

Alaska Native History Timeline

Alaska's First People lived on the land throughout Alaska for tens of thousands of years, long before the arrival of outsiders. The within tribes and spoke many different languages. They fished and hunted and harvested the land. Each tribe had its own language, culture, traditions, laws and governments. The tribes often worked together and cooperated with one another. They had their own traditional ways of resolving disputes among each other. The tribes would trade among each other according to traditional rules. The land was very important to Alaska's first people and met all of their needs for food, shelter, clothing, culture, spirituality, weaponry and survival. The land took care of them and they took care of the land.

1740s-1830s	Enslavement of Aleut and Alutiiq (Unangan and Sugpiaq) people by Russians for fur trade. Estimated population of the Unangan people at contact 15,000, reduced to 2,000 through disease and slavery.
1784	Refuge Rock Massacre (Awa'uq Massacre). Gregory Shelikov, with armed mercenaries and cannons, massacres up to 3000 Qik'rtarmiut Sugiat (Alutiq) people on Sitkalidak Island near Kodiak. This incident is often referred to as the Wounded Knee of Alaska.
1796-1799	The Russian-American Company is established. Unalaska [Iluula [Bergsland: 1994: 603]] becomes a major station. [Partnow]
1799	Alexander Baranov, General Manager of the Shelikhov-Golikov Company, establishes a trading post at Sitka. The site is a strategic and important trading location in Southeast Alaska and has a large Tlingit settlement.
1799	Tsar Paul I grants the Russian-American Company, formed by Shelikhov's heirs and other Siberian entrepreneurs, sole trading rights in North America for 20 years. Baranov remains General Manager. The third and last charter, issued in 1844, classifies Native people as dependent (Unangan/Aleuts, Koniag), semi-dependent (Chugach), and independent (Tlingit).
1802	Tlingit attack and destroy the Russian post at Sitka.
1804	Led by Baranov, Russians and Unangan/Aleuts return to reoccupy Sitka. They are aided by a Russian navy ship Neva. After two weeks of fighting what some call the Battle of Sitka, the Tlingit leave the area. Tlingit oral accounts describe their survival march across Baranof Island. Tlingit return to live at Sitka in 1819 at the invitation of the Russians after Baranov's departure.
1818	The Russian-American Company introduces new rules, among them to employ Natives only on the basis of voluntary contracts. The class of Creoles, persons of mixed ancestry, is created. Creoles are entitled to education and other privileges in exchange for a commitment to work for the company for a minimum of ten years.
1824	Ivan Veniaminov, Russian Orthodox missionary, arrives in the Aleutian Islands. Assisted by Ivan Pan'kov, a Tigalda Island leader, Veniaminov learns the Unangan/Eastern Aleut language, develops an alphabet, and records information about the people and their customs. The two write a Unangan/Aleut catechism, the first book written in an Alaska Native language. Veniaminov moves to Sitka in 1834 and does similar work with the Tlingit. There he starts an all-colonial school to educate Natives and Creoles and obtains Russian-American Company support for it. Veniaminov leaves Alaska in 1845. As head of the church in Moscow, he continues support of the Alaska mission after Russia sells Alaska to the U.S.
1836-1839	Smallpox, measles, chicken pox, and whooping-cough epidemics reduce the Unangan population.

1838	The British Hudson's Bay Company leases the Southeast Alaska mainland from the Russians. This reduces competition and lowers the prices paid to Native people for furs.
1850s-1920s	Whale population nearly destroyed by commercial whalers. Alcohol, sugar and wheat flour introduced by whaling ships to northern communities.
1867	US "purchase" of Alaska from Russia for \$7 million – The Alaska Native population was not consulted. The Russians did not have ownership of the land, meaning the transaction was not a proper sale of land, only a transfer of a right to occupy.
1872	Mining Act of 1872. In section 1, it is stated that only US citizens may claim land and the loads, excluding Alaska Native people from their own properties, as Alaska Natives were not "granted" citizenship until 1924.
1878	The first salmon canneries are established at Klawock and Sitka in Southeast Alaska. Within ten years there will be canneries operating throughout Southeast and Southcentral Alaska and several operating in Western Alaska. The canneries provide seasonal employment for Native people.
1880	U.S. Navy officers force the Tlingit to allow non-Natives access to the Chilkoot Trail to get from Southeast Alaska to the upper Yukon River.
1880	At a meeting held in Washington DC, Sheldon Jackson (Protestant) brokers the division of Alaska into denominational service areas between Protestant churches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southeast and Barrow – Presbyterian • Yukon River – Episcopalian • Kodiak and Cook Inlet – Baptist and existing Russian Orthodox • Aleutians – Methodist and existing Russian Orthodox • Kuskokwim – River and Nushagak – Moravian • Cape Prince of Wales – Congregationalist • The Catholic and Russian Orthodox Churches already had missions and schools established • Jackson and US Revenue Cutter Service Capt. Michael Healy worked together to bring 1300 reindeer from Chukotka to ward off the famine occurring due to the commercial overharvesting of seals, walrus and Wales along the Alaskan coastline.
1880	Canneries exploited salmon fisheries, by barricading the mouths of streams and rivers, which decimated salmon populations.
1882	After villagers take hostages and demand payment for the accidental death of a Tlingit leader employed by a whaling company, the U.S. Navy shells the Southeast Alaska village of Angoon (Kootznahoo), then burns the houses and canoes. The U.S. Government settles claims for the destruction 89 years later, in 1973, for \$90,000.
1892	Tsimshian from Metlakatla build a sawmill at Gravina. It is reported as the first business built, managed, and operated by Alaska Native people. The sawmill operates until destroyed by fire in 1904.
1893	Pitka Pavalof and Sergei Gologoff Cherosky, Creoles of Russian-Native descent, find gold on Birch Creek in Interior Alaska. Learning of the discovery, prospectors jump their claims and argue the claims are invalid because the men are Natives. The discovery attracts more non-Natives to the Yukon River and the town of Circle is founded.
1896	George Carmack, Skookum Jim Mason, and Tagish Charley Mason find gold on Rabbit Creek (renamed Bonanza Creek) in Canada. When word of the discovery reaches San Francisco and Seattle in summer 1897,

	the Klondike gold rush starts. Subsequently, many gold discoveries are made around Alaska and a number of settlements in Interior Alaska are created among them Eagle, Fairbanks, Ruby, and Iditarod.
1899	The U.S. Army starts constructing a trail, called the Trans-Alaska Military Road, from a year-round open port in Southcentral Alaska (Valdez/Fort Liscum) to the Yukon River near the Alaska-Canada border (Eagle/Fort Egbert). Parts of the trail are Native travel routes. In 1905, the new Alaska Road Commission constructs a spur road from Gulkana to the new mining camp of Fairbanks. The Valdez-Fairbanks route (later named the Richardson Highway) is Alaska's principal road until the 1940s.
1900	"The Great Death" smallpox, measles, chickenpox, flu, colds. Example: Nome flu epidemic killed 60% of all local native people. The resulting death tolls and trauma of losing so many family and community members in countless communities across Alaska contributed to Historic Trauma Response (community level posttraumatic stress disorder) and multigenerational grief. Many individuals normalized survivalist coping mechanisms in their lives as a result, and past trauma based coping mechanisms onto their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
1900	Epidemic causes the death of one-third of the population of Unalaska.
1902	Congress passes the Alaska Game Law, assigning protection of Alaska's mammals to the U.S. Bureau of Biological Survey (later merged with the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries to become the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). An exemption allows Natives to kill game animals and birds for fur and clothing, but restricts them from shipping or selling them except for the hides. The game law passed by Congress in 1908 reaffirms the exemption.
1902	A gold strike leads to the founding of Fairbanks. It becomes the largest community in Interior Alaska. A number of Athabaskan people move to Fairbanks for jobs.
1903	Era of early Unangan publication ends. The last book published is the Unanga (Aleut) translation of the Gospel of St. Luke. Then there is nothing in the Unanga language published for over 50 years!
1905	Congress passes the Nelson Act that among other things, funds roads, education, and care for the mentally ill in Alaska. The legislation states the funds for education are for schools for "white children and those of mixed blood who lead a civilized life". This results in a second school system; Alaska has U.S. Bureau of Education (later Bureau of Indian Affairs) schools created by the Organic Act of 1884 that become known as Native schools, and Territorial (later State) schools. This dual system operates into the 1980s.
1906	Congress passes a Native Allotment Act allowing qualified (acculturated) Alaska Natives to apply for 160-acres of non-mineral land as an "inalienable and non-taxable" homestead. Natives qualified if they were head of a household, 21 years old, and could establish a prescribed period of use and occupancy of the area. The allotments had restrictions regarding sale of the land. The act extended provisions of the General Allotment Act of 1887 (also known as the Dawes Act) to Alaska.
1908	Three Native families in Sitka go to court seeking permission for their children to attend the territorial school in town. The judge determines in the case known as Davis v. Sitka School Board the families do not "lead a civilized life", and hence, does not permit the children to enroll in the territorial school.
1911	Thirteen Southeast Alaska Natives create the Alaska Native Brotherhood to gain recognition of Native citizenship rights, education, and abolition of "aboriginal customs". The fraternal organization soon has camps in most Southeast communities.
1912	Novarupta Volcano near Mt. Katmai in Southcentral Alaska erupts, destroying several Native villages and forcing the people living at them to relocate.

1912	The first hospital for Native people opens in Juneau, but soon closes for lack of funds. In 1915 Congress appropriates funds for a 25 bed Native hospital in Juneau and assigns the U.S. Bureau of Education responsibility to oversee it.
1913	Four men, including Walter Harper, an Athabaskan, make the first successful ascent of Mt. McKinley/Denali's south peak, the highest point on the North American continent. The other members are Hudson Stuck, Harry Karstens and Robert Tatum.
1915	The Territorial Legislature passes a law [Chapter 24, Session Laws of Alaska, 1915] recognizing Native people as Alaska citizens. The law requires a Native person to get endorsements from five white citizens and to have "severed all tribal relationships and adapted the habits of a civilized life".
1915	Tanana chiefs of Interior Alaska meet with Alaska's Delegate to Congress James Wickersham and government officials starting construction of the Alaska Railroad. The chiefs express concern about protecting their hunting and fishing rights, their interest in education and jobs, and their opposition to reservations.
1915	Native women in Southeast Alaska organize the Alaska Native Sisterhood.
1916	The U.S. and Great Britain sign a migratory bird treaty. The treaty establishes a closed season on hunting migratory birds between March 10 and September 1 and limits the open season to three and a half months. Native people in Alaska and Canada could take certain sea birds and eggs for food and clothing. The closed season was to apply, but the law is not enforced until World War II.
1917-1919	Worldwide flu epidemic. 75% of Wales population died during flu, the majority of those that died were childbearing adults. Hundreds of mass graves were used to bury the unthinkable amount of flu victims. Elders and children were not as severely affected, and children left parentless were sent to church run orphanages like the Catholic Mission of Pilgrim Hot Springs north of Nome. Pilgrim Hot Springs was run by Father Bellarmine LaFortune who ran the school from 1917 to 1941.
1920	TB Epidemic hit every corner of Native America, and especially exploded in over-crowded boarding schools. The Alaska Humanities Forum reports that...In Southeast Alaska, the death rate from tuberculosis in 1932 was 1,302 per 100,000. The rate among non-Natives in the U.S. was 56 per 100,000. A survey in the 1940s showed that ¾ of the children in the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta had tuberculosis...Before the effective drugs became available persons with active cases (from all over Alaska) were isolated in far- off hospitals or sanatoriums to prevent spreading the disease.
1922	After Charlie Jones, a Tlingit, is arrested at Wrangell for voting, and Tillie Paul Tamaree is arrested for aiding and abetting him, a federal court gives Alaska Natives the right to vote in territorial elections, two years before all Native Americans get the right to vote in public elections. Jones is acquitted and the charges against Tamaree are dropped.
1923	Carl Ben Eielson gets a U.S. mail contract for ten bimonthly round trips by air between Fairbanks and McGrath. Later, air mail delivery replaces many dog team mail carriers, impacts roadhouse operators, and reduces the number of road and trail maintenance workers, many of whom are Native people.
1924	Congress passes the Citizenship Act (Chapter 233, 43 Stat. 253) recognizing Native Americans as U.S. citizens.
1924	William L. Paul is the first Native elected to the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives. He serves two terms.

1925	The Territorial Legislature passes a literacy act that requires a person to read and write English to vote in territorial elections. William L. Paul successfully gets the bill amended to permit those who voted in 1924 to vote in future elections.
1925	Dog teams and drivers, most of whom are Natives, relay diphtheria serum needed to prevent an epidemic from Nenana to Nome. The event gets national media attention.
1926	Congress passes the Alaska Native Townsite Act allowing Natives to get restricted deeds to village lots.
1930	U.S. Census figures show Native people are no longer more than fifty percent of Alaska's population.
1932	The Bureau of Indian Affairs opens Wrangell Institute, a co-educational vocational boarding school, at Wrangell in Southeast Alaska. With the opening of Mt. Edgecumbe High School at Sitka in 1947, Wrangell Institute becomes an elementary school. The BIA closes the Wrangell school in 1975. Many children are abused at Wrangell.
1935	The Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska was established to pursue a land suit on behalf of the Tlingit and Haida people. The organization of Central Council evolved out of the struggle of our people to retain a way of life strongly based on subsistence. That struggle included the rights of Native people to claim lands they had used from time immemorial, lands they were given no claim to under the Western concept of land ownership.
1934	First for the Lower 48, then Alaska in 1936 – Congress passes the Indian Reorganization Act. The law allows Alaska natives to develop constitutions for self-government. The law imposed a Western legal framework of the community government upon Native communities. Within the constitutions of most IRAs, it states that the US federal government will not take lands without first consulting with tribal governments. For this reason, many Alaska natives feel that the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 is illegal.
1937	Congress passes the Alaska Reindeer Industry Act restricting ownership of reindeer to Alaska Natives. The act is passed to promote an economic development program and to provide a “means of subsistence for the Eskimos and other Natives of Alaska”.
Late 1930's	Makushin, Kashega, and Biorka villages begin to move to Unalaska.
1942	Japanese bomb Dutch Harbor Naval Air Station and Fort Mears in the eastern Aleutians and occupy Attu and Kiska islands in the western Aleutians. The 42 Aleuts on Attu are taken prisoners by the Japanese and interned in Japan until 1945. After the war, the 27 survivors are not allowed to return to the island.
1942	The Alaska Highway is constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a wartime project. Construction leads to the relocation of many Natives in east central Alaska to communities such as Northway, Tok, and Dot Lake close to the road.
1942	Japanese took Aleuts and held them prisoner in Japan until 1945. The US relocated and interned Aleuts, Japanese-American and German-Americans to dilapidated internment camps. Aleuts were housed in old fish canneries in Southeast Alaska. Most Aleut's were not allowed to return to their home communities. Aleut's were forbidden to hunt for their food in Southeast Alaska, and very little food was provided to the camps. Many of the people that were interned died due to the extremely poor living conditions and lack of food.
1942	ALCAN Road from lower 48 was built.
1944	Local Nome Inupiaq, Alberta Scheneck is arrested for sitting in the “Whites Only” section of the Nomarama Theater with her white date. Alberta writes a passionate and compelling letter to the Nome Nugget Newspaper and a telegram to the in Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening on the issue of racism and garners

	his support for a civil rights bill for Alaska. He was urged to address the issue by his secretary Katie Hurley. Katie Hurley went on to be a longtime advocate for Alaska Native people and was later and original signer and member of the Alaska Constitutional Convention.
1945	Tlingits Frank Peratrovich and Andrew Hope are elected to the Territorial House of Representatives, the first Natives elected since William L. Paul in the 1920s. The next year, Peratrovich is the first Native elected to the Territorial Senate and later becomes president of the Senate. Natives from other regions run for the legislature and more get elected.
1943-1945	Elizabeth Peratovich 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.”
1947	Kake is the Territory of Alaska’s first independently incorporated school district serving all Native children.
1951	Congress extends the provisions of the Johnson-O’Malley Act passed in 1934 to Alaska. The act provides a means of transferring the education of Native children from the federal government to state and local school systems.
1953	The Alaska Native Service opens a 400-bed hospital with a dedicated tuberculosis wing in Anchorage.
1955	The Territorial Legislature passes a bill calling for a Constitutional Convention. Frank Peratrovich, a Tlingit, is elected one of the delegates. He is selected to be vice-chair of the convention. Article XII, Section 12 of the constitution acknowledges the State does not have a right to Native lands. Native people, particularly in Northwest Alaska, do not favor statehood because they did not see protection of their traditional ways and determination of their lands.
1955	The federal government transfers responsibility for Native health care in Alaska from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the U.S. Public Health Service, Division of Indian Health, because of the overwhelming incidence of tuberculosis.
1953	Public Law 280 was a transfer of legal authority “jurisdiction” from the federal government to state governments which significantly changed the division of legal authority among tribal, federal and state governments. Congress gave six states (five states initially – California, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon and Wisconsin; and then Alaska upon statehood) extensive criminal and civil jurisdiction over tribal lands within the affected states (the so-called “mandatory states”). Public lot 280, however, is a comp located statute which has been very controversial since the time of its enactment in 1953. It has often been misunderstood and misapplied by both federal and state governments. Moreover, the practical impact of public lot 280 has gone far beyond that which was legally required, intended and contemplated.
1958	Operation Chariot. The US government proposed that detonating several nuclear devices to form a man-made harbor near Point Hope, at Cape Thompson, Alaska. After the government analyzed the financial feasibility of the project and maintenance and operation expenses, the US decided to focus the project on how radiation levels affected the indigenous people of the Point Hope area. There are to this day, high levels of radiation in the Point Hope area of unknown origin, and cancer rates of Point Hope residents are extremely high.
1958	Howard Rock, Inupiaq writer and artist of Point Hope, helped defend his people from the Atomic Energy Commission’s Operation Chariot proposal to excavate a harbor near the village with a series of aboveground atomic blasts then in 1962 founded the Tundra Times newspaper. Under Rock’s leadership, the newspaper published the voice of Alaska’s native people to assist in the recognition of their aboriginal land claims before

	Congress. Alaska Native leaders together with Rock's newspaper, helped make the ANCSA settlement of \$1 billion and 44 million acres of land possible.
1959	Alaska becomes the 49th state. Native population was not consulted or adequately represented in Constitutional Convention. The state starts selecting land as provided for under the act. Alaska Natives routinely object to the selections to call attention to their land claims.
1961	The Barrow Duck incident. In May 1961, a Barrow man is arrested for hunting subsistence birds out of "season" as specified by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, with Canada which states that waterfowl may not be taken from spring until fall – the entirety of their presence on the North Slope. In addition, the residents of Barrow were never informed of the act. In protest and in solidarity, 138 Inupiaq Barrow men went out and harvested subsistence waterfowl, presented their catches and demanded to be arrested. In response, the US government amended the MBTA with input of Alaska Natives, leading to the allowance of taking waterfowl for subsistence purposes between spring and summer.
1963	The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposes to dam the Yukon River near Rampart, flooding the huge Yukon Flats, displacing several villages, and destroying prime waterfowl nesting areas. Alaska Senator Ernest Gruening supports the project. The project is abandoned after protests by Natives and national wildlife groups.
1964	On March 27, 1964 at 5:36 PM, the great Alaskan earthquake, measuring 9.2 on the Richter scale and set of tidal waves occurred. The quake alone lasted for four minutes and 18 seconds. The earthquake devastated south-central Alaska, leaving 139 dead and destroying a number of communities, among them the Native villages of Chenega, Old Harbor and Kaguyak, forcing residents to relocate. The resulting tsunami reached heights of 67 meters in some places. Both of the earthquake and tsunami claims lives and caused damage around the Pacific region. The earthquake was felt over nearly all the earth. This was the second and strongest earthquake in recorded history.
1965	Civil rights and antipoverty programs begin in Alaska.
1965	William E Beltz of Unalakleet, Alaska (1912 – 1960) served in the territorial House of Representatives from 1949 to 1950, where he served as the first president of the Alaska State Senate. He was a carpenter and, in 1955, was elected president of the Alaska Council of Carpenters. A native Alaskan, he felt the need for formal educational institutions in rural areas of Alaska. In 1965, in recognition of his efforts to promote education and say, a regional high school in Nome, the first of its kind in northern Alaska, was named in his honor.
1966	The Alaska Federation of Natives forms and holds first statewide meeting, with over 400 and Alaska Native leaders in attendance. The main focus of the first meeting was to discuss land claims. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall imposes a freeze on all land actions in Alaska by the federal government until Native land claims are resolved.
1960s	Alcoholism rates begin to grow in rural Alaska. Indigenous People across the world sustained communitywide injury at contact with colonial powers. Communitywide trauma manifests as high rates of suicide, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual abuse and child abuse. A healing approach that is based on individual wellness with a cultural context, the wellness of whole communities and promotion of Native self-determination seem to be common recommendations of many Indigenous experts across the world in addressing historical trauma, multigenerational grief behaviors and communitywide injury.
1968	The U.S. Court of Claims issues its determination that the Tlingit and Haida people owned 18 of 20 million acres in Southeast Alaska when the U.S. purchased the land from Russia. Known as the Tlingit-Haida

	Settlement, the Indians receive \$7.5 million for lands withdrawn to create Tongass National Forest and Glacier Bay National Monument.
1968	The State of Alaska starts the Community Health Aide Program to improve emergency medical care in rural Alaska.
1968	Atlantic Richfield Oil Company announces discovery of the huge Prudhoe Bay oil field on Alaska's North Slope. They, with other oil companies, form Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and determine that the best way to transport the oil to market is by a pipeline from the North Slope to a year round port at Valdez in Southcentral Alaska, and from there moved by tanker. Native and State land claims need to be resolved so the company can get the necessary permits and leases to build the pipeline.
1971	ANCSA. (Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act) This act resulted in loss of aboriginal title to land, and aboriginal rights to hunting and fishing, and the loss of resources and lands, into the hands of the state of Alaska. This act cleared the way for the trans-Alaska pipeline, and allowed the state of Alaska to claim 104 million acres of land selections. Alaska natives received fee simple title to 44 million acres, which excluded the 44 million acres from being considered "Indian Country." Although Alaska natives of the largest private landowners in the United States, the fee simple titled held by Alaska Natives prevents the majority of that land to be litigated under principles of Federal Indian Law, to the disadvantage of Alaska Native People. Only one federal Indian reservation with the ability to be called "Indian Country" exists in Alaska – the Metlakatla Indian Community of the Annette Island Reserve in southeastern Alaska.
1972	The Alaska Native Language Center is created at the University of Alaska Fairbanks to record and preserve Native languages.
1972	The Bilingual-Bicultural Education Act (AS 14.30.400) says all Alaska school districts with at least eight pupils with limited English and whose primary language is other than English will provide a bilingual-bicultural education program.
1972	MMPA (Marine Mammal Protection Act) which limited access to sea mammals and yet is the sole legal mechanism allowing for Marine mammal harvesting for subsistence purposes for Alaska Native people.
1972-1976	Mollie Hootch Case (Tobeluk v. Lind) Alaska Legal Services files a class-action lawsuit on behalf of rural children and fights for each Alaskan community to have public high schools. Mollie Hootch was the first name on the list of plaintiffs. Previous to 1966, most hub community schools were segregated. Until the Mollie Hootch case, if a rural child wanted to seek education past eighth grade, the student had to leave the home community, and was sent to one of the following boarding schools specifically set up for native students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eklutna (near Anchorage), Wrangell Institute, Mount Edgecumbe in Sitka, St. Mary's, Holy Cross, Kodiak Baptist, Haines House, Covenant High in Unalakleet, Beltz Regional in Nome, • Kodiak Regional, St. Mark's Mission in Nenana, McGrath Boarding School, Copper Center, • Jesse Lee Home in Unalaska/Seward/Anchorage, Chemawa in Oregon, Choloco in Oklahoma, Bethel's Moravian school, Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, Haskell Institute in Kansas. Those Alaska Native children younger than eighth grade that were wards of the state of Alaska, were sent to elementary boarding schools. Some students stayed in the schools for years. Children in these schools were often physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually abused by teachers and administrators around the schools. Children that were sent to boarding schools lost part of their cultural identity, in many cases lost their language, missed the opportunity to learn parenting skills and return home feeling like they did not belong at home or the school they just came from.
1978	The Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission is created to ensure that northern Alaska Natives could continue to hunt bowhead whales for subsistence.

1978	The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 (AIRFA) (42 U.S.C. § 1996.) protects the rights of Native Americans to exercise their traditional religions by ensuring access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites.
1980	ANILCA (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act) an act that provides for the rural preference in the harvesting of animals for subsistence purposes... However, the federal government failed to recognize the “native” preference that it was created for... Rather Congress placed the word “rural” in its place, under pressure from the State of Alaska. The Act claimed approximately 100 million acres into national parks and preserves.
1980	Infusion of money into Alaskan economy due to the building of the oil pipeline. Nearly every village now had at least one telephone.
1980s	Organizations and individuals promote the sobriety movement in Alaska.
1982	The first Yupiit Yuraryarait (Yup’ik Way of Dancing) festival takes place at St. Mary’s on the Yukon River. Soon after, the first Cama’i Dance Festival is held at Bethel. These festivals revive the dancing and festival traditions of the Yup’ik people.
1989	Exxon Valdez runs aground in Prince William sound, and spills 11– 32 million gallons of crude oil. This oil spill was devastating to the ecosystem of the region and caused a PTSD reaction amongst area residents. The event has had multigenerational effects, and one of the most devastating effects has been the crumbling of the traditional ecological knowledge bridge between generations due to inability to harvest subsistence resources due to contamination.
1990	The US government passes the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) which requires federal agencies and private museums to return human remains, funerary materials and sacred objects to the tribes of their origin. Thousands of these “artifacts” were taken from tribal nations to be on display in museums around the world over a period of several hundred years. Since enacted, NAGPRA has allowed for 6007 individual Native American, Hawaiian and Alaska native human remains to be repatriated from the Smithsonian Institution to their home communities across the United States. As of February 2018, 1123 individuals’ skeletal remains from Kawerak region communities have been repatriated home for proper reburial.
1991	Special convention resolution number 83 – 01 is titled “1991 Land Protection” and cites that the land is the fundamental relationship that will ensure the Constitution of Alaska native culture and their economic and social well-being. This resolution continues by stating that the original intention of Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act were to prevent native lands from being transferred out of Native ownership, but then states it wasn’t enough to protect from being transferred out of ownership after 1991. To address this AFN resolved to develop and request that Congress enacted additional mechanisms to continue Native ownership of Native lands.
1991	The Red Dog Mine, north of Kotzebue in Northwest Alaska, starts operation. The zinc and lead deposits are among the largest found in the world and the mine is expected to operate 50 years. The mine pays rent and royalties to the Native-owned NANA Corporation and agrees to employ and train local Native people for sixty percent of the jobs at the mine.
1992	Georgianna Lincoln from Rampart is the first Native woman elected to the Alaska Senate. She is re-elected two times, choosing to retire in 2005.

1993	Head of the BIA from 1993–1997 – Ada Deer (Menominee Indian), under Pres. Bill Clinton (Clinton is of Cherokee descent) provides for full recognition of tribes, allowing for Alaska’s tribes to enter into government to government relations with the Federal Government
1996	The U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals concludes 1.8 million acres of Interior Alaska lands belonging to Venetie and Arctic Village tribes are Indian Country. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1998 reverses the decision, unanimously determining there is no Indian Country in Alaska.
1997	Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, a non-profit health organization based in Anchorage, Alaska provides health services to about 150,000 Alaska Natives and American Indians in Alaska. ANTHC is owned and managed by Alaska Native tribal governments and their regional health organizations. A new Alaska Native Medical Center replaces the one built in the 1950s in Anchorage.
1999	The Alaska Native Heritage Center opens in Anchorage. It profiles Alaska Native people today and provides educational programs for people of all ages to better understand Alaska Native people.
2000s	The cost of living begins to drastically rise in rural Alaska. A study done by the University of Alaska Anchorage Institute for Social and Economic Research shares that those low-income families in Rural Alaska that are making less than \$26,000 annually spend up to 82% of annual income on energy costs (i.e.: heating fuel, propane electricity.) The high cost of living is determined to be a major factor of rural outmigration to urban areas of Alaska for those I could afford the move. The high cost of fuel and gasoline cause subsistence hunting and gathering to become prohibitively expensive, and less hunters and gatherers are harvesting subsistence food.
2000	Unlawful U.S. Air Force Arctic Aeromed study. Results in US federal government appropriating \$67,000 each to 102 Northwest Alaskan Inupiat people that were given radioactive iodine as part of a US Air Force thyroid medical experiment in which participants were not informed from 1955-1957. Many of these participants developed severe thyroid problems and have passed on from cancer.
2000	At the urging of Annie Alowa, Alaska Community Action on Toxics and regional leaders, collaboration between the villages of Gambell and Savoonga, the State University of New York School of Public Health and the Environmental Research Center at Oswego, and Norton Sound Health Corporation initiated a study of the levels of contamination of Northeast Cape on St. Lawrence Island. Results of the study yielded that St. Lawrence residents had 5 to 10 times the PCB body burden of an average person from the lower 48 states.
2002	Elsie Boudreau seeks legal counsel and attorney Ken Roosa for sexual abuse she experienced at the hands of the Catholic Church as a child. Elsie inspires more survivors to come forward in the case becomes a class action lawsuit on behalf of 240 individuals from all across rural Alaska that were sexually abused as children by dozens of Catholic priests, volunteers and employees. The case was won by Roosa, with court stipulations that the Bishop himself was to go to the hometown of the survivors and apologize in person.
2010	The First Alaskans Institute embarked on a two-year project entitled: “Alaska Native Dialogues on Racial Equity.” Funded by the Kellogg foundation, this project allowed for the facilitation of difficult conversations to occur in rural and urban Alaska on the issue of racial equity. This statewide project led to the formation of the Nome Social Justice Task Force, as a subcommittee of the Nome Community Center Board Of Directors.
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.” Producer Tom Curran and reporter Mark Trahan examined the Catholic Church sex abuse story and how decades of abusive Alaska natives by priest and church workers have left many generations of whole communities with posttraumatic stress disorder.

2011	In March 2011, an underwater earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale created a set of tsunamis that devastated the coast of Japan, killing nearly 19,000 people. Nuclear power plants in Japan are damaged, releasing radiation into the Pacific Ocean and into the air.
2012	Sen. Donnie Olson’s Senate Bill 130 is passed into law. The bill establishes the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council to assess the state of Alaska Native Languages, re-evaluate the programs within the state, and make recommendations to the governor and legislature to establish new programs or reorganize the current programs.
2012	The State of Alaska Fish Board meets and again questions the “rural” status of several rural Alaskan communities off the state road system in reference to their qualifications to be considered able to subsistence fish. Several such proposals were reported to the State Fish Board by the Outdoor Council – an organization that has historically challenged rural preference for subsistence. All proposals failed to the relief of rural Alaska.
2013	April 1 – Katie John subsistence fishing cases are finally over – the state of Alaska’s legal fight against rural Alaskans subsistence fishing rights has ended. The US Supreme Court refused to hear the state of Alaska’s appeal of what is known as the Katie John case. Now the state of Alaska must move toward a constitutional amendment that would put state law into compliance with federal ANILCA law-which provides for a “rural” preference to subsistence fishing.
2014	In April, the Alaska legislature symbolically, officially recognizes 20 Alaska Native languages.
2016	The Indian Trust Asset Reform Act, Public Law No: 114 – 178 that was recently passed in June 2016, has three main features: Title I Recognition of Truest Responsibility, Title II asset management demonstration project, and Title III Improving and streamlining the process. Title I says that the bill is supposed to reaffirm the federal government’s duty to promote tribal self-determination. (U.S. Congress, 2016) some tribal leaders argue that this Act is not necessary, because of the inherently sovereign nature of tribes.
2018	Alaska Gov. Bill Walker officially apologized at the annual Alaska Federation of Natives in Anchorage for historical wrongs. "I conclude today with this message, as the 11th governor of the State of Alaska, I apologize to you, Alaska's first people, for the wrongs that you have endured for generations. For being forced into boarding schools, I apologize. For (being) forced to abandon your Native language and adopt a foreign one, I apologize. For erasing your history, I apologize. For the generational and historic trauma you have suffered, I apologize."
2019	The State of Alaska officially recognizes May 31 as Katie John Day.