

ROCK Mat-Su

Raising Our Children with Kindness

RUSSIA, EURASIA, ALASKA

SELECTED HISTORICAL EVENTS

25,000 B.C.E.
Human presence arrives in area now known as Alaska.



17th-18th Century
17th century:Siberian Russians aware of and trading with Alaska Native people.
1728:Vitus Bering reaches Bering Strait.
1778: Captain Cook is first known European in what is now Cook Inlet.
1780: Japanese whalers reach Aleutian Islands.
1784: First Russian settlement, on Kodiak Island.

1700s-20th Century
The "Manilla men" who served on explorer's ships in the 1700s and later crewed aboard 19th century whaling vessels. By the 20th century, salmon canneries attracted "Alaskans" as workers. When wages dropped during the Depression, Filipinos formed labor unions, which abolished the oppressive contract labor system. Although significant to Alaska's economic and historical development, "Alaskans" were practically anonymous and few accounts exist that reflect their work and lives.

CHICKALOON/KNIK/MAT-SU

SELECTED HISTORICAL EVENTS

Centuries of Life: Ahna Copper
Ahna people have been collecting and using copper for over 500 years. It was an important source of wealth and status. Ahna people gathered copper nuggets from streambeds and high-grade copper ores from surface outcrops to make implements including tanged points, awls, beads, ornaments, needles, knife blades, and copper wire. Copper was an important commodity in aboriginal trade long before European contact and was distributed over long distances via trade networks.



1794
Russian settlers in Alaska frequently abducted Denaina women as sex slaves. British explorer George Vancouver identified 23 buildings at Fort Nikolaevskia (modern day Kenai) as "the residence of such of the natives as were self-sufficient and living in communal hunter-gatherer villages along the rivers and shores of Tikatnu, now called Cook Inlet.

WORLD TO NORTH AMERICA

SELECTED HISTORICAL EVENTS

11,000 B.C.E.-1640 C.E.
Indigenous settlement. Not a wilderness... "The Pre-Columbian Americas were faced together with a complex system of roads and paths which became the roadways adopted by the early settlers. ..."North America in 1492 was not a virgin wilderness but a network of Indigenous nations, peoples of the com... they did not settle a virgin land. They invaded and displaced a resident population." Since there is no evidence of com on any other continent prior to its pre-Columbus dispersal, its development is a unique invention of the original American agriculturalists. Unlike most grains, corn cannot grow wild and cannot exist without attentive human care."

1492-1600
A navigator & explorer of African ancestry, Pedro Alonso Niño traveled with Christopher Columbus' first expedition to the New World in 1492. Pedro Niño was the pilot of Columbus' ship the "Santa Maria." He led his own expedition, financed by the Council of Castile, to find gold and pearls in areas not already discovered by Columbus. He returned to Spain very wealthy but did not live up to an agreement he had with the King to turn over 20% of his treasure (known as "The Royal Fifth"). He was arrested and died in prison before his trial.



1619
Jamestown colonists bought 20 to 30 enslaved Africans from English pirates. Those men and women who came ashore on that August day were the beginning of American slavery.

1802
The Russian-American Company post included defensive fortifications, a warehouse to store furs, and a barracks to house the garrison. In the Tikling view, the Russians only owned the land the fort was on and not all the land in the area of Mikhailovsk/White Baranov was away. Kalyáan/Katlian, a war hero of the Kiks.ádi Tikling people, led an attack against Mikhailovsk.The Tiklings won the battle and destroyed Mikhailovsk.

1804
Russians and Unangan/Aleut people return to recoupy Sitka. After two weeks of fighting what some call the Battle of Sitka,Tikling people leave the area. Tikling people return to live at Sitka in 1819 at the invitation of the Russians after Baranov's departure.



1850s-1830s
Whale population nearly destroyed, introduction of alcohol, sugar and wheat flour.

"That's one of the first stories my dad told me... It's like I could see it happening, as if I was there."
-Tara Stiller on the Awá'uq Massacre of 1784



Mid-1800s
Vasilisa Qeshqa or Berente'n, Chief of Benteh (among the lakes), brokered peace with the Copper River Ahna. He wrote in Cyrillic, he provided for his people and was well-known as a healer and shaman.Wasilisa is named after him.

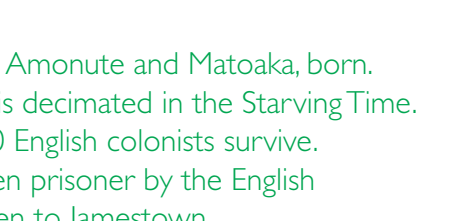
1834-1860
Russian exploration of Mat-Su.

Our story is just kind of waves of epidemics, and fur trade and extractive resources and miners."
- Angie Wade on Mining and Colonialism



1550s-1640s
The Powhatan Confederacy was established under the leadership of Chief Wahunsoanocock (Chief Powhatan). Chief Powhatan united more than 31 of the Virginia Indian tribal groups in the Tidewater region of what is now the Commonwealth of Virginia. Chief Opechancanough launched a last major effort to expel the colonists on April 18, 1644, the third Anglo-Powhatan War. In 1646, Royal Governor William Berkeley captured Opechancanough, at the time believed to be between 90 and 100 years old. They paraded him as a prisoner before a jeering crowd. The chief was killed by a soldier, who shot him in the back. Before dying, the chief reportedly said "If it had been my fortune to take Sir William Berkeley prisoner, I would not have neatly exposed him as a show to my people."

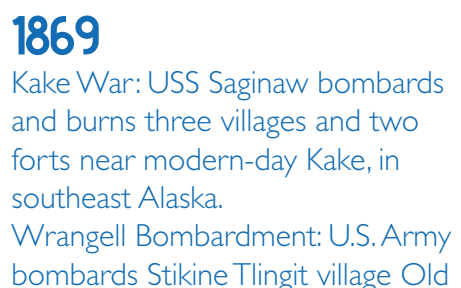
c1595-1617
c1595: Pocahontas, or Amonute and Matoaka, born. 1609-10: Jamestown is decimated in the Starving Time. Around 60 of the 500 English colonists survive. 1613: Pocahontas taken prisoner by the English captain Argall and taken to Jamestown. 1614: She marries John Rolfe and becomes known as Lady Rebecca. 1617: Pocahontas dies. Tensions escalate between the Jamestown colonists and Powhatan tribes. 1622: Approximately a third of the settlers in Virginia were killed by Powhatan forces. The colony eventually rebounded and later killed hundreds of Native people in retaliation, including many warriors poisoned by Dr John Potts at Jamestown.



1898
U.S. Congress opens up the 1862 Homesteading Act to include Alaska. This special legislation spurs waves of American settlers in the coming decades. The last homestead granted patent, in 1988, was on the Stoney River in southwestern Alaska.



"The people who moved in and took ownership didn't really want that story to be heard..."
-Walter Tellman on the Homestead Act



1869
Kake War: USS Saginaw bombs and burns three villages and two forts near modern-day Kake, in southeast Alaska. Wrangell Bombardment: U.S. Army bombs Stikine Tikling village Old Wrangell for two days after residents refuse to deliver Scud-doo, who had murdered an American merchant. Scud-doo was retaliating for the murder of his son by American soldiers. Scud-doo was handed over and hung, the first use of the death penalty in American Alaska.



1900s
Epidemics of smallpox, measles, diphtheria, and scarlet fever known collectively as "The Great Death," decimated Alaska Native communities. The 1918-1919 Spanish flu epidemic killed 60% of all Nome-area Alaska Native people. The Unalaska epidemic killed one-third of the population. Thousands of Alaska Native children were left orphans by these epidemics. Many were sent to church run orphanages like the Catholic Mission of Pilgrim Hot Springs north of Nome.

"Our communities are most affected."

Perceptions of Ownership
The Russian and American intrusions into the Mat-Su region impacted Alaska Native relationships with nature, especially the land. What had been loosely bounded zones of influence and responsibility were forced to change because of colonial understandings of land ownership.

1914
Without consultation with Alaska Native people, U.S. Congress passes the Alaska Railroad Act, "so as best to aid in the development of the agricultural and mineral or other resources of Alaska, and the settlement of the public lands therein." This sets the stage for the next twenty years of resource exploitation and settler/Alaska Native interactions.

1915-1919
1915: Anchorage founded on Ship Creek near a Denaina fishing camp. 1917: Wasilla townsite founded as station on the Alaska Railroad. 1917: Eska Mine, the most productive coal mine in the Mat-Su Region begins operations. 1917: Alaska Railroad reaches Chickaloon. 1918-1919: The location where the Eska railroad spur met the main line is named Sutton after a local homesteader.

1763
The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was issued by King George III on October 7, 1763, following Great Britain's acquisition of French territory in North America after the end of the Seven Years' War. It forbade all settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains, which was delineated as an Indian Reserve. British desire was to avoid an expensive Anglo-Indian war to protect settlers from attacks by tribes.

1760
Settlers target non-combatants. "In Case a War must be proclaimed, the three Southern Provinces of Virginia and the Carolinas should exert their whole force, enter into and destroy all the [Cherokee] Towns of that at War with us, and make as many of them as we should take their Wives and Children Slaves, by sending them to the Islands [West Indies] if above 10 years old... - Governor of North Carolina



1913
Four men, including Walter Harper, a Koyukon Athabaskan, make the first reported ascent of Denali's south peak, the highest point on the North American continent.

1922
Federal court gives Alaska Native people the right to vote in territorial elections.



1925
After the expansion of Alaska Native voting rights and the rising political power of Tingit William Paul, the Alaska Territorial Legislature passed a literacy act requiring a person to read and write English to vote in territorial elections. Alaska had an English literacy requirement to vote through 1970.



1925
Dog teams and drivers, most of whom are Alaska Native people, relay diphtheria serum needed to prevent an epidemic from Nenana to Nome.



1912/1915
In 1912, 13 southeast Alaska Native people create the Alaska Native Brotherhood to gain recognition of Native citizenship rights, education, and abolition of "aboriginal customs." The Alaska Native Sisterhood is established in 1915.



1918-19
The Spanish Influenza pandemic was one of a series of disease outbreaks brought to Alaska by colonial settlers. According to Alaska Department of Health and Social Services research, 81.7% of all Alaska-wide Spanish Flu deaths were Alaska Native people.

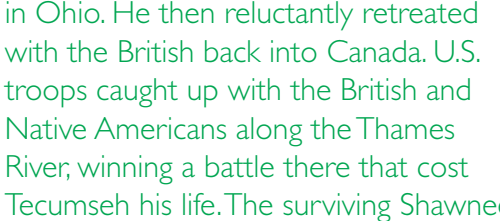
1922-1923
On April 30, 1922, the U.S. Navy concluded that coal mining in Chickaloon was not worth the effort and handed oversight of mining operations there to the Alaska Engineering Commission. On May 1, 1922, mining operations were suspended indefinitely. By the end of 1923, Chickaloon was a ghost town. The buildings were torn down and shipped to Anchorage where they were used for new construction in Government Hill. Only unsalvageable debris was left in Chickaloon. The railroad tracks were removed in the 1930s.

"My mother was born in 1922 and she was not sent away to boarding school but all of her brothers and sisters were."
- Rain Wade on the Boarding School Era



1768-1813
Tecumseh, Shawnee warrior and chief, leader of confederacy of Native Americans. War of 1812 broke out in June; Tecumseh and his supporters joined the British. U.S. General William Hull and about 2,000 men invaded Canada from Detroit. They were quickly repelled due to Tecumseh's interception of a supply train. He participated in failed sieges of two forts in Ohio. He then reluctantly retreated with the British back into Canada. U.S. troops caught up with the British and Native Americans along the Thames River, winning a battle there that cost Tecumseh his life. The surviving Shawnee divided into groups and dispersed in various directions. Most eventually ended up in Oklahoma.

1763-1783
American Revolutionary War. Around 1750, the British mainland American colonies had a population of approximately 1.5 million. German immigrants began to arrive and between 1749 and 1754, more than 5,000 Germans arrived annually. Each year 3,500 black captives arrived from Africa or the Caribbean. Nearly 1 in 5 Americans, or 300,000 people, were enslaved. Poverty in Northern Ireland forced a massive flight of Scots-Irish people to the colonies. Some colonists began to agitate for their independence. This led to the American Revolution, with its ethos of freedom and equality. African American people began a parallel struggle for their own freedom. Dragging Canoe and "Chickamauga Cherokees" fought for Cherokee land and independence 1776-1792. Cherokee people fought on the side of the British during the war.



1818-1895
Frederick Douglass was an American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer, and statesman. After escaping from slavery, he became a national leader of the abolitionist movement. He was a firm believer in the equality of all peoples, whether white, black, female, Native American, or Chinese immigrants.



1822-1915
Harriet Tubman escaped slavery and made some 13 missions to rescue approximately 70 enslaved people, using the network of antislavery activists and safe houses known as the Underground Railroad.



1828-1830s
Andrew Jackson elected president. Indian Removal Act passed in 1830. Jackson prospered as planter, slave owner, and merchant. Jackson may have owned as many as 300 slaves. At various times he posted advertisements for fugitive slaves who had escaped from his plantation. In one advertisement in October 1804, Jackson offered "ten dollars extra, for every hundred lashes any person will give him, to the amount of three hundred." He has been featured on the \$20 bill since 1928.

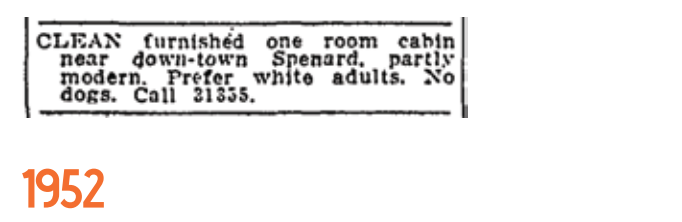
1945
Elizabeth Peratrovich petitions Alaska legislature to end Jim Crow practices in Alaska, and the Alaska Anti-Discrimination Act passes in 1945, nearly 20 years before the passage of federal civil rights act of 1964. This new policy ended the common signs in store and restaurant windows that read "No Dogs, No Natives."

1940s
In 1939, the Department of the Interior proposed Jewish refugees should settle in Alaska. Alaskans near uniformly rejected Jewish people as suitable settlers. A 1940 Alaska Life magazine poll found 88.5% of Alaskans opposed to foreign settlement in Alaska. In 1941, Ernest Patten, later president of the University of Alaska, said referring to Jewish people, "America should borrow a page from the Germans and attempt to do some long-range planning for the future."

1940s
Construction of the Alaska Highway. 10,000 US soldiers who built the Alaska Highway included about 3,500 African-American troops. Facing the loss of traditional ways and limited employment opportunities, many Alaska Native people relocate to look for work on the new highway. The move separates families and interferes with traditional lifeways.

1940s
The U.S. Air Force's Arctic Aeromedical Laboratory conducted a study on the role of the thyroid in acclimating to cold weather. 102 Northwest Alaskan Inupiat people were given radioactive iodine as part of the experiment. In 2000, the U.S. government appropriated compensation of \$67,000 per participant. Many of the participants developed severe thyroid problems and died of cancer.

1964-89
Tribal and borough governments established. 1964: Matanuska-Susitna Borough incorporated, leading to confrontations over taxation of Alaska Native people in region. 1973: Residents establish the sovereign Chickaloon Valley Traditional Council in 1973, federally recognized the same year. 1989: Knik Tribal Council federally recognized.



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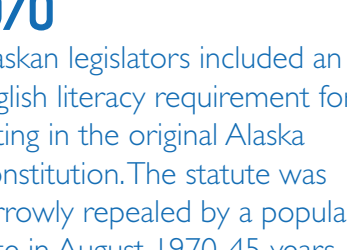
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1838
Cherokee people were herded into stockades, forced on boats and to march overland between May 1838 and March 1839 about 16,000 Cherokees were removed. At least 4,000 died and many were buried in unmarked graves.



1968
The State of Alaska initiates the Community Health Aide Program to improve emergency medical care in rural Alaska.



1964
On March 27, the great Alaskan earthquake occurred measuring 9.2 on the Richter scale which set off tidal waves. The quake alone lasted for four minutes and 18 seconds.

1965-1971
Anchitka was an ancestral home for the Aleut people from roughly 4,000 years ago through Russian contact. In 1965, 1969, and 1971, the U.S. Department of Defense conducted underground nuclear detonation testing.

1966
The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) forms and holds its first statewide meeting with over 400 Alaska Native leaders in attendance. The focus of the first meeting was land claims.

1978-1998
Twenty years of complaints peaked in 1998 over a wooden figure hung from a hangman's noose outside the Triple B Bar in Houston. Over time, the originally light wood of the figure darkened, making the sign seem to depict a lynched African American person.

1975
"Susitna will disappear. It will disappear. Only grass will grow there. That grass will cover the whole village. The Taninans of Susitna will disappear... There will be only Americans." -Shem Pete, recounting his uncle's prediction for the fate of the Denaina, Susitnu Htsukdu'á

1991
Newly elected Alaska Governor Wally Hickel nominated fundamentalist Talkeetna pastor Jack Phelps to the state board of education. The previous year, Phelps wrote in the church newsletter of his support for former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke. Phelps was subsequently rejected for the position by a state House committee.

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1865-1968
Segregation era.

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Segregation persists. In 1917, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the government could not enforce racial zoning. About 50 years later, the Fair Housing Act outlawed racial discrimination. It took another 50 years for the Supreme Court to decide in 2015 that policies that implicitly affected minorities were also unconstitutional. "Economic segregation in housing is damaging, and perhaps even as insidious as outright racial segregation, because while in effect it still excludes substantial numbers of people of color from good places to live, it does so with the open consent of the law."

1869
Transcontinental railroad complete; wild buffalo exterminated; war on Native American people intensifies.

1921
The Tulsa massacre, Greenwood Massacre, or the Black Wall Street Massacre, when mobs of white residents attacked black residents and businesses of the Greenwood District in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It has been called "the single worst incident of racial violence in American history." The attack, carried out on the ground and from private aircraft, destroyed more than 35 square blocks of the district, the wealthiest black community in the US, known as "Black Wall Street". Many survivors left Tulsa. Black and white residents who stayed in the city were silent for decades about the terror, violence, and losses of this event. The riot was largely omitted from local, state, and national histories.

1997-1999
Alaska Native people take charge of health clinics, hospital. Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), the largest tribal-run health organization in the US, manages the statewide medical and public health services of the Alaska Native health care system. ANTHC is owned and managed by Alaska Native tribal governments and their regional health organizations. In 1997, a new Alaska Native Medical Center replaced the one built in the 1950s in Anchorage. In 1999, Southern Foundation and ANTHC take over management of all Indian Health Service programs at the Alaska Native Medical Center and other Alaska Native health facilities statewide.

1978
Alaska Subsidence Law is created. It created the Division of Subsidence within the Department of Fish and Game to provide information about subsidence and to assist the boards in carrying out the law.

1970
Alaskan legislators included an English literacy requirement for voting in the original Alaska Constitution. The statute was narrowly repealed by a popular vote in August 1970, 45 years after the first such requirement was enacted in Alaska.

1999
The Alaska Native Heritage Center, per its mission statement, "preserves and strengthens the traditions, languages, and art of Alaska's Native People through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education."

2011
The devastating experiences of the Catholic Church sexual abuse of children and women in rural Alaska is shared through the PBS frontline film entitled "The Silence."

2014
The Alaska legislature symbolically and officially recognizes 20 Alaska Native languages.

2006
At an Alaska Board of Game meeting in Wasilla, Ron Somerville, then Chairman of the AK Board, referring to Alaska Native people who missed the meeting, said, "There must have been a run on free beer." When an Alaska Native woman took her turn to speak, Somerville said, "Don't like beer, Donna?" Somerville was honored in 2019 by the Governor as Alaska's 2019 Conservatist of the Year.

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2018
Alaska Governor Bill Walker officially apologized at the annual Alaska Federation of Natives in Anchorage for historical wrongs.



2019
The State of Alaska officially recognizes May 31 st as Katie John Day, a celebration of her fight for subsistence rights of Alaska Native peoples.

"She fought for her rights, to make sure her family would have a way to feed themselves forever."

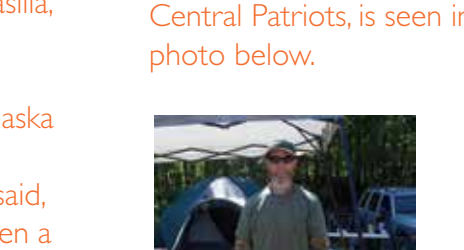
2020
No funding for Alaska Marine Highway system. "From the tribes perspective, enough is enough... our communities are the most affected. This marine highway is the lifeblood of Alaska... for people to flippantly say, 'Well you choose to live in rural Alaska.' Yeah, I choose to live where my ancestors have lived for 10,000 years. Absolutely, damn straight." -Richard Chalyee Eesh Peterson, President of the Central Council of Tingit and Haida Indian Tribes

2008
In 2008, the day after MLK Day, African American Matanuska Electric Association employee Donte Kelly discovered a noose placed on his desk. The coworker who placed the noose was later promoted to be his supervisor. This was the latest in a series of racial incidents experienced by Kelly including racial comments and a failure to promote. Kelly filed a discrimination lawsuit against MEA in 2009 with an unknown outcome.

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2020
Southern Poverty Law Center lists four hate groups and ten other anti-government militia groups in Alaska, including the prominent South Central Patriots based in Wasilla. John Rood, founder South Central Patriots, is seen in the photo below.



1916-1968
"Great Migration" African American people flee northwards. "They left as though they were fleeing some curse... they were willing to make almost any sacrifice to obtain a railroad ticket and they left with the intention of staying." - Scholar Emmett J. Scott, an observer of the early years of the migration

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-Omari Richins on Slavery and Colonialism

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