

**Rights and Responsibilities in History**  
**History/Social Studies Lesson Plan Proposal**  
**Alaska Rights & Responsibilities: The Work of Alberta Schenck**  
**Grade Level: Middle School**  
**Submitted by QasuGlana/Barb Amarok**  
**December 2024**



**Purpose/Summary/Focus:**

To authenticate and include in school curriculum Alaska-specific historical events and Alaska Native leaders related to rights and responsibilities.

**Background:**

In 2008, I interviewed and taped several Elders, including Alberta (Schenck) Adams, on the topic of the segregated Dream Theater of Nome, Alaska. Each of the Elders was from Nome. Each has since passed on: Lucie Trigg, Caroline Reader, John Sahlin, Gary T. Longley, William Hoogendorn, and Alberta Adams. Four interviewees identified as Alaska Native and two identified as Caucasian. In 2015, I worked with two KNOM staff members to create a lesson plan which is posted on the KNOM website.

**Outcome:**

Students will demonstrate comprehension, application, and evaluation of the work of Alberta Schenck, as it relates to Alaska and U.S. History.

**Objectives:**

Comprehension

Students will describe instances of segregation and actions supporting civil rights.

Application

Students will apply what they learn to interpret civil rights and civil responsibility.

Evaluation

Students will assess the difference between segregation and discrimination, and they will conclude if these occur today.

**Essential Question Topics:**

Rights as freedoms or privileges that individuals possess as human beings or as individuals in a society including civil rights, political rights, social rights, economic rights, and human rights. (akhistoryday.org)

Responsibilities as expectations of individuals as members of society including legal responsibilities, civic responsibilities, social responsibilities, and ethical responsibilities. (akhistoryday.org)

**Materials:****Teacher:**

The teacher will need access to a copier, a computer, and a white board.

**Students:**

The students will need access to computers to do searches on the internet and to produce papers and projects.

**Alignment with Alaska History Standards:**

With this lesson, students will participate in historical inquiry and examine the work of Alberta Schenck as it relates to Territory of Alaska legislation.

- “The teaching of history should introduce students to the process of historical inquiry. This process requires critical examination of evidence and careful weighing of facts and hypotheses. It provides experience in the kind of reasoned and informed decision-making that should characterize each student’s knowledge of and participation in state events and issues.”  
([education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/History\\_Performance&GLEs.pdf](http://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/History_Performance&GLEs.pdf))  
([education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/ContentStandards.pdf](http://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/ContentStandards.pdf))

With this lesson, students will examine the work of Alberta Schenck in challenging the status quo and supporting civil rights of Alaska Natives.

- “Alaska as a Territory (1912-1959) INDIVIDUAL, CITIZENSHIP, GOVERNANCE, POWER) AH. ICGP 8 describing how Alaskans, particularly the Native people, challenge the status quo to gain recognition of their civil rights (e.g., appeals to the Russian government, Ward Cove Packing Co. Case, Molly Hootch, anti-discrimination acts, women’s suffrage). [DOK2] (H. B2, GC. B5)”



([education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/History\\_Performance&GLEs.pdf](http://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/History_Performance&GLEs.pdf))  
([education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/ContentStandards.pdf](http://education.alaska.gov/akstandards/standards/ContentStandards.pdf))

**Activity 1A:**

Hand out copies of the 25<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature Proclamation, the photograph of Alberta Schenck Adams, and the photograph of Dream Theater.

**Activity 1B:**

Together, read and discuss the Proclamation aloud.

**Activity 2A:**

Display and discuss the following with the class. Be prepared to expand on each point.

1. What does the term, civil, mean relating to Civil War and the Civil Rights Act?
2. What was the Civil War about? Why was there a war?
3. What was Abraham Lincoln's platform or promise when he ran for president?
4. When did the Civil War happen, what was the outcome, and how many years ago did it happen?
5. What is the definition of segregation, and what is the definition of discrimination?
6. Who was Rosa Parks, and what is she known for?
7. What year was the United States Civil Rights Act passed and what was it about?
8. Who was Elizabeth Peratrovich, where was she from, and what is she known for?
9. What is the meaning of the phrase, Jim Crow?

**Activity 2B:**

Assign individual research projects based on the discussion points. Have students use the following websites to research. Have students use Word or Power Point to prepare information to present to the class. Students may be allowed to work in pairs or small groups.

1. [hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/faqs/what-are-civil-rights/101/index.html](http://hhs.gov/civil-rights/for-individuals/faqs/what-are-civil-rights/101/index.html)
2. [britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War](http://britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War)
3. [nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/slavery.htm](http://nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/slavery.htm)
4. [loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/time-line-of-the-civil-war/1861](http://loc.gov/collections/civil-war-glass-negatives/articles-and-essays/time-line-of-the-civil-war/1861)
5. [dictionary.cambridge.org](http://dictionary.cambridge.org)
6. [womenshistory.org](http://womenshistory.org)
7. [archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act](http://archives.gov/milestone-documents/civil-rights-act)
8. [alaska.edu/uajourney/notable-people/Juneau/elizabeth-peratrovich](http://alaska.edu/uajourney/notable-people/Juneau/elizabeth-peratrovich)
9. [jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/what.htm](http://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/what.htm)

**Activity 2C:**

Have students share their findings with the class.

**Activity 3A:** Review the 25<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature Proclamation. Ask questions to reinforce retention of the information.

**Activity 3B:**

Play each of the following KNOM audiotape sections. Assign the students to take notes on what they hear. After each section, ask students what they noted, what they learned, and discuss.

**Section 0 – 7:29**

Elders reminiscing; narrator on Alberta Schenck in 1944; Alberta Schenck; Barb Amarok explanation of project; excerpt of Muktuk Marston book; Barb's reactions to the segregation and explanation of project

**Section 7:29 – 9:30**

Lucie Trigg sharing about movies shown; Caroline Reader sharing about Bob Lewis attending every night and on Shirley Temple movies; Gary Longley sharing on shorts, movies and giveaways; Bill Hoogendorn; John Sahlin sharing on admission cost

**Section 9:31 – 11:29**

John Sahlin sharing on segregated seating; Caroline Reader sharing on segregated seating and how it made her feel; Gary Longley sharing on segregated seating

**Section 11:29 – 13:16**

Gary Longley sharing about Dream Theater staff and staff management; Lucie Trigg sharing on seating, reactions, and seating in churches; Barb Amarok sharing on perspectives relating to segregated seating

**Section 13:16 – 14:58**

Alberta Schenck sharing about date with master sergeant to the Dream Theater

**Section 14:59 – 16:31**

Alberta Schenck sharing on her subsequent activities to address the segregated seating at the Dream Theater

**Section 16:31 – 18:42**

Reading of Alberta Schenck's Letter to the Editor of the Nome Nugget Newspaper

**Section 18:43 – 19:23**

Alberta Schenck sharing on standing up to segregation, wiring message to Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening

**Section 19:24 – 20:05**

Gary Longley sharing about Senator OD Cochran's work on the anti-discrimination bill

**Section 20:05 – 22:00**

Barb Amarok sharing on Elizabeth Peratrovich, how actions in Alaska preceded the U.S. Civil Rights Act, on personal responsibility

**Section 22:01 – 23:08**

Barb Amarok's message to Alberta Schenck

Section 23:09 – 25:37

Narrator conclusion, Gary Longley’s conclusion, Barb Amarok’s conclusion

Section 25:37 – 27:31

KNOM acknowledgments

**Activity 3C:** Assign students to combine their individual notes into a synopsis of the KNOM audiotape. Students may be allowed to work in pairs or small groups. Have half the students share with the class.

**Activity 4A:** Review with students what they’ve learned about Elizabeth Peratrovich and Alberta Schenck. Assign students to take notes during the film showing.

**Activity 4B:**

Show For the Rights of All: Ending Jim Crow in Alaska. This can be done in two showings.

**Activity 4C:** Review with students what they learned and what they recorded. Assign students to write an individual synopsis of the film. Students may be allowed to work in pairs or small groups. Have the second half of the students share with the class.

**Activity 5A:**

Show the following dates on the board:

- 1861 – 1864
- 1964
- 1945

**Activity 5B:**

Have students, in small groups, discuss a comparison of the timeline of civil rights activities of the Lower 48 to those in Alaska.

**Activity 5C:**

Break the class into small groups to review the definitions of “segregation” and “discrimination”. Have the students discuss the question, do either segregation or discrimination take place today?

**Activity 5D:**

Have groups share out and provide feedback to each other.

**Assessment:**

Task	Indicator of Proficiency	Possible Points
Project Activity 2	Presentation	0 - 17
Project Activity 3	Presentation	0 - 17
Project Activity 4	Presentation	0 - 16

Projects may be rated through presentation and/or submission.

- A - 40 – 50 Points
- B - 30 – 40 Points
- C – 25 – 30 Points
- D - 20 – 25 Points

### **Materials**

1. 25<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature Proclamation (courtesy of Gary T. Longley)
2. Photograph of Alberta Schenck Adams (courtesy of Gary T. Longley)
3. Photograph of Dream Theater (courtesy of Carrie McLain Museum)
4. Audio Clip from KNOM website
5. For the Rights of All: Ending Jim Crow in Alaska
6. Viewer Discussion Guide of For the Rights of All: Ending Jim Crow in Alaska

### **Teacher Resources/References**

Alaska Territorial Legislature. (1945). Anti-Discrimination Act, House Bill 14. [vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg41/id/543/](http://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg41/id/543/)

Blueberry Productions. (2009) For the Rights of All: Ending Jim Crow in Alaska. Vision Maker Media. [visionmakermedia.org/filmtype/for-the-rights-of-all/](http://visionmakermedia.org/filmtype/for-the-rights-of-all/)

Cole, Terrence. (1996). Jim Crow in Alaska The Passage of the Alaska Equal Rights Acts of 1945. In S. Haycox (Editor), An Alaska Anthology Interpreting the Past.

KNOM Audio Clip. [knom.org/2015/08/23/story49-voices-from-the-dream-theater/](http://knom.org/2015/08/23/story49-voices-from-the-dream-theater/)

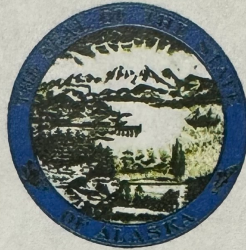
Marston, Muktuk (Marvin R. Marston, Lt. Col. USAF ret.). (1969). Men of the Tundra Eskimos at War. October House Inc, New York.

University of Alaska. Ernest Gruening. [alaska.edu/uajourney/notable-people/fairbanks/ernest-gruening/](http://alaska.edu/uajourney/notable-people/fairbanks/ernest-gruening/)

University of Alaska. (1944). To Whom It May Concern (Alberta Schenck Letter to the Editor). [vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg22/id/25/](http://vilda.alaska.edu/digital/collection/cdmg22/id/25/)

University of Alaska. O.D. Cochran. [alaska.edu/uajourney/regents/1939-1948-orville-cochran/](http://alaska.edu/uajourney/regents/1939-1948-orville-cochran/)

# THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE



\* HONORING \*

\* ALBERTA SCHENCK \*

The Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature takes great pride in honoring Alberta Schenck for her contributions and dedication to the civil rights movement and equality in Alaska. Alberta refused to give up her seat in the "white" section of an Alaskan Theatre eleven years before Rosa Parks did the same on an Alabama Bus.

Alberta was born to Albert "Whitey" and Mary Schenck in 1927. Her Father, an Irishman, moved to Nome after serving the military in WWI. He and Mary met and were married in Nome, where they raised Alberta along with her brothers, both of whom joined the Army and served during WWII.

In the spring of 1944, Alberta was working in Nome's Dream Theatre as an usher. She was fired from her position for expressing her opposition to the theatre's Jim Crow policies which forbid natives and "half breeds" from sitting in the white's only section. In an essay published in the March 3, 1944, edition of the Nome Nugget, Alberta expressed the sentiment echoed in the civil rights movement of the 1950's "I only truthfully know that I am one of God's children regardless of race, color, or creed." Alberta went on to expose the practice of Jim Crow as counter to the spirit of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America.

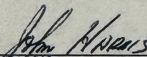
Shortly after the publication of Alberta's essay she went on a date to the Dream Theatre. Alberta took her seat next to her date, a white Army Sergeant. The manager of the theatre came in personally and ordered Alberta to move to the Native section of the theatre. When Alberta refused the manager stormed out. He returned with the chief of police. Alberta remained defiant, and refused to move to another section. The police chief then seized her; pulling her out into the street. That night Alberta Schenck slept in the City Jail.

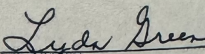
After her release and with the help of her friend Major Marvin "Muktuk" Marston, Alberta sent a telegram to Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening describing her story. Gruening offered Alberta his support for her fight against racism and sorrow for the pain it had caused her. The community of Nome showed their support for Alberta, electing her as the Queen of Nome that April during the spring carnival. Alberta received three times the votes of her nearest competitor.

In January of 1945, the Alaska Territorial Convened in Juneau. During this session Representative Edward Anderson of Nome and Senator O.D. Cochran introduced legislation that would become the Alaska Anti-Discrimination Act. During debate in both houses of the territorial legislature, the injustice suffered by Alberta at the Dream Theatre was used as the "prime example" of prejudice and racial discrimination.

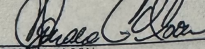
Alberta currently resides in Fullerton, California. The Twenty-fifth Alaska State Legislature offers Alberta their appreciation and thanks for her courage and action in the face of injustice.



  
JOHN HARRIS  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

  
LYDA GREEN  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

  
RICHARD FOSTER  
PRIME SPONSOR

  
DONNY OLSON  
PRIME SPONSOR

Date: March 27, 2007

Cosponsors: Representatives Foster, Harris, Chenault, Cissna, Coghil, Crawford, Dahlstrom, Doll, Doogan, Fairclough, Gara, Gardner, Gatto, Gruenberg, Guttenberg, Hawker, Holmes, Johansen, Johnson, Joule, Kawasaki, Kelly, Kerttula, Kohring, LeDoux, Lynn, Meyer, Nelson, Neuman, Olson, Ramras, Roses, Salmon, Samuels, Seaton, Stoltze, Thomas, Wilson; Senators Olson, Green, Bunde, Cowdery, Davis, Dyson, Ellis, Elton, Hoffman, Huggins, Kookesh, McGuire, Stedman, Stevens, Therriault, Thomas, Wagoner, Wielechowski, Wilken





MARCH 17, 1944



# The Nome Nugget

Published Monday, Wednesday and Friday by the  
**NOME PUBLISHING COMPANY**  
 NOME, ALASKA  
 Telephone: Main 123 P. O. Box 618

W. A. BOUCHER ..... Editor-Publisher  
 EMILY BOUCHER ..... Society Editor

Third Class Application Made in Nome Post Office

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 1944.

## Communications

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is a long story, but will have to make it as brief as possible. It concerns race between natives, breeds and whites.

I believe we Americans and also our Allies are fighting for the purpose of freedom. Many of our early ancestors fought for the very same purpose, so their children and children's children, etc., would be free. I myself am part Eskimo and Irish and so are many others. I only truthfully know that I am one of God's children regardless of race, color, or creed. You or I or anyone else is not to blame what we are. But we are all proud to be what God has made us.

Why was it Thomas Jefferson and his men signed the Declaration of Independence? You or I know for certain that they did not fight and had thousands injured and killed for nothing. It has been known and said through centuries that all American citizens have the right to go, do, and say what they please.

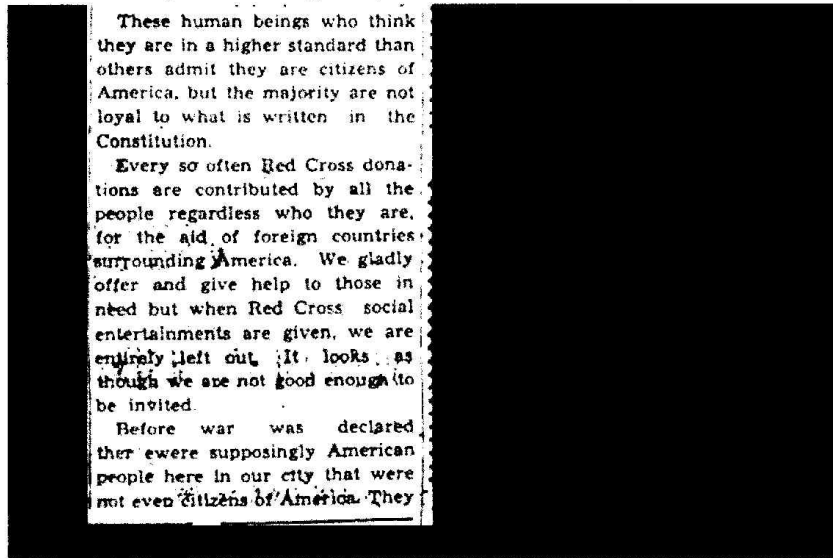
What has hurt us constantly is that we are not able to go to a public theater and sit where we wish, but yet we pay the SAME price as anyone else and our money is GLADLY received. We are not allowed even to go to public doings, only when money is concerned for the benefit of the so-called society people of our city.

evidently were the ones keeping us from attending social entertainments and complaining to where we should sit in a theater, because of being natives and part natives.

In other parts of Alaska all people are treated equally. Seemingly Nome is the only town in Alaska treating the natives and breeds as outcasts. These people trying to be so-called society people, are only following the steps of Hitlerism.

ALBERTA SCHENCK.





## Alaska State Library - Historical Collections

## Object Description

## Collection Name

Alaska State Library. Documents. ASL. (/digital/collection/cdmg22/search/searchterm/Alaska State Library. Documents. ASL./field/collec/mode/exact/conn/and)

## Identifier

ASL-NomeNugget-March 3, 1944

## Title

To whom it may concern: Nome Nugget, Friday, March 3, 1944.

## Description

Letter from Alberta Schenck, regarding race discrimination in the United States and Nome, Alaska in particular.

## Creator

Schenck, Alberta

## Contributors

Nome Nugget (Newspaper); Nome Publishing Company

## Subject.LCSH

Race discrimination  
 Segregation  
 Discrimination in public accommodations  
 Red Cross and Red Crescent  
 Motion picture theaters  
 United States. Constitution

## Subject.Local

Alaska Natives--Northern Alaska--Inupiaq

## Personal Name

Schenck, Alberta

## Corporate Name

Nugget Publishing Corp.--Nome

## Location

Nome (Alaska)

## Region

Interior Alaska

## Time Period

1939 to 1959