

Suggested Topics for Alaska History Day Projects

Alaska Native History

Aleut War of 1776

Tlingit Battle of 1804 at Sitka

Dena' Nena' Henash (Our Land Speaks) First Tanana Chiefs Conference 1915 with James Wickersham

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)

Why did it take the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act to legitimize Alaska Natives in the view of the majority population in Alaska?

What was it about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act that legitimized Alaska Natives in the view of the majority population in Alaska?

History of an ANCSA Village Corporation and its land selections

ANCSA, a change in federal policy from "termination to self-determination?"

ANCSA and the Alaska economy, have the Native corporations changed the flow of revenue from natural resource development and industry from leaving Alaska to fueling Alaska?

How did the extinguishment of Aboriginal Title to the land and Aboriginal hunting and fishing rights in ANCSA impact Native subsistence?

How well has the federal government done in meeting the Federal Trust responsibility to Alaska Natives in the years since passage of ANCSA?

Alaska Political History

Debates in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1867-68 about whether to pay Russia for Alaska as required by the 1867 Treaty of Cession. (Seward provided his friends in the House with reports from the 1867 cruise of the cutter *Lincoln* to describe the benefits of the purchase. The Congressional Record, which is online, has the text of the debates.)

Debate over Naming the City of Anchorage

Alaska's Debate Over Statehood v Territory

US/Soviet Russian Relationships: Cession of Alaska, Lend Lease Act, Cold War

Debate over Cleaning up the Aleutians after WWII

Kivalina v Mobil Oil: Climate Change in Alaska

Alaska Maritime History

Fishermen v EXXON in the Wake of the EXXON VALDEZ Oil Spill

Citizens Protest US Naval and Oil Company Underwater Sonics

Alaska Economic History

Debate in Creating the Alaska Permanent Fund and Dividends

Who Were the Zobels?

Debates over subsistence fishing and hunting—whaling, sealing, wolves, caribou

Debate over the Pebble Mine and Fishing Rights in Bristol Bay

Alaska Women's History

Debate over Women Voting in Alaska Territory

Elizabeth Peratrovich on Equal Rights

National History Day in Alaska Topics

National History Day 2022,
Debate and Diplomacy in History: Successes, Failures, Consequences

Compiled by Bruce Parham

Alaska Boundary Dispute (1903)

The Alaska boundary dispute was a disagreement between Canada and the United States over the boundary of southeastern Alaska and the coast of British Columbia. Superficially, the dispute was between the United States and Great Britain, which then controlled Canadian foreign affairs. The dispute was resolved by an international tribunal in 1903. According to historian Claus-M. Naske, “relations between the United States and Canada were long embittered by this dispute and its settlement” (*Alaska: A History*, 3rd ed., Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011): 142).

Primary Sources

Great Britain Foreign Office. *Correspondence Respecting the Alaska Boundary: Presented in Both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty, January 1904*. London: Harrison & Sons, 1904; Ottawa, Ont.: S. E. Dawson, 1904.

<https://open.library.ubc.ca/collections/bcbooks/items/1.0348623>

Miles, David. *The Canadian View of the Alaska Boundary Dispute, as Stated by David Milles in an Interview with the Correspondent of the Chicago Tribune on the 14th August, 1899*. Ottawa: Govt. Printing Bureau, 1899. 23 pp.

<https://archive.org/details/canadianviewofal00mill>

The British Colonist [newspaper]; online edition: 1858-1980. Victoria, BC: University of Victoria Libraries;

<https://britishcolonist.ca>

Library of Congress. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, 1777-1963*;

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>

Secondary Sources

Bailey, Thomas A. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950): 507-10.

Hodgins, Thomas. “The Alaska-Canada Boundary Dispute.” *Contemporary Review* (1902);

<https://archive.org/details/alaskacanadaboun00hodg>

Jessup, David Eric. "Between Two Empires: Canada and The Alaska Boundary Dispute." In *The Big Wild Soul of Terrence Cole: An Eclectic Collection to Honor Alaska's Public Historian*, edited by Frank Soos and Mary F. Ehrlander, 201-224. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2019. Includes extensive list of primary and secondary sources on the boundary dispute.

Monro, John A. *The Alaska Boundary Dispute*. Issues in Canadian History. Toronto: Copp Clark Publishing Company, 1970.

Naske, Claus-M. and Herman E. Slotnick. *Alaska: A History*. 3rd ed. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011.

"The Alaska-Canada Boundary Dispute," pp. 141-42.

Penlington, Norman. *The Alaska Boundary Dispute: A Critical Reappraisal*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Ltd., 1972.

North Pacific Fur Sealing Convention of 1911

The Convention between the United States and Other Powers Providing for the Protection and Preservation of Fur Seals, popularly known as the Fur Seal Treaty of 1911, was the first international treaty to address the issue of wildlife conservation. Russians, Japanese and, especially, Canadians, had begun pelagic sealing, the practice of shooting, harpooning or otherwise killing seals as they swam in the ocean--outside the territorial waters of the United States. As a result of this treaty, in 1912, Congress passed a law prohibiting any sealing activities for a five-year period, which allowed the seals to regenerate. The treaty was in effect for thirty years until World War II, and then was followed by other international agreements, most notably the Fur Seal Act of 1966.

Primary Sources

Convention Between the United States, Great Britain, Russia, and Japan for the Preservation and Protection of Fur Seals or the Fur Seal Treaty of 1911;

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bc/THE_FUR_SEAL_TREATY_OF_1911.pdf

National Archives Microfilm Publication M720, *Alaska File of the Secretary of the Treasury, 1868-1903*. Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1968.

Microfilm Descriptive Pamphlet for M720: During the 1890s, the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Russia, and Japan became involved in a pelagic sealing controversy and citizens and ships of these countries hunted and killed fur seals in the Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea. Numerous letters on this dispute were received by the Secretary of the Treasury because of his responsibility for protecting American fur seal interests. Most of his records document the American, Canadian, and British efforts to resolve the problem.

Roll 1: Index to Letters Received Relating to Fur Sealing, 1868-1903;

Rolls 2-18, Letters Received Relating to Fur Sealing, April 13, 1868-July 3, 1903.

(For an online copy of the descriptive pamphlet for M720, please download a copy of the pamphlet from the Microfilm Catalog on the National Archives and Records Administration website, <https://www.archives.gov>). Note: Due to COVID-19 restrictions and library closures, this microfilm may not be available at major libraries in Anchorage, Fairbanks, or Juneau.

Secondary Sources

Bailey, Thomas A. *A Diplomatic History of the American People*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1950).

Bailey, Thomas A. "The North Pacific Sealing Convention of 1911." *Pacific Historical Review* 4, no. 1 (1935): 1-14.

Borneman, Walter R. *Alaska: Saga of a Bold Land*. New York: Perennial/Harper Collins, 2003. See pp. 116-18.

Busch, Briton Cooper. *The War Against the Seals: A History of the North American Seal Fishery*. Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985.

North Pacific Fur Seal Treaty of 1911; NOAA Celebrates 200 Years of Science, Service, and Stewardship; <https://celebrating200years.noaa.gov/events/fursealtreaty/welcome.html>

Resettlement of European Refugees in Alaska, 1938-1944

There were plans and requests for the resettlement in Alaska of European refugees in Alaska between 1938 and 1941. Most of the support for resettlement came mainly from federal officials and "nongovernment people" representing humanitarian or rescue organizations. The opposition to the plans centered on three types of objections: nativism, antisemitism, and economic insecurity.

Berman, Gerald S. "Reaction to the Resettlement of World War II Refugees in Alaska." *Jewish Social Studies* 44, nos. 3-4 (1982): 271-82.

This article examines the reaction to plans and requests for the resettlement in Alaska by European refugees between 1939 and 1941.

Eshkoli-Wagman, Hava. "Did the American Jewish Press Torpedo Rescue Opportunities? Resettlement Plans for Jewish Refugees in Alaska and the Dominican Republic, 1938-1943." *Modern Judaism* 35, no. 1 (February 2015): 83-107.

Ford, Aurora. "'We know full well the difficulties'. Alaska Jewish Museum exhibit recounts a fruitless 1939 plan to offer European Jews a refuge in the Last Frontier." *Forum* magazine

(Alaska Humanities Forum), Summer 2017, 26-31. Alaska Humanities Forum.

https://issuu.com/alaskahumanitiesforum/docs/forum_summer_2017.

This article was published as the grant report for the Alaska Jewish Museum's exhibit, "A Refuge in the Last Frontier: Evolution of the Alaska Development Plan";

<https://www.alaskajewishmuseum.com/exhibits>.

Miller, Orlando. "Jewish Refugees for Alaska, 1933-1945, Part I." *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (Fall 2003): 43-64.

Miller, Orlando. "Jewish Refugees for Alaska, 1933-1945, Part II." *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2004): 338-52.

Mitson, Hannah L. "The King-Havenner Bill of 1940: Dashed Hopes for a Jewish Immigration Haven in Alaska." *Alaska History* 14, nos. 1-2 (Spring/Fall 1999): 31-42.

Covers a congressional proposal, also known as the Alaska Development Plan, to resettle Jewish refugees from Europe in Alaska between 1938 and 1940.

Naske, Claus-M. "Jewish Immigration and Alaska Economic Development: A Study in Futility." *Western States Jewish Historical Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (January 1976): 139-57.

Reamer, David. "Without Open Arms: The Alaska Response to the World War II-Era Refugee Crisis." *Alaska History* 33, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 16-33.

Aleut Evacuation and Relocation, 1942-1945

Immediately after the Japanese invasion of Alaska and the occupation of Attu and Kiska in early June 1942, the U.S. Navy evacuated all Aleuts living west of Dutch Harbor and in the Pribilof Islands. For safety, in June and July, 881 Aleuts were forcibly removed from nine villages in the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands and taken to several abandoned canneries in southeast Alaska. The Pribilof Islands were home to over one-half of the Aleuts most affected by the evacuation. Except in Unalaska, the entire population of each village was evacuated, including at least 30 non-Aleuts. Earlier in the year, various federal agencies had discussed a more orderly evacuation to sites on the south shore of the Alaska Peninsula, an area more environmentally compatible to their home islands, but the Japanese attack on Dutch Harbor forced emergency action. Native leaders had suggested evacuation to Kodiak Island, but government officials insisted on an evacuation nearer the mainland, farther from the war zone (Sources: Stephen Haycox, *Alaska: An American Colony* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020); and Dean Kohlhoff, *When the Wind Was a River: Aleut Evacuation in World War II* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998).

Aleut Evacuation: The Untold War Story, DVD (59 minutes), Produced by Michael and Mary Jo Thill, Girdwood, AK: Gaff Rigg Productions, for the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, 1992;

<https://www.apiai.org/product/aleut-evacuation-untold-war-story/> (available at major libraries in Alaska).

Chandonnet, Fern, ed. *Alaska at War: The Forgotten War Remembered, 1941-1945*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2008. See "Aleut Relocation and Restitution," pp. 291-310, and bibliography, pp. 435-39.

Haycox, Stephen. *Alaska: An American Colony*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2020.

Kohlhoff, Dean. *When the Wind Was a River: Aleut Evacuation in World War II*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998.

Mobley, Charles. *World War II Aleut Relocation Camps in Southeast Alaska*. Anchorage: National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office, 2013;

<https://www.nps.gov/articles/series.htm?id=730CA036-1DD8-B71B-0BEFB9A92FB52305>

Personal Justice Denied: Report of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. Washington, DC: The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, 1983; reprint ed., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.

See, Part II: The Aleuts: War and Evacuation in Alaska.

<https://www.archives.gov/research/japanese-americans/justice-denied>

"Petition Protesting Conditions, Aleut Women, October 10, 1942," Pribilof Islands Logbooks, Records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Record Group 22 (National Archives Identifier 2641505), National Archives at Seattle, Seattle, WA.

<https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/documented-rights/exhibit/section3/detail/protest-petition.html>; Documented Rights [exhibit], 2009, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD.

Pribilof Islands Logbooks, 1870-1961; Records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Region 1 (Pacific), Record Group 22; National Archives at Seattle, Seattle, WA. National Archives Identifier 297024; <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/297024>

Digitized copy available through Alaska Digitization Project (National Archives at Seattle; <https://www.archives.gov/seattle>):

https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=*&f.ancestorNalds=297024&sort=naldSort%20asc

The Lost Villages of the Aleutian Islands: Attu, Biorka, Kashega, and Makushin

After the end of World War II, the Unangax (Aleut) survivors of four villages were never allowed to return to their ancestral homes. The village of Attu was destroyed in battle and the U.S. Department of the Interior refused to rebuilt it. The Unangax of Biorka, Kashega, and Makushin were relocated to other villages due to lack of U.S. Government support, postwar cost-cutting, and consequences of the Aleutian campaign--the damaged environment and weak economy.

Secondary Sources

Arnold, Carlene. "The Legacy of Unjust and Illegal Treatment of Unangan During World War II and Its Place in Unangan History." Master's Thesis, University of Kansas, 2011, 187 pp.; https://kuscholarworks.ku.edu/bitstream/handle/1808/9804/Arnold_ku_0099M_11929_DATA_1.pdf

Hudson, Ray and Rachel Mason. *Lost Villages of the Eastern Aleutians: Biorka, Kashega, Makuskin*. Anchorage: National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 2014. https://www.nps.gov/aleu/upload/Lost_Villages-final-508.pdf

Kirtland, John C. and David F. Coffin, Jr. *The Relocation and Internment of the Aleuts During World War II*. 9 volumes. Anchorage: Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, 1981.

Kohlhoff, Dean. *When the Wind Was a River: Aleut Evacuation in World War II*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998.

"The Lost Villages of the Aleutian Islands: Biorka, Kashega, Makuskin." Aleutian World War II National Heritage Area, National Park Service, Alaska Regional Office, Anchorage, Alaska; <https://www.nps.gov/aleu/learn/historyculture/lost-villages.htm>

Mason, Rachel. "You Can't Go Home Again: Processes of Displacement and Emplacement in the 'Lost Villages' of the Aleutian Islands." *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* 8, no. 2 (2010): 17-29; http://www.alaskaanthropology.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/akanth-articles_346_v8_n2_Mason.pdf

"Tanadgusim Adan Chiilulix: A Journey Home Documentary." Produced by Lauren Adams, KUCB, Unalaska, Alaska; YouTube; <https://www.kucb.org/arts-culture/2019-09-03/tanadgusim-adan-chiilulix-a-journey-home-documentary>

Abstract: Tanadgusim Adan Chiilulix (a Journey Home): Revisiting the Lost Villages of the Aleutian Islands" tells the story of a project that brought Unangan? survivors of World War II back to the communities they were forced to leave during the war — and then never allowed to resettle. KUCB coverage of the Lost Villages Project is supported in part by a grant from the Alaska Humanities Forum and the National Endowment for the Humanities, a federal agency. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in this coverage does not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Primary Sources

Alaska State Archives, Juneau. Record Group 101, Records of the Office of the District and Territorial Governor. Subject Files, 1934-1953 (Ernest Gruening, 1939-1953); <https://archives.alaska.gov>

General Correspondence of Alaskan Territorial Governors, 1909-1958 [microfilm]; National Archives Microfilm Publication M939. Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Service, 1980.

Roll 291, File 49: World War II-Misc. Correspondence, Reports, Etc., 1942-1945

Roll 337, File 76: World War II-Misc. Correspondence, Reports, Etc., 1941-1946

(Source: *Index to the General Correspondence File of the Governors of Alaska, 1909-1958*.

Edited by Evan Miller with the assistance of Judy Wojcik (1975). Original records held by the Alaska State Archives, Juneau. Note: Due to COVID-19 restrictions and library closures, this microfilm may not be available at major libraries in Anchorage, Fairbanks, or Juneau.

Dimond, Anthony J. Papers, 1904-1953. Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks;

<https://archivescatalog.library.uaf.edu/public/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en-US>

Gruening, Ernest. Papers, 1914-1974. Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks;

<https://archivescatalog.library.uaf.edu/public/final/Portal/Default.aspx?lang=en-US>

Pribilof Islands Logbooks, 1870-1961; Records of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Region 1 (Pacific), Record Group 22; National Archives at Seattle, Seattle, WA. National Archives Identifier 297024; <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/297024>

Digitized copy available through Alaska Digitization Project (National Archives at Seattle; <https://www.archives.gov/seattle>):

https://catalog.archives.gov/search?q=*&f.ancestorNalDs=297024&sort=naldSort%20asc