home has a private room except those in the hospital where there are two-bed rooms. A variety of activities and services are provided and there is a great deal of interaction with the community. For example in the Palmer home the seniors have a kitchen band that entertains at schools, and the schools bring programs to the home. The care is excellent, the standards of cleanliness exceptionally high. Cost to the individual runs from nothing to \$425 a month depending on the individual's ability to pay.

The state provides free schools to all native villages. Most high schools teach classes in aviation, both flying and ground care of planes, snowmobile care and native arts. Other schools are supported by burrough taxes plus state and federal funds. Costs per student run from about \$6000 to over \$10,000 each year.

The college near Fairbanks, was established in 1922 and has since become a modern State University with an enrollment of over 4,000 students, some part-time. There are community colleges in most areas and extension courses are offered wherever there is a demand. The extension service has operated homemaker clubs since the early 1930's. Some of the local schools are offering Montessori kindergardens as an option to regular pre-school classes.

Alaska has many artists who work in all mediums. Most paintings are landscapes or pictures of natives and animals. Gold, silver, and semi-precious stones are fashioned into all kinds of jewelry. Wood, ivory and stone are carved with many degrees of skill and artists work in pottery.

Music and drama, fairs and special celebrations have attracted large audiences. Some things such as the Fur Rendezvous at Anchorage, the Gold Rush days at Fairbanks which feature ice carvings, the Ice Worm Festival at Cordova and the Iditarod dog race have gained national press attention and bring visitors from the "Lower 48" which is the way Alaskans refer to the rest of the United States. (When leaving Alaska they say they are going "Outside.")

Alaska today has everything the "Lower 48" does, and living in the cities is similar to living in any modern city. Rural living can be the same as rural living in any other state or can be as primitive as it was a hundred years ago depending upon how far a person settles from established communities and whether or not he lives off the land or relies on shipped in supplies.

TRANSPORTATION

From the time of Baronof until the Alcan highway was built during the Second World War, the only connection with the outside world was by boat and telegraph. Various shipping companies operated out of Seattle and Portland on ships that carried passengers and freight to ports along the Inside Passage, to Wrangell, Seward, Anchorage and Nome. Some made stops to pick up fish at canneries or to leave supplies. Smaller fishing and passenger boats serviced the islands and native villages during the summer months.

Overland transportation was by foot, by horse and in the far north by dog team. In 1902 one man rode a bicycle 400 miles on the Yukon River ice in 5 days. In about 1911-12 for example the government had two tons of mail at Iditarod to be transported to Nome. Two men had identical bids for the job so they split the contract. William A. Black took a team of horses and two double-ender bob sleds, put snowshoes on his horses and brought his ton into Nome several days ahead of the man who used a dog team. A ton was too much for the usual dog team. It took twenty days to get that ton of mail to Nome.

The first airplanes were starting to fly. They could be called to come for real emergencies.

In 1927 the first air service within Alaska was started. A plane with skis instead of wheels was shipped to Anchorage. The skis were too light and crumpled with the first landing. New ones were built of wood at the railroad yards in Anchorage and the plane was able to land on frozen lakes. A landing field was constructed in Anchorage. By the early thirties bush pilots were flying pontoon planes all over Alaska. These planes carried trappers and prospectors, hunters and settlers to the back country. They flew rescue missions to bring sick and injured people to hospitals and carried mail and supplies to people who would otherwise have had to rely on backpacking. Since Alaska is covered with thousands of lakes landing was no problem.

It wasn't until the mid 1940's that commercial flights to Anchorage from Seattle and other state-side airports were established. Today most passengers are carried by plane, most freight comes by truck or ship but air freight is big business.

The difficulty brought by the railroad was that now there was no resident doctor and the settlers were back to taking care of most illness themselves.

With the coming of the railroad they were also developing the coal mines, more homesteaders were coming and agriculture was producing more and greater variety of foods. There were more jobs now, though most were still seasonal so food still was ordered in the fall to last through the winter.

Can you imagine having to plan in August everything you are going to need to eat all winter? Herning's store in Wasilla and Krog's store in Matanuska usually had most items needed, but cash was often not available, and the longshoreman's union strikes in Seattle could totally stop all shipping, thus completely isolating the entire territory. Strikes could last for weeks, sometimes months.

When supplies really got short, the community shared what was there. Hunters shared their game, farmers their vegetables and fishermen the fish so that everyone had something to eat.

On August 12, 1916, construction of the new modern railroad hospital, located on Third Avenue between A and B streets started. It was occupied by the staff and patients on December 1, 1916:

This was the largest building for this purpose in the territory - 42' x 100' two story plus attic and basement to accomodate fifty patients.

The basement floor contained kitchen, refrigeration, store rooms, staff dining room, boiler and fuel rooms, laundry, x-ray laboratories, and morgue. It had two entrances, one for supplies one for emergency entrance. (The volunteer ambulance was a model T truck with a box built on the back.)

The main floor contained offices for the chief surgeon and house surgeon, business office, waiting room, diet kitchen dispensary, utility room, one private room, one small ward and one large 20 bed ward.

On the second floor were preparation and operating rooms, sterilizing, utility rooms, diet kitchen, linen room, five private rooms, two small wards and one large ward. In the attic were employees sleeping rooms and a storage room 21' x 55'. Each floor had ample bath and toilet facilities, hot and cold water, steam heat, electric lights and elevator service. There was a dumb waiter for patient meal service. All of this cost \$35,000.00.

The hospital staff consisted of seventeen persons. They were chief surgeon, house surgeon, four nurses, three orderlies, a clerk, steward. The matron and two assistants, a cook, plant engineer and one stenographer. The general manager doubled as x-ray and laboratory technician, sometimes as anesthetist.

All of this was available to all those who needed it, but because of transportation difficulties only those with serious conditions were able to make use of the facilities.

The hospital and refrigeration cars on the railroad required ice to preserve food so they put out contracts to furnish it. The ice was cut from lakes when it was about two feet thick in blocks, which were then hauled to the depot in Wasilla

from where the train took them to the Anchorage station. This was another cash source for the community.

Ice blocks were cut by the homesteaders for their own use. Placed in a log crib and covered with sawdust all around, it would last most of the summer, with conservative use but woe unto anyone who did not recover it after taking a piece!

By 1933 another medical service was offered. Dr. Hines started his optometry practice in the valley. He carried his equipment in suitcases and went from house to house to test eyes and fit glasses.

Roads came to Alaska very slowly. There was a wagon trail from Knik to the mines in the Talkeetnas shortly after the turn of the century. As the railroad moved north small road systems grew up to serve the communities around them. Cities and towns had streets and sometimes sidewalks. But it wasn't until the thirties that people had roads that connected many towns together. In the forties a road system that connected Fairbanks and Anchorage was built. This was extended to Seward and Valdez, and connected to the local road down the Kenai Peninsula. During World War II the U.S. and Canada worked together to get a land route to Alaska and the Alcan Highway finally connected Alaska with the rest of North America's roads. Even today, however, most of Alaska is closed to development because of lack of roads. To reach most of Alaska one still must depend on plane or boat. See Map

EXTENSION SERVICE IN ALASKA

"Congress yesterday, Congress today and Congress tomorrow" is eternally unchanging. Our national legislators always like their little confusions and frustrations, as long as they affect someone else. So, in 1897 they began one of those confusions in Alaska.

That year, the congress appropriated funds for a "special commission to explore the agriculture possibilities ... in Alaska." Funds were appropriated in 1898 to establish an Agricultural Experiment Station at Sitka. Seven other stations were established between 1900 and 1915. Only two remain today - one in Fairbanks, one in the Matanuska Valley.

When the college was opened in 1922, President Bunnell appointed Lydia John-Hansen to the home economics department. In 1930 she was appointed to head the newly established Extension Clubs through out Alaska. In 1931 the first clubs in the Matanuska Valley and Anchorage began.

THE EXTENSION SERVICE THAT ALMOST WASN'T

The Club in Matanuska was typical. It started with 15 members, was hampered by lack of transportation and disbanded after a year. It was reorganized and thrived. Mrs. John-Hansen brought a hand loom to the valley and taught the women to weave. The loom was kept in the school and loaned to women who wove scarves and mufflers in bright colored yarns. Mrs. John-Hansen also demonstrated carding wool and dyeing it with dyes made of native plants and berries. A beautiful yellow came from young birch leaves.

By 1934 women were making mittens, caps and helmets, and baby buntings from old wool clothing using Extension patterns, preserving eggs, meats and fish, fruits and vegetables using Extension recipes.

In 1935, 200 new families entered the Valley in the government sponsored colonization project and several new clubs were formed, and the agricultural and home economics departments of the Extension Service played a large part in helping people live in Alaska and adjust to the new conditions. As these people moved from the tent city in Palmer to their homesites, they found great help and a social outlet in the Extension clubs. In 1935 alone there were over 600 calls at the tent office in Palmer for advice or help. A shop to sell articles made by the women was opened at the office and such things as "handwoven scarfs, hand sewn gloves, rag rugs, purses, hot dish mats of native grasses" were sold. The shop also became a distribution center for old clothing, glass jars and magazines sent by Anchorage groups, and even acted as a miniature employment agency for local women.

There are only two real agricultural areas in Alaska, the Matanuska and the Tanana Valleys and these are the sites of the major activity of the Extension service today. They are still teaching women how to preserve wild game, pickle fish and prepare native fruits and vegetables, as well as how to budget, care for children, furniture and all the things the Extension does today.

HEALTH CARE IN ALASKA

The first doctor came to Alaska with the Russians and settled in Sitka. When the U.S. took possession the Capitol of Alaska was moved to Juneau and a hospital was built there in the early 1900's. There was a hospital and doctor in Ketchikan in 1920 and the government built the railroad hospital in Anchorage when the railhead reached there about 1912. A number of dog team doctors had operated out of their offices as towns were established. Dentists followed doctors, usually several years later and many times doctors pulled teeth as well as set broken bones. Missionaries to the natives carried medical kits and some limited medical knowledge to the natives, before the government set up medical units in some of the larger native villages.

Today every city has one or more modern hospitals and rural areas have regional medical centers. Emergency medical teams with ambulances and flight service are scattered across Alaska and medical services are as up to date as any in the nation.

Since Alaska has a young population with 65 percent of the people under 44, there is less demand for many types of medical service than in the nation as a whole. In a population of about one half million there are only about 17,000 people over 65. There are about 250 males for every 200 females.

The state government finances home nursing and home-care services on a limited basis. Private agencies contract with the state to provide so many hours of service to the disabled, the elderly and those who need some professional care, but don't require hospitalization. Current home health care workers are paid \$12 per hour of service, but draw no travel time or benefits, and furnish their own transportation. Clients are visited one to three times a

week, depending on need.

The state cares for the elderly in geriatric homes and hospitals and there is no longer any distinction between native and other population in hospital and health care.

CLIMATE

Since Alaska is such a large state and stretches from the frozen Arctic to just a few hundred miles north of Washington state, the climate has a greater variation than any other state.

Precipitation varies from 0-12 inches in the northern and eastern third of the state to up to 220 inches in southeastern Alaska. A small part of northern Alaska has January temperatures that average -20° below, sometimes dropping to -85° while southern and southeastern Alaska have winter temperatures above 0° . Summer temperatures vary as widely with some areas having a mean July temperature about seventy and most of the state between 60° - 70° , while it gets up to 96° in Fairbanks.

In much of the state it rains often during haying season and the cut hay is hung on stakes or racks to dry. It's some sight to see men putting up hay while wearing slickers and rain hats!

About half of the state is covered by permafrost which is a condition where the soil remains frozen all year or only the top few inches thaw. The moss of the tundra helps insulate the permafrost and protects it from thawing. This means that the ground must be thawed by fire, steam or other artificial means in much of the state in order to dig foundations for buildings. It also makes it difficult to dispose of sewage or dig wells. It takes 5-10 years in many areas to compost materials and even then the compost must be treated heavily with chemicals. Thus population size must be limited for waste disposal reasons.

Many plants can grow above the permafrost however. Besides the mosses and ferns there a wide variety of berries and grasses and small plants native to the area. After the tundra is removed the soil may thaw a little deeper each year for up to 30 years. Only the southern coastline areas are free of permafrost.

The long hours of summer day light make crops grow quickly. In June and July sunrise is about four o'clock in the morning and sunset about eleven at night. The rest of the time is twilight. The woods can go from winter bare to full leaf in four days. All cool weather crops grow well. Because the days are so long crops grow rapidly but since the season is short with late and early frosts many crops won't mature. Peas, all members of the cabbage family and root crops do very well. Potatoes, one of the largest of the agricultural crops in Alaska do beautifully. Alaskan potatoes are sweeter in taste than those grown in other states. Corn and beans will mature only one year in three or four and now are not grown commercially. Most all food is used locally with fish being the only major crop shipped "outside" in any quantity.

There is some livestock farming but except for reindeer the meat and dairy products do not fully supply the local demand and most foods are shipped in from the "lower 48," or from Hawaii. There is about the same proportion of foods from Australia, New Zealand, etc. in Alaska markets as there are in Oregon markets.

EARTHQUAKE

Then came March 27th, 1964. Good Friday. The following is quoted verbatim from this writer's memory of the event.

"At 5:36 P.M. on that clear March day, with a temperature around +20, there was a lemon colored sky against which the Alaska Range and the Sleeping Lady were black silhouettes. Cook Inlet mirrored the yellow sky, with black streaks and occasional clumps of floating ice motionless on a full tide.

"Several crows drifted aimlessly past our picture window on the 5th floor of the Knik Arms Apartments.

"A quick jerk, the rattle of dishes ruptured the quiet. Esperance (the lady whose apartment I shared) and I had just kicked off our fleece-lined boots and were relaxing with the newspaper before getting dinner. We looked at each other and said, 'Here we go again.' Minor quakes are a way of life in Alaska.

"This was no minor quake. The tempo increased to frenzy, while heavy furniture crashed to the floor, every dish in the cupboards smashed and marble slabs flew through the air - my heavy IBM typewriter leaped off the desk and landed upside down - all accompanied by an absolutely hellish noise which went on for an unbelievable six and a half minutes.

"As soon as the noise stopped and we were able to stand upright we made our way in the dark down the inside stairs, as Esperance's first thought was for her daughter and grandchildren. When we stepped out, the street on which our apartment house stood had fallen in 30 feet; all the houses had sunk into the ground. Three new apartment buildings were a shambles. Back of us, less than a mile away, the brand new luxury Four Seasons Apartments, 7 stories, almost completed, lay in an enormous heap of rubble - reduced to small pieces. Three brand new office buildings downtown, all constructed with prefab panels, had caved in like houses of cards.

"On Government Hill the new school went over the bluff, broken in two. And all the nearby homes were hopelessly damaged. Over 100 houses in Turnagain by the Sea simply went over the bluff, into the ravine, or the ground just opened up and swallowed them. Our building had also moved 9 feet in 24 hours, closer toward the edge of the bluff.

"I had got my car out after we left the apartment, with some idea of driving down the railroad track, but the streets had heaved up in two directions and there was no egress, so we had to abandon the car and proceed on foot. Walking was rather hairy, as two days of snow followed by thaw, followed by freeze, followed by earthquake, made for scary walking. We had to jump fairly wide crevasses. It was an eerie feeling to look down and be unable to see bottom."

Other parts of Alaska suffered more than Anchorage if possible. Near Cordova one river and small lake disappeared, swallowed up. Kodiak Island was partly inundated, and the rest of it raised up on one end, lowered on the other. Seward lost all its docks, railroad terminal, oil storage tanks, and down town was surmerged. The town of Valdez had to be completely abandoned. It was later

rebuilt, three miles from the old site.

It was glaringly evident that without a federal grant Alaska could not hope to survive. As the mayor of Seward told Senator Gruening "Just treat us like you would a foreign country. Don't make it a loan. We couldn't float a loan on peanut butter. We don't need politicians, technicians, or advice, we have the know-how and people - what we need is M O N E Y - in a word CASH."

The rest is history, you can't keep Alaskans down. A few panicked and left. Most stood pat, and many who were "Outside" returned to help in the vast cleanup and rebuilding job. With time, hard work, and federal money, Alaska got back on its feet, licked its wounds, repaired its damages, and faced the future undismayed.

The future of course is the oil boom. How long it will last is problematical. Meantime, the money rolls in.

FISHING AND HUNTING IN ALASKA

Before 1940 brought an influx of military personnel to Alaska the supply of fish and game was almost unlimited. A family might catch 100-200 salmon near the mouth of a river in one day and can, salt, dry and smoke them for winter use. Clams, shrimp, crab and halibut were available all along the coast and there were no government controls on non-commercial fishing.

Moose, bear and caribou were readily available and one could take as much as needed.

Today one can take one salmon per day and ten smaller fish. Clams and crabs are also limited. The Game and Fish Commissioners set limits on the number of caribou, and moose to be taken, and hunters names are selected in a random drawing and a family with three or four hunters can expect to be allowed on the average of one animal every three or four years. Bear is still fairly plentiful.

However sportsmen, hunters and fishermen still make up a large part of the tourist business. All the newspapers feature articles on catches, conditions, etc. all during the season. Private airlines run bush flights to view game, land hunters on lakes in the wilderness, or take fishermen into lakes and streams in uninhabited areas. Most people there have several guns of various sizes and a variety of fishing tackle and gunsmiths do a good business keeping guns in repair and building special weapons for sportsmen. The prize trophies are mountain sheep or Kodiak bear.

Reindeer can be taken only by Eskimos or Indians. Buffalo have been imported and herds established and permits are available on a limited basis for hunting them.

The press, the Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau, the airlines and various sportsmens' organizations all promote the idea of Alaska as a frontier land, a sportsman's paradise and it is true that a larger percentage of the population in Alaska hunt and fish than in other states.

FOOD

It costs more to raise all kinds of livestock in Alaska than in the rest of the U.S. because the season of grazing is so short and because it is necessary to heat barns and poultry buildings for such a long winter season. Artificial lighting is costly also. In the Anchorage-Matanuska area electrical costs are similar to those in Josephine County. Therefore most food stuffs are shipped in. Local products often cost more than those shipped in. For example in Anchorage eggs that are shipped in cost \$.90-\$1.00 - local eggs \$.48-.50 more. Local fresh milk costs 20-30 cents more per gallon. Total grocery costs for a family of four on an average budget cost about \$1,000 more per year than they do in Oregon.

Except during July, August and September diets of most people contain fewer fresh fruits and vegetables. Canned, dried and frozen foods are used widely. Those people who live near super markets can buy fresh foods the year around at premium prices; those in rural areas must depend on foods that store well. Many diets are heavy in meat and starches and sugars. Because of the cold weather people who work out-of-doors need more fat than those in more temperate climates.

To meet these special conditions individuals and the Extension service have invented interesting food combinations to provide for the lack of fresh green produce. Since cabbage keeps well in root cellars it is used widely. Turnips, carrots, rutabagas also keep well, and canned vegetables.

WINTER SALAD RECIPES

Cabbage & Carrot Salad

Shred 1-2 cups cabbage and 1/2 to 3/4 cup carrots. Add 1/2 c raisins and dress with cole slaw dressing or mayonnaise mixed with small amount of milk.

Confetti Salad

Mix shredded cabbage and carrots and chopped apples in equal parts. Add raisins and canned pineapple chunks. Dress with mayonnaise mixed with milk & 1T sugar

Breakfast Drink

A substitute for orange juice nutritionally can be made by boiling one quart rhubarb, one qt. cranberries, three qts. water. Boil and strain through jelly bag. Sugar to taste.

Rose hips, like other fruit, should be gathered far enough away from a road to be free of dust and dirt. Select only the ripe hips for the richest vitamins. Of course green ones and even those that have been frost bitten are useful if one is unable to find enough of the better ones. Once the fruit is back in the kitchen it should be processed rapidly in order to preserve its maximum vitamin content. Snap off tails and stems and split. Remove the seeds (if the seeds are not removed, Grandpa may get some caught in his dentures). For use in jams, jellies and preserves bring to a boil with 1/2 cup water to each quart of split fruit. Simmer gently for 15 minutes. Drain through a jelly

bag or colander for an hour. Juice may be used in preserving immediately, or put in a covered container in refrigerator for later use if no berries are on hand to use with it. Pulp may be used at once in jam or it also may be reserved in the refrigerator for later use.

For drying the rose hips; proceed as above, using less water to bring to a boil. As soon as it boils, remove from heat and drain thoroughly. Spread in a thin layer on shallow trays or on cheesecloth. If weather permits, dry outdoors. Box lids with holes punched in them make excellent trays and are well ventilated. Best of all, of course, are fabricated trays made with screening for the bottoms. When the hips have reached the crisp, brittle stage in curing, which denotes they are sufficiently dried, they may be ground or powdered and stored in air-tight containers for future use in cookery.

* Note: cranberries refer to lowbush or lingenberries

Hot Cranberry Punch

An excellent beverage to serve during the cold holiday season. First prepare mulled cider by boiling 1 qt. of apple juice with 2 each whole allspice and whole cloves, and 1 stick of cinnamon for five minutes. Add 1/2 c of brown sugar and boil 5 minutes more. To prepare the punch, reheat the mulled cider and add 1 qt. of cranberry juice and sugar syrup to taste. Heat until the boiling point is almost but not quite reached. Keep hot in a covered double boiler so that it will be ready to serve whenever any well chilled guests drop in.

Equal parts of cranberry juice and orange juice with just a dash of currant or raspberry. Sweeten or not, as you please. A sprig of mint dresses this one up.

Another good cranberry punch is made by first preparing a sugar syrup of 2 cups of sugar and 2 cups of water boiled together for 5 minutes. In a large pitcher or punch bowl put about 1 cup of cracked ice. Add 1 qt. of cranberry juice, 2 cups of water, syrup to taste, 1 cup of orange juice, 1 T lemon or lime juice. Mix enough to blend well and chill until ready to serve. Then add 1 qt. of ginger ale or charged water.

Have you tried equal parts of cranberry, raspberry and rose hip juice?

North Star Scones

First prepare cranberry filling by combining 3/4 c jelly or jam, 1/2 c finely chopped apple, 3T brown sugar, 1/2 tsp. cinnamon and 1/4 c chopped walnuts. Blend lightly until evenly mixed and of consistency to spread. Next blend together 2 c sifted flour, 4 tsp baking powder 1 T sugar and a dash of salt; blend in 5 tbs butter or other shortening. Roll out on wax paper to about 10 by 20 inches. Spread filling over half of dough and fold other half over carefully. Press edges together firmly with a floured fork. Transfer to ungreased baking sheet, paper and all. Trim off excess wax paper and brush top with slightly beaten egg white or milk. For a gala touch sprinkle with red sugar. Ordinary sugar will do. Cut into square but do not separate the squares. Bake in a hot oven until a golden brown. Serve while still warm.

Irish Bread Alaska Style

Follow your favorite recipe for baking powder biscuits and then add in order given: $1\frac{1}{2}$ T salad oil, 2T sugar, 1 c dried wild currants or blueberries. (Raisins may be used if you have no dried wild fruit), 1 T dried rose hip powder and 1 T caraway seed. Stir just enough after each addition to mix well. Bake in oiled cast iron fry pan for 25 to 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Increase heat to 400 degrees for last 5 minutes. Serve warm with blueberry jelly or jam. This is a real treat for Sunday breakfast.

Cranberry Stuffing

Grind 1 c lowbush cranberries with pulp of one orange, a few ripe olives and $\frac{1}{2}$ c cooked ham. Add enough bread or bread crumbs (part corn bread makes it extra flavorful) to make a stuffing sufficient for your meal. Mix lightly. Add 2 or 3 T of sugar (just enough to cut the tartness of the cranberries), salt, pepper and dried parsley to suit your taste. Moisten as much as you like with broth or hot water combined with butter or drippings. Most people like this stuffing quite dry. The berries will probably furnish enough moisture. This is especially good with duck or goose.

SOURDOUGH SONGS

by Laura Buchan Jones

OUR ALASKA

(Tune: Deep in the Heart of Texas)

The stars at night, are twice as bright
(clap, clap, clap, clap)

Up here in our Alaska.

The Arctic sky, is twice as high,
(clap, clap, clap, clap)

Up here in our Alaska.

There's sun at night and Northern Lights
(clap, etc.)

Up here in our Alaska.

So don't berate the BIGGEST STATE
(clap, etc.)

And THAT IS OUR ALASKA!

LET THE REST OF THE WORLD GO BY

(Tune: Same as title)

With a sourdough like you,
In my snug igloo,
Our creditors and in-laws
Sure will never find
Our spot that's known
To Russia alone,
Just the spot she want to own,
But how good we'll feel
On muktuk and seal,
Out there beneath the Arctic sky,
We'll buy a dog team and sled,
Bake sourdough bread,
And let the rest of the world go by.

SCHOTTISCHE OF THE ICE WORMS

(Tune: Puffer Billies)

Out on the glaciers --
In the evening sunset
Out crawl the ice worms
For their exercise.
They squirm and wiggle
And Schottische on the ice cap
One, two, three, four,
Hop, Hop, and Hop.

WHEN IT'S SPRINGTIME IN ALASKA

(Tune: When It's Springtime in the Rockies)

When it's springtime in Alaska, It's ninety-nine below
Then the Eskimos go hunting in forty feet of snow,
When the polar bears get sunburned, and the seals make love all day,
When it's springtime in Alaska - Alaska far away.

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PREPARED BY:

Ara Belle Black ... Extension Home Economics Advisory Committee
ACWW Chairman

Dorothea K. Wallace (Dee) ... Williams Study Group

Teaching Guide for Alaska, the Last Frontier

The objectives of this lesson are to

1. Familiarize our members with the 49th state
2. Develop an understanding of Alaska's unique history, people and economy
3. Encourage attending the 2005 NAFCE Conference in Anchorage, Alaska.

Materials in the packet:

An Alaskan folk tale

(This can be used at the beginning to peak interest.)

An Alaskan map/quiz with answers

A Roving in Time script

(This is a great way to foster creativity... There are other ways to make history come alive and appeal to each person. We picked a politician, a pioneer and a typical Alaskan. Others we considered were the Iditarod winner, an environmental activist, or a Exxon executive after the spill.

Alaska in a Nutshell packet (includes facts, figures, geography, natural resources, history, native population info, and frequently asked questions about Alaska

Evaluation

This is a necessary item for programs, now and in the future. We want to know if we achieved our objectives, or where we fell short.

Other Resources

Video from Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau

Alaska magazines

Activities map

Websites: www.theus50.com www.1upinfo.com www.alaskainfo.com

Mr. Raven Outwits Mr. Red Fox

An Alaskan Igloo tale from an oral history project

Raven and the Red Fox had become bitter enemies because of their jealousy. The raven was recognized as the wisest of all birds and the fox was known to be the most cunning of all animals. They lived their days scheming to "best" the other without much success. Though they hated each other, they managed to live co-exist amicably.

Raven thought of a way to rid himself of his enemy and be further revered by his friends. He visited Fox's igloo and invited him up the hill to play games.

Fox was quick to accept. "Sure I'll play slide-down-the-hill with you." So they climbed a steep hill nearby. This was indeed a steep hill, so steep that the deep pond at the bottom could not be seen. Both Raven and Red Fox knew this pond existed but neither saw fit to mention it.

Crafty Red Fox invited Raven to go first, taunting him by saying, "I want to see how well you slide."

Raven took the position and away he went. He slid so fast that he couldn't stop, but just as he was about to plunge into the pond, he spread his wings and glided across to safety. "Okay, Red Fox, let's see how well you can slide."

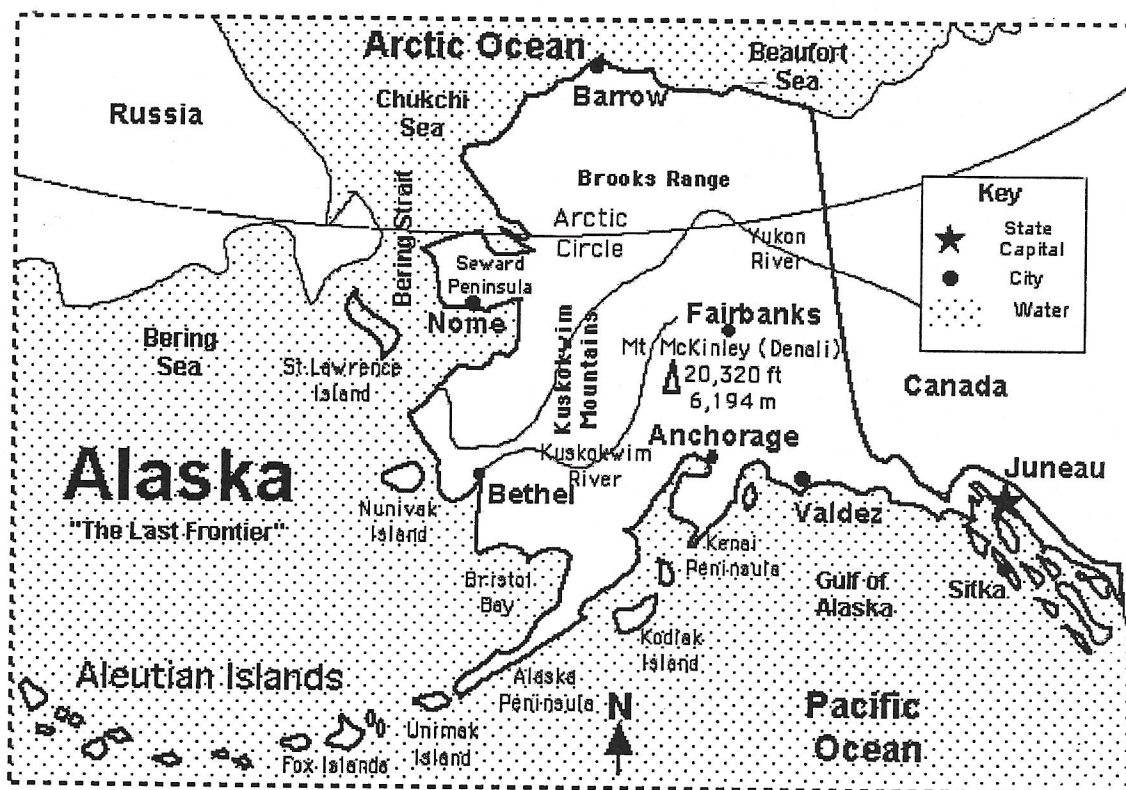
Red Fox wouldn't go, saying he was afraid to fall in the water. Raven taunted him on. "Most assuredly, you can jump as well as I can." Now the ability to jump was something Red Fox knew he could do very well. So, off he went, very fast and when he got to the edge, he jumped as far as he could and landed in the middle of the pond.

He called for help as he was sinking but Raven only laughed, and kept laughing long after Red Fox had drowned.

Alaska Map and Quick Quiz

This map and quiz is available at the website www.enchantedlearning.com, a very good internet teaching/learning resource for all ages.

☺ Using the map below, fill in the blanks to questions 1-10.



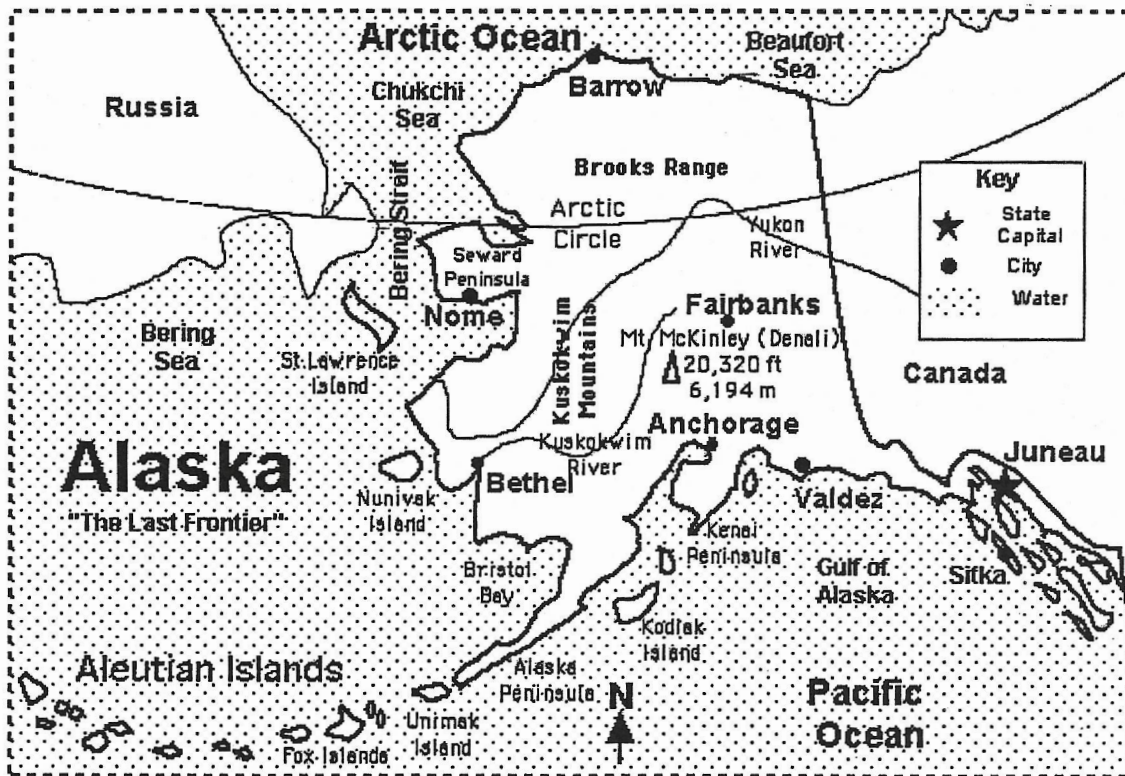
1. What is the capital of Alaska? _____
2. What country borders Alaska on the east? _____
3. What ocean borders Alaska on the north? _____
4. What ocean borders Alaska on the south? _____
5. What country is just west of Alaska, across the Bering Strait? _____
6. What is the name of the tallest mountain in Alaska? _____
7. What is the name of the river that flows from Canada, across Alaska, and into the Bering Sea? _____
8. Which Alaskan city is farthest north? _____
9. The Iditarod dog sled race runs from Anchorage to a city on the southern coast of the Seward Peninsula. What is this city? _____
10. What is the name of the mountain range that runs across Northern Alaska? _____

☞ Please listen very carefully as instructions are given to complete the next activity.

Alaska Map and Quick Quiz

This map and quiz is available at the website www.enchantedlearning.com, a very good internet teaching/learning resource for all ages.

☺ Using the map below, fill in the blanks to questions 1-10.



1. What is the capital of Alaska? Juneau
2. What country borders Alaska on the east? Canada
3. What ocean borders Alaska on the north? Arctic
4. What ocean borders Alaska on the south? Pacific
5. What country is just west of Alaska, across the Bering Strait? Russia
6. What is the name of the tallest mountain in Alaska? Denali or Mt. McKinley
7. What is the name of the river that flows from Canada, across Alaska, and into the Bering Sea? Yukon
8. Which Alaskan city is farthest north? Barrow
9. The Iditarod dog sled race runs from Anchorage to a city on the southern coast of the Seward Peninsula. What is this city? Nome
10. What is the name of the mountain range that runs across Northern Alaska? Brooks

☺ Please listen very carefully as instructions are given to complete the next activity.

Roving Reporter Script for Teaching Alaska History

Good morning. This is Sharon Takahashi, live on the floor of the FCE Annual Meeting in Pendleton, Oregon. My fellow reporter, Sharon Guthrie and I are taking you in our time machine to explore Alaska, our 49th state. Let's go to Sharon Guthrie now, who is in Washington, D.C. with President Andrew Johnson.

Reporter: This is Sharon Guthrie, your FCE Roving in Time Reporter. Today is October 19, 1867. I'm here this morning in the Oval Office with President Andrew Johnson. How are you this morning, Mr. President?

President J: Just fine, Sharon.

R: Thank you for agreeing to this interview. Americans across our nation are wondering about our purchase of Alaska from the Russians. Many are calling it Seward's Folly after our Secretary of the Interior. Many Americans believe Alaska is a huge piece of snow and ice. They question the wisdom of this purchase. Comment, Mr. President?

P: Sharon, Alaska is much more than snow and ice. It is a spectacularly beautiful piece of land rich in many resources such as gold and other minerals, soil, endless forests, and fish and game. But our primary reason for the purchase is Alaska's vast resources of fur. We believe Alaska's fur trade is vital to our leadership in the world. I predict that years from now the people of the United States will welcome and appreciate the purchase of Alaska.

R: If Alaska is so valuable, why would the Russians agree to sell it to us?

P: The Russians claimed Alaska in 1799. Maintaining their colonies there has become expensive and difficult. Alaska has become a significant economic drain on Russia. Alaska and their involvement in the Crimean War has stretched their resources thin.

R: Thanks you, Mr. President, for sharing your valuable time with us. I know you have a busy afternoon ahead. This information should help our people understand our purchase of Alaska. I hope you are right about Alaska's value for America. Now, back to Sharon Takahashi in Pendleton, Oregon.

Sharon T. Our reporter, Sharon Guthrie is steering the Time Machine forward and we can hear it coming to another stop. Sharon, where are you parked now and what year is it?

R: It is a beautiful August Afternoon here in the Yukon, probably right around 70 degrees. The date is August 18, 1897. We are on site of the gold rush. The area we are standing in is filled with cloth tents and one room log cabins. It's truly bustling with activity here in Forty Mile. I'm with the "Bride of the Klondike," Ethel Berry. How did you get that name, Mrs. Berry?

Ethel: Please call me Ethel. We are very informal here in Alaska. I got that name because my husband and I were married in the fall of 1895. My honeymoon trip was over Chilkoot Pass with a dog team.

R: That must have been quite an experience. You have been here at Forty Mile ever since?

Ethel: Yes, I've been living here alone since the winter of 1896, housekeeping Klondike-style. When I got here the house had no door, windows or floor, and I had to stand around outside until a hole was cut for me to get in. We had all the camp-made furniture we needed: a bed and stove—a long, little sheet-iron affair, with two holes on top and a drum to bake in. The water we used was all snow or ice, and had to be thawed. It has been an adventure.

R: You've been here alone for a year? Where has your husband been all this time?

Ethel: He's been off working the creeks. But he had no luck. Now, we have heard of the discovery at Bonanza Creek and we are heading over there tomorrow. I just know we will hit it big now.*

R: Thank you, Ethel, for sharing your experiences with us. I wish you luck. And now, let's zip our Time Machine back toward Sharon Takahashi in Pendleton.

Sharon T: Thanks for those interesting stops, Sharon. Let's see if I can maneuver this time machine to -oops, a jerky stop. It looks like March 30, 2001. Let's catch that woman running with her children. Can I ask your name, please, and what's your hurry?

Subject: Yes, I'm Mary Haida, and these are my children. Jake's 10, Harry's 8, Martin's 4 and Mandy's 7 months. We've got to file our paperwork for the "dividend" by tomorrow. We're in a real hurry. My husband's out in the oil field right now.

R: What's the "dividend" you mentioned?

Mary: In 1976, Alaskans approved a constitutional amendment to establish the Alaska Permanent Fund. A percentage of all mineral lease rentals, royalties, royalty sales proceeds, federal mineral revenue-sharing payments and bonuses are placed in a permanent fund. In 1982, they made a big change. Each Alaska applicant who has lived here six months prior to March 31 qualified for a \$1,000 dividend. The actual amount is calculated by adding together the fund's net income for the last five years, multiplying that number by 21%, and dividing that number in half. It could be more, but my family will get at least \$6,000. So, I can't talk anymore. I've got to go.

R: Thanks for stopping, Mary. We won't delay you. Let's coast the time machine to October 15, 2001 to check on the dividend dispersal. Mary's at the post office—what's the news on the dividend, Mary?

Mary: Each of us got \$1,850.28, that's \$11,101.68 for my family. It was a good year for oil here.

R: It sure makes this reporter wish she were an Alaskan resident. Let's get back to the present and see if we can share more insights about Alaska. I know we have a room full of people who are very curious about Alaska today.

*Ethel Berry and her husband, Clarence, did strike it big on claim #5 Eldorado. They were able to produce \$140,000 in one season. They saved their money and returned to the states. When they arrived in Seattle, 23 year old Ethel was wearing men's clothing. Her bedroll was so heavy she couldn't lift it. Inside the bedroll was nearly \$1 million in gold. Ethel Berry was rich!

Alaska, the Last Frontier

Information compiled by Sharon Guthrie, Betty Kamikawa and Sharon Takahashi for presentation at Annual Conference, October 8, 2003.

Alaska in a Nutshell

Alaska, nicknamed the Last Frontier, became the 49th state on January 3, 1959. Its capital is Juneau and it was purchased from Russia in 1867 for \$7.2 million. It was organized as a U.S. territory in 1912. Alaska's state motto is "North to the Future."

The name Alaska has an Aleut origin. It means "great country" or "great continent." The Aleuts lived on the Aleutian islands, a chain that extends westward from a large peninsula in southwestern Alaska. The first large island is Unimak Island. From where they were positioned, their peninsula led to a much larger "mainland."

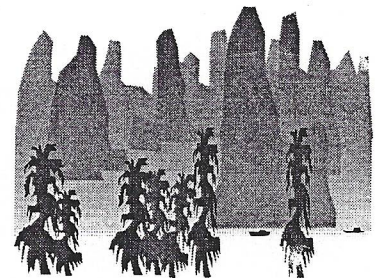
According to time scientist and surveyor William Healey Dall, "This name, now applied to the whole of our new territory, is a corruption, very far removed from the original word...called by the natives Al-ak-shak or Al-ay-ek-sa. From Alayeksa, the name became Alaksa, Alashka, Aliaska, and finally Alaska. We have, then Alaska for the territory, Aliaska for the peninsula."

Its land area measures 570,374 square miles, or about 365 million acres. Alaska is 1/5th the size of the combined lower 48 states and 500 miles away from the contiguous 48. Its coastline measures 6,640 miles, but its total shoreline is about 34,000 miles long. Its western tip is only 51 miles from Russia's Siberian Coast.

The northern quarter of Alaska lies in the Arctic Circle. It is frozen, treeless tundra; the southeastern region contains lush rain forests. Many parts of Alaska are still wild and barely populated and accessible by float planes.

Alaska's climate can vary widely. The Panhandle and the coastal plain along the Gulf of Alaska have moderate temperatures and heavy precipitation. High mountains protect these from cold northerly winds, and ocean currents warm the shores. Winds off the Pacific Ocean lose their moisture as they collide with the mountains, drenching the area with rain. The average annual precipitation in this region is about 94 inches, although some areas receive twice that amount. The average annual temperature is 41°F. The Copper River, Cook Inlet, and Bristol Bay areas have colder winters and less rainfall. Summer and winter temperatures in the interior are more extreme. Average annual precipitation there is about 15 inches.

The 2000 census lists its population as 626,932, with a median age of 30.1 years. Only the states of Wyoming and Vermont have smaller populations. The largest city by population is Anchorage (260,283). The 2001 median income was \$30,064, ranking it 15th in the nation.

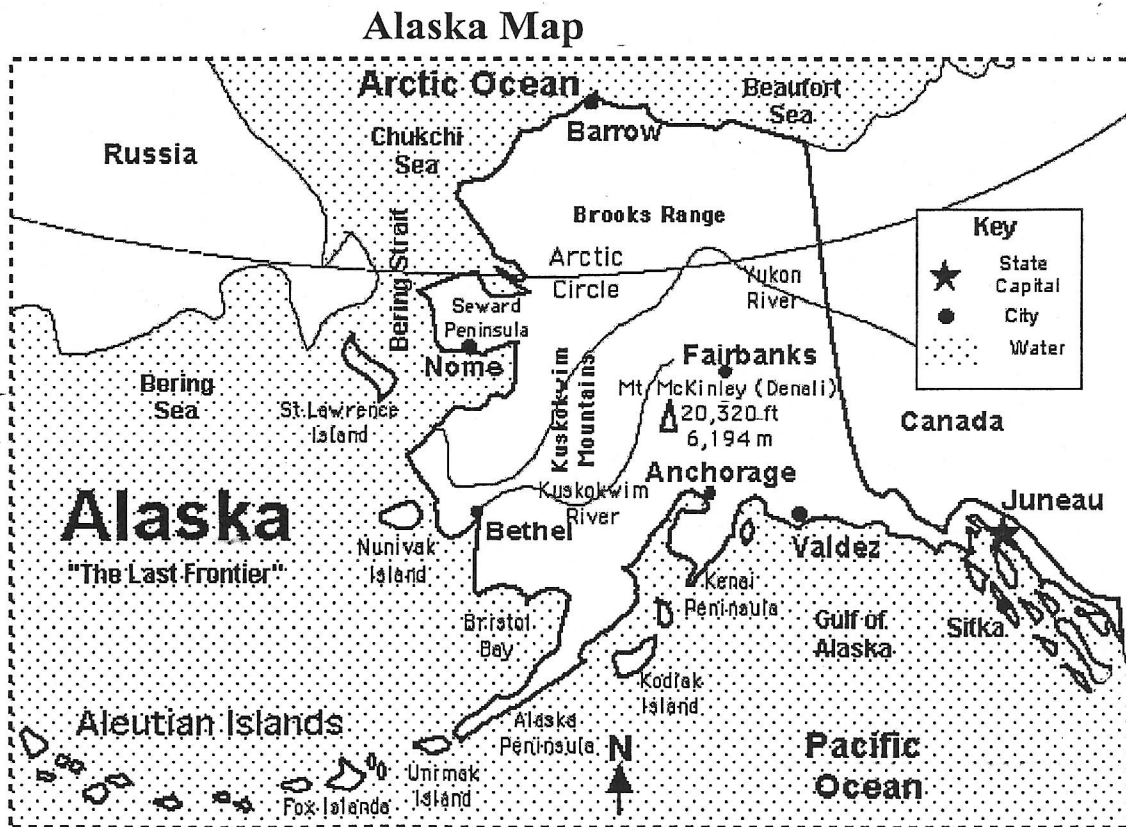


Natural Resources

Forests cover about one-third of Alaska. The coastal forests, in the Panhandle and along the Gulf of Alaska, are dense, towering stands of western hemlock, Sitka spruce and red and yellow cedar. The interior forests contain mostly white spruce, birch, aspen, poplar, and willow.

The Last Frontier supports an astounding variety of wildlife. Close to the more populated southeast region, black tailed deer, mountain goats, moose, black bears and Kodiak brown bears can be found. As one travels north, moose, grizzly bears and Dall sheep make their appearance. Caribou increase in numbers in the north, and the far north is home to the polar bears. The most important commercial fish are salmon, cod, herring, halibut, crab, shrimp, clams and scallops.

Alaska's economy braced itself on fur, fish and gold, but today it relies on petroleum and natural gas. One fourth of all the petroleum produced in the United States comes from Alaska. More than 1.8 million barrels of crude are extracted from Alaska's oil fields every day. The state also produces about 860 million cubic feet of natural gas a day. Zinc is Alaska's most valuable mineral product.



Highlights in Alaska's History

- BC Inupiat society: Myth and Reality
- 1741 Peter, the Great of Russia commissioned a Danish sea captain, Vitus Bering to explore the Northwest coast of Alaska. July 16, Bering sights Mt. St. Elias on Alaskan mainland and goes ashore. December 8 Bering dies of scurvy and is buried on Bering Island. This feat is credited with the "official" discovery by Russia and the first reliable information on the land.
- 1778 Captain James Cook of England explores the Arctic Ocean.
- 1784 First white settlement in Alaska on Kodiak Island is established.
- 1799 Czar Paul claims Alaska as a Russian possession.
- 1835 United States and England obtain trading privileges in Alaska.
- 1867 The Swedish Evangelical, Moravian, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Congregational, and Catholic Churches established schools throughout Alaska.
- 1867 Alaska is sold by Russia to the United States. October 18th is celebrated as Alaska Day.
- 1878 The salmon-canning industry was started.
- 1880 Gold was discovered near Juneau.
- 1896 Gold is discovered along the Klondike river and Bonanza Creek in Yukon Territory. This marked the beginning of the Klondike gold rush.
- 1901 Drilling of first oil wells.
- 1902 Gold is discovered near Fairbanks.
- 1906 An act authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to allot homesteads to the natives of Alaska is passed.
- 1912 Alaska becomes a Territory with its own legislature.
- 1913 The Alaska legislature gives women the right to vote.
- 1925 The Serum Dog Sled Run to Nome is performed. This is the beginning of the Iditarod race of today.
- 1942 Work begins on the 1,523 mile Alaska Military Highway from Dawson Creek, Canada to Fairbanks.
- 1946 Alaska votes to apply for statehood.
- 1956 The constitution of the State of Alaska was agreed upon.
- 1959 Alaska becomes our 49th state.
- 1967 The first Iditarod trail Sled Dog Race is formally run.
- 1970 Construction of the Alaskan Oil Pipeline is begun.
- 1971 The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was established.
- 1980 The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act becomes law creating over 80 million acres of additional parks, preserves and monuments in Alaska.
- 1989 Exxon Valdez Oil Spill
- 1991 Amendments to the ANCSA take effect.

Alaska's Native People

Alaska's 98,000 native people make up 16% of the state's population. Of those, the majority are Eskimo, Indian and Aleut. In 1741 when the Russians came in contact with the Natives in Alaska, they estimated the native population at 100,000. The Eskimo, Indian and Aleuts were hunting and gathering people who did not practice agriculture.

Indian People

In southeast Alaska, the Haida and Tlingit Indians had abundant herring, salmon, deer and other foods to allow them to settle in permanent villages and develop a culture rich in art. The Haida excel at totem carving and are highly skilled in working with wood, bone, shell, stone and silver. The Tlingit (Klink-it) commercially dominated the Interior Canadian Indians, trading eulachon oil, copper pieces and Chilkat blankets for various furs and beaded clothing.

The Athabascans lived in the Interior. They migrated from one camp to another to take advantage of the seasonal bounty of fish, waterfowl and other game. They lived on caribou, moose and fish.

The Tsimshian Indians moved from British Columbia to Annette Island in SE Alaska, led by Rev. William Duncan, an Anglican. The Tsimshian today are primarily fishermen.

Eskimo

Eskimo people have traditionally lived in villages along the harsh Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean coastlines. They also live on King Island, St. Lawrence Island, Little Diomed Island and Nunivak Island. The inland Eskimos of southwestern Alaska settled along the lower reaches of Alaska's two largest rivers, the Yukon and Kuskokwim. Two major groups of Eskimos are Yup'ik (SW Alaska) and Inupiat (N Alaska).

The Eskimo diet consisted of traditional foods such as berries, salmon, waterfowl, ptarmigan, caribou, whales, walruses and seals. Winter dwellings were partially underground and covered with sod.

Aleut

The Aleuts have traditionally lived on the Alaskan Peninsula and along the Aleutian Chain. When the Russians first made contact, almost every island was inhabited. Contact with whites decimated the population. The Aleuts lived in permanent villages, taking advantage of sea life and land mammals. Their original dwellings were large, communal structures, accommodating as many as 40 families. They gradually adopted the Russian style log cabin. Today, many are commercial fishermen.

Alutiiq

The Alutiiq have been grouped with the Aleuts but they have a unique identity. They lived on Kodiak Island, some coastal areas of the Kenai Peninsula and Prince William Sound. From the first Russian attack on Kodiak in 1784, this Native group was most altered by contact with the Europeans.

FAQs (Frequently asked questions) about Alaska

Is it Mt McKinley or Denali?

This is the highest mountain in North America, the South Peak measuring 20,320 feet and the North Peak 19,470 feet. It was named for William McKinley in 1896. McKinley was the Republican candidate for President.

An earlier name had been Denali, an Athabascan word meaning "the high one." In 1975, the state of Alaska renamed the mountain Denali, recognized by the Alaska Geographic Names Board. However, the federal Board of Geographic Names has not taken any action, and legislation has been introduced to retain McKinley.

About those glaciers...and other Alaskan peculiarities...

How many glaciers are there in Alaska?

Glaciers cover approximately 29,000 square miles or 5% of Alaska. There are an estimated 100,000 glaciers in Alaska, ranging from tiny cirque glaciers to huge valley glaciers.

Glaciers are formed over a number of years when more snow falls than melts. There are five types of glaciers: alpine, valley, piedmont, ice fields and ice caps. Alpine glaciers are found high on the slopes of mountains and plateaus. Valley glaciers are an overflowing of ice from mountain or plateau basins. Piedmont glaciers result when one or more glaciers join to form a fan shaped ice mass at the foot of a mountain range. Ice fields develop when large valley glaciers interconnect, leaving only the highest peaks and ridges to rise above the ice surface. Ice caps are smaller glaciers perched on plateaus.

When a portion of a glacier breaks away from the larger body, this is called "calving."

Why do glaciers look very blue?

Glacier ice absorbs all the colors of the spectrum except blue, which is reflected back.

What is the longest glacier in Alaska?

It is the Bering (which includes Bagley Icefield) and measures more than 100 miles.

Which is the largest glacier?

It is the Bering Glacier complex, about 2,250 square miles in size.

What is permafrost?

Permafrost is ground that remains frozen for two or more years. Permafrost can be found to depths of 2,000 feet. Permafrost affects many buildings and natural bodies. It influences construction in the Arctic because building on it may cause the ground to thaw and if the ground is ice-rich, structures will sink.

How long is an Alaskan day?

At summer solstice, June 20 or 21, a day in Anchorage can be 19.21 hours, Fairbanks, 21.49 hours, Juneau, 18.18 hours, Barrow, 84 days continuous.

At winter solstice, Dec. 21 or 22, a day in Anchorage can be 5.28 hours, Fairbanks, 3.42 hours, Juneau 6.21 hours, and Barrow, no daylight from November 18 through January 24.

About that funny money just for living there...

What is the Alaska dividend?

In 1976, state voters approved a constitutional amendment to establish the Alaska Permanent Fund. By this amendment, a percentage of all mineral lease rentals, royalties, royalty sales proceeds, federal mineral revenue-sharing payments and bonuses are placed in a permanent fund. Income from the fund is available for appropriation by the legislature. Through several changes by the legislature and U.S. Supreme Court, a plan evolved in 1982, and each Alaska applicant who has been a resident for six months prior to March 31, qualifies for an initial \$1,000 dividend. The actual amount is calculated by adding together the fund's net income for the last five years, multiplying that number by 21%, and dividing that number in half. In 2001, each qualified Alaskan received \$1,850.28, second highest ever.

For more information, contact:
Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau
524 West Fourth Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501-2212
Phone (907) 276-4118, FAX (907)276-5559
Email: info@anchorage.net or www.anchorage.net

Resources:

"Alaska," The New Book of Knowledge. New York, Grolier's Publishing, 2002.

Silberfeld, Heath Lynn. The Alaska Almanac: Facts about Alaska. Anchorage, Alaska Northwest Books, 2002.