



DO ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE GET FREE MEDICAL CARE*?

And other frequently
asked questions
about Alaska Native
issues and cultures



**No, they paid in advance. Read more inside.*

DO ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE GET FREE MEDICAL CARE*



And other frequently asked
questions about Alaska
Native issues and cultures

**No, they traded land for it. See page 78.*

Libby Roderick, Editor

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Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the editors, contributors, and publishers have made their best efforts in preparing this volume, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents. This book is intended as a basic introduction to some very complicated and highly charged questions. Many of the topics are controversial, and all views may not be represented. Interested readers are encouraged to access supplemental readings for a more complete picture.

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FORWARD

Three years ago, Alaska Pacific University and the University of Alaska Anchorage embarked on a ground-breaking partnership to enhance the learning climate on our campuses, with the stated goal of making them more inclusive of minority voices and ways of knowing and safer places for the free exchange of ideas. The partnership was awarded a grant through the Ford Foundation's *Difficult Dialogues* initiative, and since then nearly sixty of our faculty members have come together to re-examine the tools of productive civil discourse. Many others have joined them in discussions of controversial topics related to race, class, culture, science, religion, business, politics, and social justice with a new consciousness and purpose.

These efforts have started an important transformation on our campuses that we hope will continue and deepen in the years ahead. The Books of the Year program is one outcome: a chance for our two universities to share common readings and address together a common theme. This year's theme, "Alaska's Native Peoples: A Call to Understanding," is especially important to all Alaskans. We urge our faculties and students—as well as staff, administrators, and community members—to take this opportunity to learn more about Alaska's indigenous peoples. We invite you to start with the Books of the Year and this companion reader, but we hope you will not stop with them. As you read these books and explore other resources, we also urge you to ask new questions and to respect and acknowledge the complexity you discover in each new answer.

This inquiry is at the heart of higher education. We invite you to embark with us on this journey towards a greater understanding of the peoples, cultures, histories, and values of our fellow citizens, the first Alaskans.

Sincerely,



Fran Ulmer, Chancellor
University of Alaska Anchorage



Doug North, President
Alaska Pacific University

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the companion reader to the UAA/APU Books of the Year for 2008-09!

The Books of the Year are *Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being* by Yup'ik writer Harold Napoleon and *Growing up Native in Alaska* by Anchorage historian Alexandra J.

McClanahan. *Yuuyaraq* outlines the devastating impact of epidemic diseases that wiped out so many of the Native culture-bearers between the late 18th and early 20th centuries. *Growing up Native in Alaska* includes interviews with 27 of today's young Alaska leaders about their lives, their futures, and the innovative and creative ways they are finding to “live in two worlds.”

We offer this companion reader to provide additional context for our theme this year. It includes responses to some frequently asked questions about Alaska Native issues and cultures and a bibliography of recommended readings to deepen your understanding of the issues involved. Responses were written by Alaska-based individuals and scholars within our community and reviewed by the UAA/APU Book of the Year committee. Neither the responses nor the readings are intended to speak for all Native people or to represent the full range of opinion on any one subject; instead we hope you'll use the responses and readings as entry points to a deeper exploration and richer discussion of the complex and compelling issues that are part of Alaska Native life today. Most readings pertain to several disciplines; wherever possible, we have provided annotations and suggested excerpts of the most relevant passages.

Hard copy readings can be found at the UAA/APU Consortium Library, the Loussac Library, or through interlibrary loan. Online readings can be found on our web site: <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>. Many of the online readings are original works, never before published. Others are links to materials found on other web sites. We will make every effort to keep the links intact and to add new materials as we discover them; however, we apologize in advance if a particular document becomes unavailable for any reason in the future.

The questions, responses, and readings are hardly exhaustive, but we have high hopes for them nonetheless. We hope this reader prompts many Alaskans to investigate the wonderful resources that already exist and that this collection—essentially a “work in progress”—inspires others to create a truly comprehensive set of resources for teaching and learning about Alaska Native cultures, identities, histories, and issues.

We invite you to participate in university and public events throughout the year (keep an eye on our web site for full details). We would especially like to call your attention to the Alaska Native Oratory Society (AkNOS), a learning community and series of speaking events and competitions that provide opportunities for Alaska Native, Native American, and non-Native high school and university students to develop oratory skills and learn about Native issues. At regional and statewide events, participants compete for cash prizes in four speech categories: Oratory, Declamation, Storytelling, and Native Languages. For more information on AkNOS, please visit <http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/native/aknos/> or call the UAA Alaska Native Studies Department at 786-6135.

It is our hope that the 2008-09 Book of the Year program will inspire rich discussions that bring Alaskans a deeper understanding of one another and of the issues that affect us all.



Renee Carter-Chapman,
University of Alaska Anchorage



Marilyn Barry,
Alaska Pacific University

and the UAA/APU Book of the Year Committee

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Photos courtesy of Clark James Mishler, Michael Dinneen, David Freeman, the Alaska State Library Historical Collection, and UAA Archive and Special Collections.

On the cover:

Philip Blanchette and John Chase sing and beat traditional Yup'ik drums at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Kenny Toovak, Inupiat Elder from Barrow. Sophia Chya and Serenity Schmidt with traditional Alutiiq headdresses and face tattoos. Photos by Clark James Mishler.

Map

Language map courtesy of Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

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TABLE of CONTENTS

Identity, Language and Culture...1

Who are Alaska’s Native peoples?...2

What is important to know about Alaska Native cultures?...4

How many Native languages are there? Is it important to save them? ...6

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and Corporations...19

What is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)? ..20

How did Alaska Native corporations start up?...22

Do all Alaska Native people get dividends?...23

What do Alaska Native people think of ANCSA?...24

Subsistence and Relationship to Land, Waters and Wildlife...29

Do Alaska’s Native peoples want subsistence hunting and fishing rights that are different from non-Natives?...30

Why are the land and waters so important to Native cultures?...33

What do the phrases “traditional ways of knowing” or “traditional knowledge and wisdom” mean? ...35

How is climate change affecting Alaska Native communities?...36

Do some Native corporations and organizations support drilling, mining, and logging on their lands?...38

Tribal Government...57

Are there tribal governments in Alaska?...58

Are there reservations in Alaska?...59

Why are there no casinos in the state?...60

Effects of Colonialism...63

Why do we hear so much about high rates of alcoholism, suicide, and violence in many Alaska Native communities?...64

What is the Indian Child Welfare Act?...67

Education and Healthcare...73

How are traditional Alaska Native ways of educating young people different from non-Native educational practices?...74

Is the dropout rate for Alaska Native high school and college students higher than rates for other students? ...76

Why are some scholarships for Alaska Native students only?...77

Do Alaska Native people get “free” medical care?...78

The Future...87

What does the future look like for Alaska Native communities and cultures? ...88

Where do we go from here?...90

Additional Resources...95

General...95

Alaska Native History Timelines...96

Cultural Sensitivity...97

University Resources...98

Sources for quotations used in this book...99



Clark James Mishler

Sophia Chya and Serenity Schmidt with traditional Alutiiq headdresses and face tattoos.

Identity, Language and Culture

Who are Alaska's Native peoples?

What is important to know about Alaska Native cultures?

How many Native languages are there? Is it important to save them?

“First, who we are. . .we are Inupiaq, Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Siberian Yupik, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Eyak, Athabaskan, Aleut, and Alutiiq. We are the indigenous people of Alaska. For over 10,000 years our ancestors have lived and thrived in one of the harshest areas of the world. We are the last remaining indigenous people in the United States to have never been forcibly removed from our homelands and settled in reservations. We have more than 230 small villages scattered in the largest land mass contained in one state of the union. The residents of many of these Native villages depend on subsistence hunting and fishing to sustain their bodies as well as their traditions and cultures.”

Sheri Burette

Who are Alaska's Native peoples?

The term “Alaska Native” is used to describe the peoples who are indigenous to the lands and waters encompassed by the state of Alaska: peoples whose ancestors have survived here for more than ten thousand years.

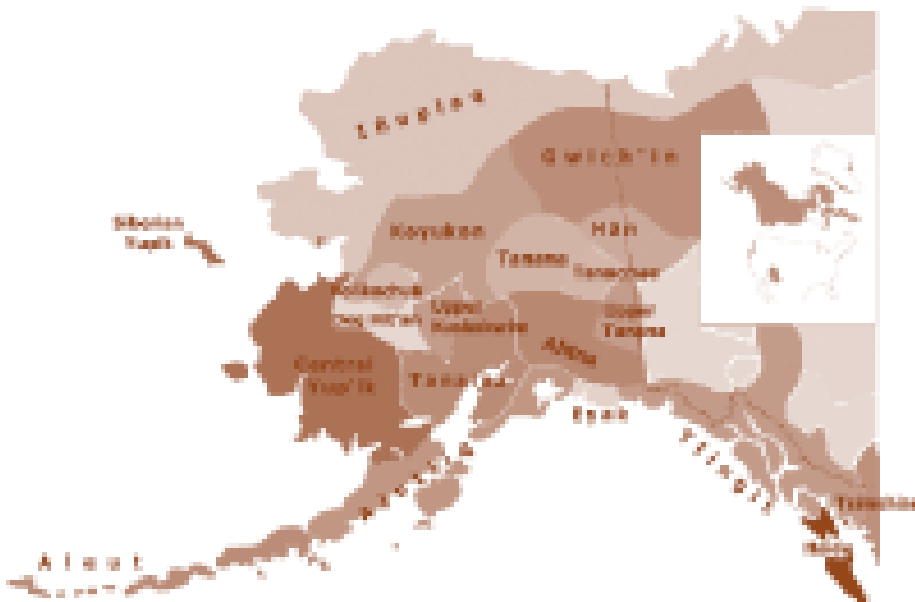
Distinct cultural groups. Alaska Native people belong to several major cultural groups—Aleut/Unangan, Athabascan, Eyak, Eskimo (Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Siberian Yupik, Sugpiaq/Alutiiq, Inupiaq), Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian—and many different tribes or clans within those groupings. Each of these cultures is distinct, with complex kinship structures, highly developed subsistence hunting and gathering practices and technologies, and unique and varied languages, belief systems, art, music, storytelling, spirituality, and dance traditions, among many other attributes.

Common values. What these cultural groups share in common, however, are deeply-ingrained values, such as honoring the land and waters upon which life depends, having respect and reverence for fish and wildlife, valuing community over individuality, sharing with others, and respecting and learning survival skills and wisdom from Elders. Alaska Native cultural worldviews are holistic. Native cultures accept that everything in creation is connected, complex, dynamic, and in a constant state of flux. Alaska Native peoples have a deep and sophisticated qualitative understanding of the environment in which they live. This understanding comes from stories passed down for generations; it also comes from life experiences, learning from mentors beginning at a young age, observations of others in the community, and the guidance of Elders.

Geography. The different Alaska Native cultural groups today inhabit the lands they have occupied for more than ten thousand years. The Inupiaq people live in the Arctic; the Yupiaq live in Southwestern Alaska; the Unangan live in the Aleutian Chain and Pribilof Islands; the Athabascan live in the Interior and Southcentral part of the state; the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian live in Southeastern Alaska; and the Sugpiaq and Eyak occupy the lower Southcentral region, Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak. Many now have moved to urban areas, because of economic pressures impinging on the villages and because opportunities for jobs and education are greater. Although it is difficult to estimate what the overall population was in early history, stories and archeological investigations prove that Alaska Native people used and occupied virtually all inhabitable land in the 586,412 square mile terrain we now call Alaska.

Population. Today more than 100,000 Alaska Native individuals live in Alaska,¹ with many more whose ancestry includes some strand of Alaska Native heritage. Until about 1930, Alaska Native people are estimated to have accounted for between fifty percent and a hundred percent of Alaska's population. Due to the influx of non-Natives, however, Alaska Native citizens now represent approximately sixteen percent of the state's population.² Most live in small rural communities accessible only by air or boat. Roughly six percent of Anchorage citizens (approximately 17,000) are of Alaska Native descent.³ Nearly one-quarter of Alaska schoolchildren from kindergarten through grade 12 are Alaska Native.⁴

Politics and economics. Alaska Native people are vitally involved in the political and economic landscape of modern Alaska. The Alaska Native Brotherhood (founded in 1912), the Tlingit and Haida Central Council (1939), Alaska Native Sisterhood, the Tundra Times newspaper (1962), the Alaska Federation of Natives (1966), the Inuit Circumpolar Conference (1975), and many other organizations, tribal leaders, Native legislators, and individuals have helped shape key political issues including subsistence, land claims, civil rights, education, cultural and language preservation, energy cost and alternatives, and climate change.



Map courtesy of Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Following passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971 and establishment of thirteen regional and over 200 village corporations, Alaska Native peoples collectively have become among the most powerful economic forces in the state (see also pages 19-26). According to the Calista Corporation Report of 2006, Native corporations have combined revenues of more than \$4 billion, pouring huge sums into the Alaska economy through job creation, business investments, dividends, and charitable contributions.⁵ However, many corporations are still struggling to realize financial gains for shareholders, and many Alaska Native people in rural areas live near poverty levels and depend upon hunting and fishing to survive. Alaska permanent fund dividends and government aid are significant sources of income in many rural households.

As history has shown, important decisions regarding Alaska's environment, public education, and economy depend on an understanding of Alaska Native histories and cultures. Readings in this section help explain some aspects of Alaska Native identities and cultures and the role they play in shaping Alaska today and tomorrow.

1) Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development. 2006. "Alaska Population Projections 2007-2030." <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/research/pop/projections/AKNativePopProj.xls#AlaskaNative!A1>

2) Statewide Library Electronic Doorway. <http://sled.alaska.edu/akfaq/aknatpop.html>

3) U.S. Census Bureau. 2006. Quick Facts. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/02/02020.html>

4) Department of Education Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. "Accountability and Assessment Total Statewide Enrollment by Ethnicity, Grade and Percent as of October 1, 2006." www.eed.state.ak.us/stats/StatewidebyEthnicity/2007Statewide_Gr_X_Ethnicity.pdf

5) McClanahan, Alexandra J. "Alaska Native Corporations — Ch'etbuja: We Share It, A Look at 13 Native Regional Corporations and 13 Native Village Corporations." 2006. Association of ANCSA Regional Corporation Presidents/CEOs. http://www.calistacorp.com/docs/reports/ANCSA_CEO_Report2006.pdf

What is important to know about Alaska Native cultures?

An attempt to answer this question fully has engaged many scholars, Elders, and educators for hundreds of years. Here are some fundamentals:

Alaska Native cultures:

- have developed over thousands of years in response to environmental conditions among the most challenging on earth.
- are many and varied, representing at least seven major groups across the state – Aleut/Unangan (Southwestern Coastal Alaska), Inupiaq (Northwestern and Northern Coastal), Athabascan (Interior), Tlingit (Southeastern), Tsimshian (Southeastern), Haida (Southeastern), Eyak (Southeastern), Yup'ik, Cup'ik, Siberian Yupik, Sugpiaq/Alutiiq (Southwestern), with many different tribes or clans within those groupings.

- are distinct from one another, with unique and varied languages, complex kinship structures, and highly developed subsistence hunting and gathering practices and technologies, belief systems, art, music, storytelling, spirituality, and dance traditions, among others.
- share key values, such as honoring the land and waters upon which life depends; respecting and sharing with others; respecting and learning from Elders; living with an attitude of humility and patience; honoring the interconnections among all things; being mindful in word and deed; knowing one's place in the context of one's history, traditions, and ancestors.
- are completely rooted in and tied to the land and waters of a particular region and the practices and customs necessary to thrive in that region.
- have been hard hit by myriad forces over the past two centuries, including diseases brought by European immigrants and traders; enslavement and oppression by colonizing powers (including the United States government, territorial government, Russian government, and religious organizations); a huge influx of non-Natives, which has altered access to subsistence foods and resulted in restrictive regulation; the arrival of western technologies, religions, economic systems, industrial development, and educational systems; and climate change.

Despite these obstacles, Alaska's Native peoples not only continue to survive, but also help define Alaska's economy, politics, and future.

It is important to note that traveling to the remote villages where most Alaska Native people live is, for non-Natives, like traveling to a foreign country in every sense of the word. A casual observer may note that Alaska Native individuals appear to be "Americanized" in that they use modern tools, clothes, and machinery, and most speak English and wear western clothes. But the bulk of Alaska Native identity is beneath the surface. Each village has different relationship and communication protocols, different customs and traditions, and different worldviews even within a single region of Alaska; these differences are magnified when considered against other indigenous cultures and mainstream society.

Alaska Native peoples have had intimate contact with their immediate environments for hundreds of generations and thus have a profound understanding of place. Development of oil reserves on Alaska's North Slope in the 1970's introduced a new tension when Alaska Native aboriginal land claims impeded construction of the 800-mile trans-Alaska pipeline. Most Alaska Native land claims were extinguished by congressional action in 1971, a solution that remains a topic of dispute today (see section on ANCSA, pages 19-26).

Alaska Native history is fraught with stories of conflict with western legal systems (particularly over land) and with western theories about land, fish, and wildlife, as well as

"For far too long we Dena'ina people have been trying to tell our story in other people's words. This may explain some of why we've been almost invisible in our own country, even among ourselves."

Clare Swan

individual versus communal rights—struggles some Native people believe may only heighten as Alaska continues to attract newcomers who know little, if anything, about Alaska’s first peoples.

Alaska’s Native peoples have a deep understanding and wisdom about fish, wildlife, habitat, weather, climate, and geography that could benefit all peoples. As environmental issues grow ever more daunting—even threatening the survival of all life on this planet—Alaska Native cultures, worldviews, knowledge, and wisdom offer alternatives for living in a respectful and sustainable relationship with the natural world.

How many Native languages are there? Is it important to save them?

Alaska is home to twenty Alaska Native languages, along with a multitude of regional dialects. In Native cultures, as in every culture, language serves as a vessel for entire ways of thinking and relating to the world: a storehouse of accumulated knowledge, wisdom, information, philosophical views, sense of place, history, relationships, social and political organization, identity, learning styles, beliefs, and attitudes about everything from food to land to marriage to spirituality. Language expresses the unique cumulative, shared experience of a group of people over generations and offers the rest of the human race another view of how to live in the world.

From indigenous peoples’ perspectives, language is birthed from the land in which the people themselves live and contains the vibration of these lands in the sounds of the words used. Each spoken tongue is unique, the result of thousands of years of living in a specific area. An adopted or second language can never replicate what a particular indigenous language can communicate.

Alaska Native words and languages are multi-dimensional in meaning. Some words or phrases communicate not only information, but also spiritual and emotional dimensions reflective of the holistic worldview of Alaska Native peoples. This is why Alaska Native Elders often speak in their own language rather than in English in group settings, even when speaking to an English-only group. To them, the English language cannot convey the depth of meaning their own language can.

The destruction or erosion of the languages of Native peoples all around the planet is of central concern to indigenous nations, anthropologists, linguists, and people of all backgrounds who understand the value and necessity of preserving cultural, linguistic, and intellectual diversity on behalf of the human future. Of the 6,000 languages spoken around the globe, linguists fear that up to 90 percent could disappear by the next century.

Native languages in Alaska are suffering some of the greatest losses. Out of the twenty languages, seventeen have 300 or fewer speakers remaining.⁶ Marie Smith Jones, Chief of the Eyak nation and the last surviving speaker of the Eyak language (a 3,000-year old language from Southcentral Alaska), died in January 2008. Although she and others worked very hard to pass the Eyak language to the next generation, there is now no one alive today for whom Eyak was a primary tongue and fundamental way of understanding the world.

Native languages have been endangered or eroded by the forces of colonization for the past several hundred years. Beginning with their arrival in the 1700s, many missionaries, government officials, and educators actively promoted policies and practices aimed at destroying or marginalizing the languages spoken by Native peoples, acting on a misguided belief that forcing Alaska Native peoples to abandon their traditional ways and become like “white” people was a progressive act. With a few notable exceptions, most mission or boarding schools (including those attended by many Native adults living today), forbade Native children from speaking their own languages and harshly punished them if they persisted. By breaking the linguistic bonds that tied children to their cultures and Elders, a chasm opened up between many Alaska Native Elders and youth. Much vital knowledge and wisdom was lost.

Unlike immigrants to the United States who gave up their original languages to assimilate, indigenous peoples of the United States have no country of origin to which they may return and in which their native tongue is still being spoken. Italian-Americans may return to an Italy where their traditional language is still actively used; Chinese dialects are still alive to Chinese-Americans who wish to reconnect with linguistic and cultural roots. Without denying losses and struggles that descendants of immigrant groups face, it must be acknowledged that Alaska Native peoples are in a very different position. Alaska Native peoples are living on their ancestral lands; if they lose their cultures, lands, languages—or all of these—there is nowhere else to return to. Those languages, and the ways of living, connecting to and viewing the world they represent, will be lost forever.

In spite of recent efforts to marginalize Alaska Native languages (such as the “English-only” laws passed overwhelmingly by voters in 1998, which sought to require that all official businesses in the villages take place in English alone), many efforts have been underway for the past few decades to document and pass on Alaska Native languages. Many schools throughout Alaska now offer bilingual programs. The Fairbanks-based Alaska Native

“Human relationships are embedded in the grammar and become a subconscious part of the ... soul...If we are to truly understand this place, we have to understand the language of this place.”

Alan Boraas

⁶ Krauss, Michael, “The Vanishing Languages of the Pacific Rim,” 2007 (Anchorage Daily News, Wed. Jan 23, 2008, page A10.)

Language Center and a host of other sites offer online resources. UAA offers classes in the Yup'ik language, and the statewide Alaska Native Oratory Society competition at UAA recognizes high school and college students who can speak their traditional languages.

Many oral history projects seek to document the speech of Elders from various regions, and Alaska Native Elders and leaders throughout the state are encouraging young people to learn to speak their original languages. Being able to speak both English and traditional languages is a strength that will allow these young people to walk in two worlds and retain a valuable heritage for their children and the rest of humanity.

“Languages...shape thought and epistemological modes of learning. Take this Iñupiaq term: aavzuuk. First, it is a complete sentence meaning ‘constellation consisting of two stars which appear above the horizon in late December, an indication that the solstice is past and that days will soon grow longer again.’ ...Structurally polysynthetic, the Iñupiaq language allows the speaker to economize on sound to maximize meaning with simply inclusion and replacement of key morphemes. Such morphemes are explicit in terms of direction, number of speakers, number of listeners, height from the horizon line, and time. Second, in this example Inupiaq epistemology makes use of language to impart astronomical knowledge of the constellations, calendric data, and patience about the presence or absence of light. Implied within the term, aavzuuk, is the suggestion that the Iñupiaq speaker will learn what to expect of the environment and other creatures in it at this time of year. Thus, the Iñupiaq sense of a maturing self grows with knowledge of the language.”

Dr. Phyllis Fast



Clark James Mishler

Blanket toss at the World Eskimo Olympics in Fairbanks.

READINGS

Please visit our web site at
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>
for a variety of supplemental readings

Online Readings

Bissett, Hallie. "I am Alaska Native."

Recent UAA graduate and current MBA student, Dena'ina Athabascan Hallie Bissett discusses her struggle to understand her indigenous identity. She not only comes to terms with her culture, but also realizes how central it is to her life.

Breinig, Jeane. "Alaska Native Writers, Alaska Native Identities."

Jeane Breinig, Ph.D., Haida, is currently a UAA Associate Professor of English. In this essay, Breinig discusses how four Alaska Natives writers portray aspects of their contemporary identities, while still maintaining connections to their respective cultural traditions.

Breinig, Jeane. "Inside the Circle of a Story."

This family story discusses the role of Haida oral traditions, storytelling, and language revitalization in Southeast Alaska. It includes links to writing by Dr. Breinig's mother Julie Coburn.

Bruchac, Joseph W. III. "We are the In-betweens: An Interview with Mary TallMountain." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*, Series 2, Vol. 1, Num.1 (Summer 1989).

Interview with nationally renowned Koyukon-Athabascan writer (who was adopted into a white family at the age of six) about her life and writings.

Burch, Ernest S., Jr. "From Skeptic to Believer: The Making of an Oral Historian."

Ernie Burch, Jr., Ph.D., social anthropologist, specializes in the early historic social organization of the Inupiaq. In this essay, he argues for the validity of using Native oral histories to truly understand the historical record. He contends that oral histories are often ignored or misunderstood by academics, and argues for their inclusion in research projects.

Davis, Robert. "Saginaw Bay: I Keep Going Back." Poem. Tlingit Tribal Art web site.

Fast, Phyllis. "Alaska Native Language, Culture, and Identity." Essay, 2008.

Phyllis Fast, Ph.D., Athabascan, is UAA Associate Professor of Anthropology. She is also an author and an artist. In this essay, Fast discusses the value of pre-colonial religious traditions and language, as well as the post-colonial impact of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971 and the ANCSA 1991 Amendments of 1988.

Garza, Dolly. “The Origin of ‘Tlingit Moon and Tide.’”

Dolly Garza, Ph.D., Tlingit and Haida, explains the educational and cultural function of a Tlingit story.

Hensley, Willie. “Speech at Bilingual Conference.” Anchorage, 1981.

William Hensley, Inupiaq, architect of ANCSA, reflects on key issues regarding the relationship between schooling, education, and the future of Alaska Native cultures in a 1981 speech to the annual Bilingual/ MultiEducation Conference.

Jacobson, Steven A. “Central Yup’ik and the Schools.”

This handbook was designed to assist school districts in providing effective educational services to students from the Yup’ik language group. This is one of three handbooks developed to increase school districts' and school personnel's understanding of selected Alaska Native language groups.

Maclean, Edna Ahgeak. “Why Don’t We Give Our Children to Our Native Languages?”

Edna Maclean, Ph.D., Inupiaq, former president of Iligsavik College, provides an overview of the effects of education on Alaska Native languages, a discussion of the State of Alaska's approach to bilingual education, and suggestions for ways to revive and maintain Alaska Native languages.

Oquilluk, William. “People of Kauwerak: Legends of the Northern Eskimo.”

William Oquilluk, Inupiaq from Point Hope (1896-1972), wrote down these stories of his people when he was concerned they would be lost without written documentation. This excerpt from his book focuses on one of the disasters that befell the people.

TallMountain, Mary. “Indian Blood.”

Poem by nationally renowned Koyukon Athabascan writer.

Thompson, Chad. Athabascan Languages and the Schools: A Handbook for Teachers.

Jane McGary, Ed. Alaska Native Language Center, 1984.

Chad Thompson, Ph.D., linguist, describes the job of a linguist and provides an overview of Athabascan languages.

Williams, Brad. “A Bridge Between Two Worlds: the term half breed gets a new definition.”

True North, Spring 1999.

Brad Williams, reporter for *True North*, interviews several “mixed identity” Alaska Native citizens, including Jack Dalton, Tim Gilbert, and Priscilla Hensley, who describe their struggles to come to terms with who they are today.

Other Web Sites of Interest

Alaska Native Language Center: <http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/>

Internationally recognized, the ANLC was established in 1972 by state legislation as a center for documentation and cultivation of the state's 20 Native languages. Housed at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, ANLC publishes research in story collections, dictionaries, grammars, and research papers. ANLC also maintains an archival collection of more than 10,000 items.

Sealaska Heritage Institute.

Online resources promoting language restoration of Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages.

<http://www.tlingitlanguage.org/>

<http://www.haidalanguage.org/>

<http://www.tsimshianlanguage.org/>

Hard Copy Readings

Breinig, Jeane. "Alaskan Haida Narratives: Maintaining Cultural Identity Through Subsistence," in *Telling the Stories: Essays on American Indian Literatures and Cultures*, Malcolm A. Nelson and Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson, eds., Peter Lang Publishing, 2001.

Breinig, Jeane. "Alaskan Haida Stories of Language Growth and Regeneration" in *American Indian Quarterly* 30 (Winter/Spring 2006): 110-118.

Bruchac, Joseph, ed., *Raven Tells Stories*, Greenfield Center, NY: Greenfield Review Press, 1991.

Collection of creative writing (primarily poetry) which includes briefs interviews with selected authors who address aspects of their contemporary Native identity. Also includes biographies and writings by Tlingit writers Robert Davis and Diane Benson among others.

Brown, Emily Ivanoff. *Tales of Ticasuk: Eskimo Legends and Stories*. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 1987.

Emily Ivanoff Brown, from Unalakleet (1904-1982), was a grade-school teacher and advocate of bilingual education. She is recognized by Alaska Native people as an important educator. Emily's Native name "Ticasuk" means: "Where the four winds gather their treasures from all parts of the world...the greatest of which is knowledge." This book is a collection of her writings, focusing on the oral stories of her people.

Brown, Emily Ivanoff. *The Roots of Ticasuk: An Eskimo Woman's Family Story*. Portland, OR: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1981.

Collection of stories by Ivanoff. Revision of master's thesis from University of Alaska published as a book, *Grandfather of Unalakleet*, in 1974; later published as *The Roots of Ticasuk*.

Christianson, Susan Stark. *Historical Profile of the Central Council: Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*. Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, 1992, Revised edition.

Early history of the movement of the Tlingit and Haida peoples to keep their traditional lifestyle and ancestral lands.

Crowell, Aron L., Amy P. Steffian, Gordon L. Pullar, eds. *Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of the Alutiiq People*. Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2001.

Combines, archaeology, history, and oral tradition of the Alutiiq people to trace a path through ancestral generations to contemporary life.

Dauenhauer, Nora M., *Life Woven with Song*. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2000.

Collection of poems, plays and essays written by noted Tlingit scholar who provides readers with creative expressions of her cultural traditions.

Dauenhauer, Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, eds., *Haa Kusteeyí, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories: Classics of Tlingit Oral Literature*, vol. 3., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Recommended excerpts:

- Pages 3-23, “Introduction: The Context of Tlingit Biography,” including “Tlingit Geography and Social Structure” and “The Concept of At.óow” (Tlingit culture and its understanding of ownership and belonging.)
- Pages 525-544

Dauenhauer, Nora and Richard Dauenhauer, eds. *Haa Shuká, Our Ancestors: Tlingit Oral Narratives*. Seattle: University of Washington Press and Sealaska Heritage, 1987.

Recommended excerpt:

- story told by Susie James about Glacier Bay history.

Dunham, Mike. “Voice for the Voiceless: Mary TallMountain.” *Anchorage Daily News, Lifestyles Section*, November 13, 1994.

Story about the life of nationally renowned Koyukon Athabascan writer (1918-1994) who was adopted out of her family at age six due to the tuberculosis that ravaged Alaska and her village. The story describes her life, the obstacles she overcame, her return to Alaska, and how she used writing as a form of healing. Examples of her creative writing are included: “Indian Blood” (poem) and “You Can Go Home Again” (essay).

“Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich/Kaaxgal.aat and Roy Peratrovich, Sr. Lk’uteen.” From the private collection of Joanne Ducharme.

Biography of Roy and Elizabeth Peratrovich and an overview of their fight for equal rights.

Fast, Phyllis Ann. “Footprints: Metaphors of Place, Mobility, and History.” In *Northern Athabascan Survival: Women, Community, and the Future*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002.

This chapter from Dr. Phyllis Fast’s book discusses Northern Athabascan history in terms of its impact on the lives of Athabascan women, economy, and leadership in the aftermath of colonial encounters.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann with William Tyson, Paul John, Marie Meade, and John Active. “Metaphors of Conversion/Metaphors of Change.” In *Hunting Tradition in a Changing World: Yup’ik Lives in Alaska Today*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Ann Fienup-Riordan, Ph.D., is a cultural anthropologist and independent scholar celebrated for her work with the Yup’ik. This chapter examines what different people in Yup’ik villages have said about change in their communities, with close attention to their use of metaphor.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. *The Nelson Island Eskimo Social Structure and Ritual Distribution*. Anchorage: Alaska Pacific University Press, 1983.

Recommended excerpt:

■ Pages 1-28, “Ethnographic Setting” gives an overview of Qaluyaaq—Nelson Island—including its geography and an overview of the historical period up to the 1930s.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann and Lawrence D. Kaplan, eds., *Words of the Real People: Alaska Native Literature in Translation*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2007.

Collection of life stories, poetry, and oral literature of the Yup’ik, Inupiaq, and Alutiiq peoples accompanied by background essays on each Native group.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. “The Real People and the Children of Thunder” and “Yup’ik Warfare and the Myth of the Peaceful Eskimo.” In *Eskimo Essays: Yup’ik Lives and How We See Them*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990.

These two chapters focus on the effects of Western contact and traditional Yup’ik worldviews.

Hayes, Ernestine. *Blonde Indian: An Alaska Native Memoir*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006.

Assistant Professor of English at University of Alaska Southeast, Hayes won the American Book Award for this memoir that combines Tlingit storytelling with the author’s personal life story.

Hensley, William L. Iggiagruk. *Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: A Memoir of Alaska and the Real People*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008.

Memoir of Willie Hensley, Inupiaq leader who grew up on the shores of Kotzebue Sound.

John, Peter. *The Gospel According to Peter John*. University of Alaska Fairbanks, Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1996.

Peter John (1900-2003) was elected in 1992 by Athabascan Elders to be their Traditional Chief. He testified in favor of Native land claims in late 1960s and advocated sobriety for Alaska Native peoples. He was awarded an honorary doctorate from UAF in recognition of his lifelong efforts to perpetuate and share Athabascan culture and language. This book is an edited compilation of oral interviews he undertook with David Krupa as a way to share his spiritual insight, combining his traditional values with Christianity.

Kari, James and Alan Boraas, eds. *A Dena’ina Legacy—K’l’egh’i Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky* Fairbanks: Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks, 1991.

Collection of 147 bilingual Dena’ina-English writings by self-taught writer and scholar Peter Kalifornsky of Kenai (1911-1993). His focus was not to create scholarly books, but to bring back Dena’ina as a living language in Southcentral Alaska.

Recommended excerpt:

■ Pages 470-481, “Peter Kalifornsky: A biography by Alan S. Boraas” gives a short biography of Kalifornsky and a brief history of the region.

Kari, James. *Shem Pete's Alaska: The Territory of the Upper Cook Inlet Dena'ina*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003.

James Kari, Ph.D., retired linguist, worked with Shem Peter and more than 40 other Dena'ina and Ahtna Athabascan people on this landmark book connecting the language, landscape, and the Dena'ina people of the upper Cook Inlet. One of the finest examples of the way oral history can be used to connect the naming of places and the stories associated with geographic features to a people's history.

Mather, Elsie. "With a Vision Beyond Our Immediate Needs," from *When Our Words Return: Writing, Hearing and Remembering Oral Traditions of Alaska and the Yukon*, P. Morrow and W. Schneider, eds., Utah University Press, 1995, Logan, Utah, pages 20-26.

Elsie Mather, Yup'ik educator, describes the ways English grammatical and pedagogical models have often overlooked and undermined Alaska Native oral traditions. In this essay, she tries to come to grips with the "necessary monster" of literacy in relation to her Yup'ik language and cultural ideals.

McClanahan, Alexandra J. *Our Stories, Our Lives*. Anchorage: CIRI Foundation, 1986.

Collection of personal experiences and traditional stories told by 23 Alaska Native Elders of the Cook Inlet Region in Southcentral Alaska who witnessed dramatic cultural changes in Alaska from 1900-1985. Compiled and edited by noted CIRI historian Alexandra J. McClanahan.

McClanahan, Alexandra J., Aaron Leggett, and Lydia L. Hays. *Dena'ina: Nat'uh/Our Special Place*. Anchorage: Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc., 2007.

Story about the indigenous people of Cook Inlet region includes the early Kachemak Tradition people, with primary focus on the Dena'ina Athabascan people.

Recommended excerpts:

- Page 9, "Na Tikahtnu Sukdu: Our Cook Inlet Story," by Clare Swan explains needs for Native people to tell history in their own words;
- Pages 15-19, "Dena'ina: Nat'uh, Our Special Place" provides overview of Cook Inlet/Tikahtnu indigenous pre-history and history.

Natives of Alaska. *Alaska Native Ways: What the Elders Have Taught Us*, Introduction by Will Mayo, Photographs by Roy Corral. Portland, OR.: Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company, 2002.

Ten essays written by Alaska Native individuals from ten major cultures who discuss how they carry their traditional values into the contemporary world. Accompanied by color photographs.

Nolan, Maia. "Premiere of One-Man Show About Race Compelling, Honest." Review of *My Heart Runs in Two Directions at Once*, by Jack Dalton. Anchorage Daily News (November 8, 2007).

Review of one-man performance by Alaskan storyteller Jack Dalton, half Yup'ik and half-European American, and his efforts to find and honor his full identity.

Orth, Donald J. *Dictionary of Alaska Place Names*. US Geological Survey, 1971.

Detailed compendium of geographic names for places and features of the Alaska landscape.

Recommended excerpt:

■ Page 6-44, “Sources of Names” provides overview of military expeditions, explorers, government studies and others that led to the mapping of Alaska.

Price, Robert E. *The Great Father in Alaska: The Case of the Tlingit and Haida Salmon Fishery*.

Douglas, AK: The First Street Press, 1990.

A study of federal Indian policy and political history of the indigenous people of Southeast Alaska focusing on the salmon industry since 1867.

Raboff, Adeline Peter. *Iñuksuk: Northern Koyukon, Gwich'in & Lower Tanana 1800-1901*. Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 2001.

History of the Northern Koyukon, Western Gwich'in and Lower Tanana kept by storytellers for over 150 years. Account of their history taken from written records of the early explorers, traders and missionaries and the oral tradition of the Alaska Native peoples themselves. Available through the University of Alaska Press.

Recommended excerpts:

■ Pages 33-38, “The Archeological Record” discusses the long-held belief that the central Brooks Range area was thought to be Iñupiat in the period of 1250-1850, while the evidence suggests Athabascans lived there in significant numbers.

■ Pages 169-171, “Northern Koyukon, Gwich'in, and Lower Tanana Timeline” provides timeline of the region from 1250 to 1898.

Spatz, Ronald, Jeane Breinig and Patricia Partnow, eds. *Alaska Native Writers, Storytellers and Orators: The Expanded Edition*. Alaska Quarterly Review, University of Alaska Anchorage, 1999.

Anthology of Alaska Native oral and written texts which includes both traditional stories in the respective languages with facing translations, and contemporary creative texts written in English. It also features a “Contexts” section which provides cultural, historical, and literary background for the selections.

Stephan, A.E., *The First Athabascans of Alaska: Strawberries*. Pittsburgh: Dorrance Publishing Co., 1996.

In an effort to retain the valuable history of her ancestors, tribal Elder A.E. Stephan documents the story of the Athabascans.

Recommended excerpts:

■ Pages 5-6, “The First Athabascans of Alaska: Strawberries” (Overview of Cook Inlet pre-history.)

■ Pages 9-12, “Indian Society” (Dena'ina culture, potlatches.)

■ Pages 15-16, “Indian Beliefs” (Overview of spirituality.)

TallMountain, Mary. *The Light on the Tent Wall: A Bridging*. Los Angeles: University of California American Indian Studies Center, 1990.

Collection of poetry and prose by nationally recognized Koyukon Athabascan writer.

TallMountain, Mary. "You Can Go Home Again" in *I Tell You Now: Autobiographical Essays by Native American Writers*, Brian Swann and Arnold Krupat, eds., University of Nebraska Press, 1987.

Essay by nationally renowned Koyukon Athabascan writer who was adopted out of her family at six due to the tuberculosis that ravaged Alaska and her village.

Wallis, Velma. *Bird Girl and the Man Who Followed the Sun*, Kenmore, WA: Epicenter Press, 2003.

Renowned author of national bestseller *Two Old Women*, Velma Wallis, Gwich'in Athabascan, interweaves two classic Athabascan oral tales. This is the story of two rebels who break the strict taboos of their communal culture in their quest for freedom and adventure. The text raises interesting questions about gender and identity.

Wallis, Velma *Raising Ourselves*, Kenmore, WA: Epicenter Press, 2003

A coming of age tale which is at times gritty, but overall inspires hope.

Other Resources

More than Words: The Life and Language of Eyak Chief Marie Smith, Video by Laura Bliss Span, 60 minutes. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0GER/is_2000_Spring/ai_61426211

Sikumi (On the Ice) by Andrew Okpeaha MacLean.

A short feature film of a hunter who goes out on the ice looking for seal and inadvertently witnesses a murder; winner of 2008 Jury Prize in Short Filmmaking at Sundance Film Festival 2008.



Cook Inlet Region Incorporated (CIRI) headquarters, Anchorage, Alaska.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and Corporations

What is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)?

How did Alaska Native corporations start up?

Do all Alaska Native people get dividends?

What do Alaska Native people think of ANCSA?

“We are not asking for anything. We are offering the U.S. Government 84 percent of our property. We are offering them...more than 300 million acres to satisfy the needs of others in the state and to satisfy the needs of the United States in the way of federal reserves, wildlife refuges, wilderness areas. We will accommodate them all. We are asking merely to be able to retain 16 percent of our land in each region and we are asking for extinguishment of title to the other 300 million acres, \$500 million from the Congress and 2 percent royalty in perpetuity which will be utilized over the whole state of Alaska.”

Don Wright

What is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)?

Alaska Native peoples have been living for thousands of years on the lands now called Alaska (a westernized version of the Aleut term for "great land" or "mainland"). Current theory asserts that early peoples migrated to Alaska some 25,000 years ago over a land bridge connecting Alaska and eastern Siberia.* These immigrants then spread out over the region, developing over time into multiple, distinct nations.

In the 1700s, traders from other nations—Russia, Spain, England, and what would become the United States—arrived in increasing numbers to exploit the fur trade. In 1784, Russia asserted dominion and claimed Alaska as a colony.

In 1867, Russia sold Alaska to the United States government for \$7,200,000 (about 1.9¢ per acre), transferring title to all public and vacant lands not owned by individuals, without regard to the claims of aboriginal peoples who had been living on the lands for generations. These peoples—deemed “uncivilized tribes” by the United States government—considered most of these lands to be their communal property, based on the principle of “traditional use and occupancy.” The treaty with Russia “provided that those tribes would be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States might from time to time adopt with respect to aboriginal tribes.”¹

In 1884, Congress declared that indigenous Americans “should not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use or occupation or then claimed by them, but that the terms under which such persons could acquire title to such lands were reserved for future legislation by Congress.”² This action was significant because it laid a groundwork for Native land claims that, in Alaska, would take another century to resolve.

In 1966, Alaska Native leaders convened statewide as the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), an entity that meets annually and remains a political force today. AFN pressed Congress to resolve the question of Alaska Native land claims stemming in part from Alaska’s days as a Russian colony and United States territory. From the perspective of many Native individuals and organizations, the lands on which they had been living and subsisting from “time immemorial” had never been the property of Russia to sell. Pressure was building to settle aboriginal claims: the state wanted resolution to carry out day-to-day affairs, and construction of the \$8 billion trans-Alaska oil pipeline could not go ahead until conflicting land claims were settled.

After five years of struggle and compromise among Alaska Native groups, the state, oil companies, and conservationists, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Richard Nixon.

*Some Native groups take issue with this theory and point to their own creation/origin stories which suggest other possible explanations and timeframes for their longstanding occupancy. The oldest subsistence sites discovered are at least 10,000 years old. Older sites may have disappeared under coastal waters.

Until ANCSA, official U.S. policy had been to “grant to them (indigenous people) title to a portion of the lands which they occupied, to extinguish the aboriginal title to the remainder of the lands by placing such lands in the public domain, and to pay the fair value of the titles extinguished.”³ (This policy was frequently dishonored, however; a cursory review of Native American history indicates numerous incidences of indigenous groups being forcibly removed from their homelands without remuneration).



Alaska State Library Photograph Collection, ASL-P01-4686

In the Fall of 1970, then Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel met with prominent figures in the Alaska Land Claims dispute in his Washington office. Clockwise from far left: Wally Hickel; Tim Wallis, President Fairbanks Native Association; Charles (Etok) Edwardson, Executive Director Arctic Slope Native Association; Eben Hopson, Barrow; Emil Notti; Attorney Barry Jackson (standing); State Senator William Hensley; Alfred Ketzler, Nenana; Barbara Trigg, Nome; unknown; Delois Ketzler; Harvey Samuelson, Dillingham; George Miller, Kenai; unknown; State Senator Ray C. Christiansen (far right); Frank Degnan, Unalakleet; Moses Paukan; Morris Thompson; John Borbridge (back to camera).

How did Alaska Native corporations start up?

Passage of ANCSA on December 18, 1971 provided title to forty million acres to be divided among some 220 Native villages and twelve regions within the state. An additional four million acres consisting of historical sites, gravesites, and other special lands were made available with certain constraints on usage: economic development was to be restricted on these lands. Twelve regional and over 200 village corporations—entirely new structures in Native societies—were set up to select the lands, hold the titles, and receive, invest, and administer

the settlement payments on behalf of their shareholders. A thirteenth corporation was set up to receive monies on behalf of Alaska Native people living outside the state. These corporations shared in a payment of \$462 million over an eleven-year period, and an additional \$500 million in oil revenues derived from specified Alaska lands.⁴

Alaska Native people who were born on or before December 18, 1971 and enrolled in the corporations became shareholders—another new concept and relationship for most of them. Under ANCSA, most village corporations retained only surface rights to the lands they selected, with regional corporations responsible for managing subsurface resources found on their lands and the lands of the village corporations within their regions. If those subsurface resources were developed (mined, drilled), seventy percent of the revenues generated were to be shared among all twelve regional corporations and all of the village corporations on a per capita basis—a very different arrangement compared with non-Native corporations across the globe.

From the outset, as holders of the last remaining Alaska Native lands, the village and regional corporations have assumed enormous responsibilities. They have

also faced enormous challenges, including an initial shortage of well-prepared Alaska Native people ready to operate these new and complex structures. Like all other corporations, Native corporations strive to maximize profits for their shareholders and may be liable for mismanagement if they fail to do so. Many regional corporations have invested in real estate, secured

ANCSA Regional Corporations

Ahtna, Incorporated

The Aleut Corporation (TAC)

Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC)

Bering Straits Native Corporation (BSNC)

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC)

Calista Corporation

Chugach Alaska Corporation (CAC)

Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI)

Doyon Limited

Koniaq, Incorporated

NANA Regional Corporation (NANA)

Sealaska Corporation

The 13th Regional Corporation

military contracts, and engaged in mining, logging and other economic endeavors to generate corporate profits. A few corporations earn large profits from their efforts and many are more modestly profitable. Others have so far failed to attain profitability but nevertheless continue to survive.

This arrangement introduces a unique tension between profitable and unprofitable corporations. But even more potentially divisive is the question of who gets to own shares in the corporations at all, especially when it comes to Alaska Native people born after 1971.

Do all Alaska Native people get dividends?

The short answer is no. ANCSA corporations declare dividends only in years when they make profits, and not all of them are profitable in any given year. Shareholders of the profitable corporations receive dividends; those of less profitable corporations may not. Only a few corporations make sizeable profits, so only a minority of shareholders receive significant dividends. And, in most cases, only people born on or before December 18, 1971 are shareholders.

As UAA anthropology professor Dr. Phyllis Fast notes:

ANCSA has had a tremendous and ongoing impact on Alaska Native identity with its cutoff date of birth (December 18, 1971) for inclusion into its provisions. All Alaska Natives born after that date were expected to assimilate into the mainstream population and/or inherit ANCSA shares from their parents and grandparents. In cultures where huge families and longer lives have become the norm, many original shareholders are alive and well and continue to own their own shares. In 1987 (enacted in 1988), Congress passed the “1991 Amendments” to allow, among other things, each of the twelve regional ANCSA corporations to vote to include descendants as shareholders. Of the twelve regional corporations, four (Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, NANA, Doyon Limited, and in 2007, Sealaska) have voted to grant descendants (commonly known as “afterborns”) new shares. Each of these corporations has implemented different strategies to decide if or how to make the process work, and each of their solutions has resulted in differing notions of inclusion. ⁵

What do Alaska Native people think of ANCSA?

Some Alaska Native people view ANCSA as a very positive step forward for Alaska Native peoples in terms of economic empowerment, while others see it as a necessary compromise to prevent all-out loss of traditional lands.

On the positive side, some see ANCSA as the first settlement in America based on self-determination for Native groups. Where earlier assimilation policies denigrated indigenous affiliations, ANCSA has opened the doors to learning about individual heritage, history, and culture. It has provided a focal point for increasing a common sense of Alaska Native identity and has resulted in a renaissance of culture reflected today in the many Alaska Native cultural events around the state and the revival of interest in preserving Alaska Native languages. In addition, the economic and political power resulting from the creation of Alaska Native corporations has made a great many things possible in Alaska that indigenous nations in the Lower 48 have as yet been unable to achieve

Others, however, agree with the sentiments expressed by Alaska Native activists Bigjim and Adler in “Letters to Howard” that ANCSA was simply another step in a long history of the United States government’s efforts to assimilate Native peoples and, ultimately, destroy their distinct cultures. “With the President’s signature on the settlement act, the relationship between the Native peoples of Alaska and the land was completely transformed...” note Bigjim and Adler. “Native Alaskans whose earlier use and occupancy had made them co-owners of shared land, now became shareholders in corporate-owned land.”⁶ Other critics argue that ANCSA’s use of the corporate form requires Alaska’s Native peoples to embrace class relationships and values—such as profit-making from the “development of resources,” placing a monetary value on land, and individual ownership of camphouses—that dangerously skew the more holistic relationships between the people and the land and between the people and their communities embodied by traditional Alaska Native cultures.

Despite its intent to resolve important issues, ANCSA remains a topic of debate more than three decades after its passage—an indication of the fundamental place that land and all it stands for continue to have for Alaska’s Native peoples.

1-4) Jones, Richard S. “Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (Public Law 92-203): History and Analysis Together with Subsequent Amendments,” Report No. 81-127 GOV, June 1, 1981.
www.alaskool.org/projects/ANCSA/reports/rsjones1981/ANCSA_History71.htm#Introduction

5) Fast, Phyllis. “Alaska Native Language, Culture and Identity,” 2008.

6) Alaska Native Heritage Center, Alaska Native Cultural Workshop Series packet, 2007.



David Freeman

Entrance to Arctic Slope Regional Corporation (ASRC) building in Anchorage, Alaska.

“Thus, investment and land use decisions of the Native corporations must reflect the concerns of their shareholders, even though many of these concerns are social rather than business. Native shareholders want more than just a dividend. They want protection of the subsistence lifestyle, jobs, access to their corporate leaders, enhancement of their culture, and other considerations which seldom, if ever, are discussed in the board rooms of profit-making corporations.”

John Shively

READINGS

Please visit our web site at
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>
for a variety of supplemental readings

Online Readings

ANCSA at 30

Interviews with Native and non-Native leaders and citizens thirty years after the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Arnold, Robert. *Alaska Native Land Claims*. Anchorage: Alaska Native Foundation, 1978.

Though dated, a key text about the history and politics of the Native land claims in Alaska. Out of print.

Bigjim, Frederick Seagayuk and James Ito-Adler. “Letter to Howard: An Interpretation of the Alaska Native Land Claims.” Anchorage: Alaska Methodist University Press, 1974.

Early concerns about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act written as letters to the editor from fictional characters.

Fast, Phyllis. “A Legacy of Sharing” in *Sakuuktugut: Alaska Native Corporations* by Alexandra J. McClahanan. Anchorage: CIRI Foundation, 2006.

Discusses how traditional Native value of sharing has been incorporated into modern practices of Alaska Native corporations.

Hall, Joelle et al. “Wooch Yayi: Woven Together—Alaska Native Corporations 2005 Economic Data: A Look at the 13 Regional Native Corporations and Three Native Village Corporations.” Anchorage: ANCSA Regional Corporation Presidents and CEOs. 2007.

Hensley, William L. Iggiagruk. “What Rights to Land Have the Alaska Natives?” May 2001.

Paper written by Inupiaq land claims leader Willie Hensley as a graduate student in a UA Constitutional Law class in 1966. Researching and writing this paper sparked Hensley’s lifetime of activism on behalf of Native peoples and their lands and cultures.

Mallott, Byron. “One Day in the Life of a Native Chief Executive,” *Alaska Native News* (October 1985) vol. 2, page 22.

Tlingit leader Byron Mallott describes an ordinary day as a CEO of an Alaska Native corporation, with activities both similar to and distinct from non-Native corporations.

Mallott, Byron. “Unfinished Business: The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.”

 Tlingit leader and former President and CEO of First Alaskans Foundation wrestles with the role of ANCSA and Native corporations in a Native-centered vision for the future.

Hard Copy Readings

Berger, Thomas. *Village Journey: The Report of the Alaska Native Review Commission*. New York: Hill & Wang, 1985.

Case, David S. *Alaska Natives and American Laws*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1984.

 Major work on the legal status of Alaska Native peoples.

 Recommended excerpt:

- Page 48-49, “Aboriginal Title.”

Fitzgerald, Joseph H., David M. Hickok, Robert D. Arnold and Esther C. Wunnicke. *Alaska Natives and the Land*. Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Anchorage, Alaska, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1968.

 Recommended excerpt:

- Chapter - The Land Issue.

McClanahan, Alexandra J. *Sakuuktugut: Alaska Native Corporations*. Anchorage: CIRI Foundation, 2006.

 Book by noted CIRI historian that places Alaska Native corporations in the context of Alaska’s history, economic and social issues, and explains why Native leaders and corporation shareholders struggle daily with the tension between focusing on bottom-line success and honoring traditional values and preserving cultures. The title is an Inupiaq word that means “we are working incredibly hard.”

McClanahan, Alexandra J. *Growing up Native in Alaska*. Fairbanks: Todd Communications, 2001.

 Interviews with 27 young Alaska Native leaders about their lives, their futures, the impact of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and how they are “finding innovative and creative ways to live in two worlds.” This is a UAA/APU Book of the Year for 2008-2009.

Morgan, Lael. *Art and Eskimo Power: The Life and Times of Alaskan Howard Rock*. Fairbanks: Epicenter Press, 1988.

 Founding editor of the only statewide Alaska Native newspaper, Howard Rock also played a vital part in pressing for Alaska Native claims to traditional land.

Other Resources

ANCSA: Caught in the Act: The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, produced by the Alaska Department of Education, Alaska Native Foundation, 1987.

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/ANCSA/caught.html>

 Six-part video series, ranging in length from 14-25 minutes.



Clark James Mishler

Subsistence hunter, Peter Spein, retrieves duck from small pond near Kwethluk.

Subsistence and Relationship to Land, Waters, and Wildlife

Do Alaska's Native peoples want subsistence hunting and fishing rights that are different from non-Natives?

Why are the land and waters so important to Native cultures?

What do the phrases "traditional ways of knowing" or "traditional knowledge and wisdom" mean?

How is climate change affecting Native communities?

Do some Native corporations and organizations support drilling, mining, and logging on their lands?

"The Indian people used every part of every animal they killed. The skins were tanned and made into clothing. The bones were made into spear and arrowheads, needles, knives, spoons and ornaments. The sinew was used for thread to sew with. Some of the skin before it was tanned was made into rawhide (rope) of every size. The large intestines were used to store oil or moose fat. The horns of the moose or caribou were used to make bowls or large spoons... All animals that were killed were treated with much respect."

Alberta Stephan

Do Alaska's Native peoples want subsistence hunting and fishing rights that are different from non-Natives?

“Subsistence” is the term most often used to describe a way of life that Alaska’s Native peoples have lived for thousands of years (and the way all cultures lived prior to the development of agriculture). It is a way of life in which everything—the economy, people’s relationships to one another, philosophy, spirituality, science, technology, health care, artistic expression, education, jokes, ideas about gender and sexuality, entertainment, the creation of tools and shelter and clothing—everything!—is intimately tied to the land and the waters upon which the people depend for sustenance.

The subsistence activities of hunting (both land and sea mammals), fishing, berry-picking, and harvesting wild plants and shellfish not only allow Alaska Native families to feed and clothe their families, but also provide the center for their entire lives and communi-

ties. From “time immemorial” (as the Elders say), Alaska Native groups have provided for themselves directly from the land and sea, not through a cash economy, but through their own hard work and ingenuity. They traded for or created by hand all the things they needed to survive—parkas, boats, fishing nets, dwellings, footwear, eating utensils, blankets—in some of the harshest natural environments in the world.¹

It wasn’t until the 20th century, with the arrival of so many migrants to Alaska, that the cash economy, an exploding non-Native population, industrial technologies, and local, national, and international business interests began to seriously impact this age-old way of life.² Many Alaska Native communities have continued to adapt to their environment by integrating new technologies (snowmobiles, outboard motors) into their traditional

subsistence activities. Many survive by continuing to hunt and fish for their livelihoods while also trying to secure enough cash to afford the extremely costly fuel and foods that are now part of village life.³ The average Alaska Native per capita consumption of wild foods is 375 pounds per year—about one pound per day.⁴ According to a 1990 study by the Alaska Department of Labor, over 50 percent of rural Native households make less than \$20,000 per year.⁵ Many rural Alaska Native citizens depend upon wild foods to keep them from starvation. And sharing with others who cannot participate in subsistence activities—Elders, the ill, young children—is a central value of Native cultures. Others have been forced to give up subsistence activities in whole or in part and to migrate to Alaska’s urban centers in order to find jobs in the cash economy, a wrenching change. In recent times, more and more Alaska

"Our culture's real rich as far as whaling goes. There's so much respect for the bowhead whale. Basically, that's what our community's based around. What I've learned—what I grew up with and maintained—is sharing. You don't get the whale. It comes to you. That's what I've been taught."

Rex Rock

Native people are being born and raised entirely in urban settings without much exposure to the traditional subsistence ways of their parents or grandparents.

The Alaska Native subsistence way of life is central to individual and community health and well-being and to the viability of indigenous cultures. ⁶ Traditionally, Alaska Native peoples derive their food, nutrition, ethics and values of stewardship, languages, codes of conduct, stories, songs, dances, ceremonies, rites of passage, history, and sense of place and spirituality from the lands, waters, fish and wildlife they have depended on for millennia. Alaska Native communities would prefer much stronger legal protection for this way of life, and legal definitions that are not simplistically tied to economic or physical food needs. However, most of the Alaska Native leadership today believes that, given the mainstream ignorance of the importance and meaning of subsistence to Alaska Native peoples, they are unlikely to secure stronger definitions in Congress in the foreseeable future.

The government definitions of subsistence involve the use of, and access to, sources of wild foods. The Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) passed by Congress in 1980 includes federal recognition of a “rural preference” for subsistence hunting and fishing and provisions for rural priority to “subsistence resources in times of scarcity.” The use of the term “rural preference” rather than “Alaska Native preference” was an attempt



Clark James Mishler

Vera Spein at her fish camp near Kwethluk.

by Congress to skirt the potential legal issue of allocation of public resources to a specific ethnic group despite widespread acknowledgement that Alaska's Native peoples have depended upon, and continue to depend upon, fish, wildlife, and habitat in Alaska for at least ten thousand years.⁷ According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game: "Both Alaska Natives and non-Natives may hunt and fish for subsistence if they live in rural areas. Currently, more than half of the people who qualify for subsistence are non-Natives."⁸

Even given this broader language and the inclusion of non-Natives, certain sport and commercial hunting and fishing interests have consistently, and so far unsuccessfully, attempted legal challenges to the language. These groups hope to eliminate "rural preference," arguing that such language is either a disguise for an ethnic-based distribution of "public resources" or violates United States constitutional provisions for protection of "individuals."⁹ However, while commercial fisheries take nearly 97 percent of the total weight of fish and wildlife harvested in Alaska (roughly 2 billion pounds), rural subsistence activities account for only 45 million pounds, or just two percent. Sports fishing and hunting account for one percent of the total harvest (approximately 18 billion pounds).¹⁰

Given this tiny percentage of the harvest by Native and non-Native subsistence hunters combined, Alaska Native citizens have a difficult time understanding why these constituencies would try to deny protection for them to continue to feed their families and engage in the activities that are central to their physical, economic, cultural and spiritual well-being—activities without which Native cultural traditions will die.

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Why are the land and waters so important to Native cultures?

For nearly ten thousand years, Alaska's Native peoples have occupied much of the usable lands and waters (lakes, rivers, coastal areas) in Alaska. Given that these lands and waters were and are the sources of community, family, and individual sustenance, and the source of materials for their arts, crafts, and technologies, Alaska Native peoples understand that they would not exist as peoples, communities, and cultures without them. For these reasons, and for reasons related to spirituality and the Alaska Native cosmologies involving intimate connection with Creation, Alaska Native peoples have exercised wise stewardship and passed along their knowledge and wisdom about the land, waters, and wildlife to each new generation. The cultural practices and cosmologies of Alaska Native peoples were so successful that when Europeans first arrived in Alaska, they found the land and waters to be completely pristine, teeming with fish and wildlife.

The lands contain the habitat that provides berries, vegetation used for food and medicine, wood for lighting fires and for building materials, and wildlife critical to the viability of all Alaska Native cultures and communities. The waters are habitat for fish, fish eggs, ducks, sea vegetables, and marine mammals—all sources of food that provide sustenance for Alaska Native families—and provide the surface for long distance travel by boat (summer) or, in recent times, snowmachine (winter).

Land and water, combined with sunlight, are actually the source of all things used by all people on the planet to survive and thrive. Indigenous cultures are, perhaps, more highly aware of their importance than many other modern societies because they have lived directly from the land, water, and wildlife for tens of thousands of years, rather than engaging in agricultural or industrial economies.

"I come from a family of reindeer herders. Reindeer husbandry is all about balance between current needs (for food and sustenance) and future growth opportunities (for a larger herd beyond just personal needs). To be a successful reindeer herder, you need both. You need to eat, but you need to save some of your animals to grow your herd. In life and in business, we must be careful stewards of our resources and strive to achieve this balance."

Margaret L. Brown



Clark James Mishler

Gladys Johnson, formerly from Hooper Bay, spends many days in Anchorage's Arctic Valley filling her bucket (and her freezer) with the annual bounty of blueberries and blackberries.

What do the phrases “traditional ways of knowing” or “traditional knowledge and wisdom” mean?

“Traditional ways of knowing” and “traditional knowledge and wisdom” are western terms that have evolved out of a gradual awareness on the part of western scientists and researchers that Alaska’s Native peoples are experts about their environments and embody worldviews critical to the human future. To define these terms in the way Alaska Native cultures traditionally understand them would be to introduce the reader to a completely different way of perceiving and living in the world.

Because of a long history of ignorance and racism, the knowledge and wisdom derived from thousands of years of direct experience with, dependence upon, observation of, and interaction with the natural world by Alaska Native communities was historically ignored, dismissed, or marginalized. Over the past few decades, scientists and researchers in higher education and government have begun to recognize the value of the information, knowledge, and holistic worldview developed by Alaska Native cultures. Indeed, many of these western institutions have slowly begun to realize that some of the limitations of western approaches—such as a tendency to compartmentalize knowledge and expertise—can be ameliorated by Native approaches, and some of the cutting edge developments in western science—such as complex systems and chaos theory—have pre-existing parallels in Native ways of thinking.

Traditional knowledge and wisdom involves a qualitative understanding of 1) how cultures are sustained in extreme climates; 2) how, when, and where to access subsistence foods; 3) daily and seasonal weather patterns; 4) sustainable food harvesting techniques and strategies; 5) wildlife biology and behavior patterns; 6) how to adapt to climactic changes; 7) complex natural interrelationships; 8) abnormal natural phenomena in the context of long time periods; and 9) qualitative historical knowledge and information of the natural world.

Because their lives have depended on the natural world for at least ten thousand years, Alaska’s Native peoples have traditionally been trained to observe the subtlest changes in wildlife and environment, and are therefore often aware of trends and anomalies in their regions far in advance of the western scientific community. No other peoples in the world,

“A number of years ago a Native Elder was telling me something was happening. The ice was changing. The changes would have a tremendous impact on subsistence and on the way people lived. NOAA has spent millions of dollars to come to the same conclusion. It took time for science to catch up with what the Elders were telling us. We need to look more at the traditional knowledge embodied in our Elders.”

Nelson Angapak

and no science, can replicate what Alaska Native Elders and cultures know and understand about their immediate environments and the wildlife that breed in their areas. “Indigenous people...have their own classification systems and versions of meteorology, physics, chemistry, earth science, astronomy, botany, pharmacology, psychology (knowing one’s inner world), and the sacred.”¹¹ This traditional knowledge and wisdom is a highly sophisticated holistic science that evolved through methodical cultural processes of the transfer of knowledge and wisdom through hundreds of generations, learning and applying a holistic way of knowing, collective information sharing, traditional spirituality, and guidance from Elders.

It is important to note that Native Elders only use the term “traditional knowledge” in conjunction with the term “wisdom.” “traditional knowledge and wisdom.” From the perspective of the Elders, it is the accumulation of vast amounts of knowledge without a corresponding development of wisdom that has brought humanity to the brink of destruction. According to Elders, human beings strive for information and knowledge, when what is needed even more is wisdom—the willingness to delve into our own souls and put right what is askew in the human family. Environmental degradation, strife, and resource conflicts will not be solved unless these deeper issues are understood and addressed more profoundly.

How is climate change affecting Alaska’s Native communities?

As public policy-makers increasingly acknowledge, Alaska is at “ground zero” for the effects of climate change. However, few have acknowledged that Alaska’s Native peoples in rural communities are at the center of “ground zero.” The fates of fish, wildlife, and Alaska Native cultures and communities are intimately connected.

Today, sea ice in Alaskan waters arrives later, recedes earlier, and is thinner than ever recorded in human history. These conditions alone affect the survivability of all ice-dependent mammals such as seals, walrus, and polar bear, all of which are key sources of protein and fat which allow many Alaska Native communities to survive through the harsh northern winters. Changes in sea temperatures and weather systems have been confirmed as a primary factor in the catastrophic declines of Steller sea lions, northern fur seals, ducks, crabs, and fishes connected to the Bering Sea adjacent to southwestern Alaska. These species have provided basic dietary staples for Native peoples in that region for thousands of years. Migratory patterns of ducks, moose, reindeer, and caribou are dramatically changing, which

11) Burgess, Philip, *Traditional Knowledge: A Report Prepared for the Arctic Council Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat*. Copenhagen: Indigenous Peoples’ Secretariat, Arctic Council, 1999.

can result in hunger for families and communities as hunters often come home empty-handed.

Water levels in lakes, streams, and rivers all across Alaska are significantly changed. Alaska Native Elders fear that changing river water levels and the resulting increase in water temperatures will adversely affect salmon health and reproduction, once again having a huge negative impact on Native diets. Beaver are now proliferating in rivers throughout Alaska, perhaps due to changes in vegetation, causing more problems with river water levels due to the effects of beaver dams. Many animals are becoming food stressed due to changes in vegetation. Weather conditions are more unpredictable and more intense than ever in living memory, threatening hunter and traveler safety.

At least five Alaska Native communities in Northwestern Alaska are facing the potential destruction of their villages by erosion from storm-driven waves. These waves are higher than ever before due to increased storm intensities fueled by changes in the global climate. Historically, these villages were protected by sea ice that prevented encroachment of waves on the shorelines. Now, however, ice no longer protects them because it too has been impacted by rising global temperatures.

Scientific institutions and governmental policy-makers are responding to the emergencies experienced by these coastal communities. However, they have yet to proactively approach the challenge of protecting all rural Native communities—and the Native cultures which depend upon subsistence for physical, economic, cultural and spiritual survival—in a systematic, critical way. Alaska Native leaders call upon them to do so now, before it is too late.

“When you don’t hear the animals in the woods something is wrong. These are ...some of the changes that we have seen in Huslia, Alaska. In my community, fire has become less predictable. It gets too hot and too dry in our area now. There is little we can do under these conditions to protect the community. Fires blew through the buffers we have built around the community. Native Elders said it burned less severely before. The plants are confused now. Flowers bloom when they shouldn’t. There is no permafrost. In September, when we used to have snow, it now rains. There are higher river levels as well that have led to more erosion. We have to move our possessions far from the riverbank. To practice the subsistence way of life we rely on healthy salmon runs. For many years now these runs aren’t healthy. The water is too warm. We may have to make new fishing rules that work for all of us. Maybe we will have to look at agriculture. I can’t raise animals because these are my ancestors. Elders don’t want to move from the river. The natural cycles are out of place. We need to teach our children what is important. What are the climate change indicators to look at?”

Orville Huntington

Do some Native corporations support drilling, mining, and logging on their lands?

Editor's note: Land and resource issues can be highly charged in Alaska. This seemingly simple question is tied to a host of highly complex issues involving not only economic development but, more fundamentally, questions of governance—who gets to make decisions and exercise authority. In a departure from previous questions in this book, we have asked two individuals to describe their personal reactions to the question and provide a response from their own experiences. Both speak as individuals, not as representatives of an organization or for any other Native person; we encourage readers to explore other perspectives as well. Both essays make it clear that a responsible discussion of the issues raised by this question requires an understanding of the unique history, purpose, structure, and challenges of Alaska Native corporations.

One Response: A Broad Perspective

By Paul Ongtooguk

Paul Ongtooguk, an Inupiaq from Northwest Alaska, is Assistant Professor of Education at UAA. He is an educator who has also been involved in decision-making at the tribal (Kotzebue IRA) level.

Do Alaska Native corporations support mining, logging, and drilling? As an Alaska Native, when I hear this question, my first response is to brace myself for a difficult conversation. Frequently, those asking the question are non-Natives who are unfamiliar with the structure and economic missions of the Alaska Native regional corporations. Typically the questioner hopes that the answer is “No.”

However, the honest response to the question is simply to say, “Yes, some Alaska Native corporations do support mining, some support logging, and others support drilling for natural gas and oil.” That is an accurate answer and can be checked through any number of public records. Simply acknowledging that these activities occur is not a blank check of support for any and all activities, but a consideration of this kind of development.

For many, however, the answer to this question is already known, and the real intent behind the conversation is to try to determine why some Native corporations support these activities. At this point, the framework for the question matters as much as the question itself. Fundamentally and most directly, the answer relates to the economic mission of the Alaska

Native corporations. Considered more indirectly, however, the question is often framed from an ecological and conservationist perspective that tends to oppose mineral, subsurface, and other resource development anywhere in Alaska.

First, the direct answer. Alaska Native corporations are divided into for-profit and non-profit corporations. The non-profit corporations include Alaska Native health corporations, Heritage centers, and educational programs. They were designed by Alaska Native leaders and operate on behalf of Alaska Native tribal governments to combine their efforts and provide social, cultural, and educational services and programs for their tribal citizens. Other Alaska Native non-profit corporations have other goals and purposes.

Alaska Native for-profit corporations, created by an act of Congress through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971, hold a unique state-chartered status. The ANCSA corporations were chartered to select and take title to the lands kept by Alaska Native peoples under ANCSA and to receive and invest the money from other lands to which claims had been dropped. At the time they were formed, the village corporations had the option of becoming either for-profit or non-profit entities and, in an historic decision, all chose to become for-profit corporations.

This point, (little noted at the time) has had great consequence since. In brief, these for-profit corporations generate profits that are distributed to corporation shareholder-members. Economically, they function in a similar manner to other western corporations, and management and members are generally happy whenever money is made. Native corporations, however, are also distinct in that their history is cultural (rather than economic). Again in brief, the relationship of Native corporations to their history and culture means that they cannot be understood, analyzed, or explained in strictly economic terms; they are, rather, a complicated tangle of economics, cultural conservation, and history.

Now to consider the question from the more indirect perspective. The people who ask this question are, in my experience, almost always non-Natives whose vision of Alaska is that of a vast land that should be preserved in a natural (“wilderness”) state in perpetuity. To most of them, “wilderness” does not include human occupation or use. The questioners tend to be conservationists, opposed to mining, logging, or drilling in Alaska in general. Their view of Alaska Native peoples tends to be narrowed to their understanding of Natives as historically careful and judicious stewards of the land and they therefore believe that Alaska Native peoples are natural allies for the non-Native conservationist agenda. This view ignores, however, the realities of modern life that all segments of the Alaskan population face as they grapple with technology, economics, and quality of life issues. It also ignores the historical record which has left Alaska Native peoples amongst the poorest groups in the nation.

“ANCSA corporations currently control all remaining Alaska Native lands and are making enormous economic and social decisions that will affect the future of all Alaska Native lands, waters, and people.”

Paul Ongtooguk

I am assuming—perhaps generously—that most conservationists are not simply NIMBYs (Not In My Backyarders) on a statewide or even national scale. They don't mean that they endorse the use of the products of these activities (metals, wood products, fuel) while having someone else—perhaps in a third world country—live with the consequences. Instead they are expressing a concern about the manner or location in which a particular development project is occurring. In my opinion, any for-profit corporation with significant mineral or timber resources has a fair right to ask those who challenge them for examples of places or practices in which they have supported, or would be willing to support, a profitable development project. Normally the conversation gets pretty quiet at that point. Many conservationists fail to offer viable economic alternatives to current options, yet maintain lifestyles dependent upon the activities to which they object.

Some Alaska Native people ask versions of this question as well, but they are most often coming from a very different place than non-Native questioners. ANCSA corporations currently control all remaining Alaska Native lands and are making enormous economic and

“Those involved in Native issues wrestle with the huge challenge of how to help lift the economic boats of Alaska’s Native peoples while simultaneously protecting the cultures, lands, and waters of our peoples.”

Paul Ongtooguk

social decisions that will affect the future of all Alaska Native lands, waters, and people. Particularly, given that few Alaska Native people born after December 18, 1971 have a role in corporate decisions, we should raise the question of how to give all Alaska Native peoples a strong voice in those decisions. Who should have the final say about development, land use, and investments based on ANCSA lands and monies? Corporate Boards of Directors? Shareholders? Alaska Native citizens, including non-shareholders? Tribal governments?

I believe there needs to be a reliable way for revitalized regional tribal governments to have a role in overseeing and giving a broader voice for Alaska Native peoples regarding economic development decisions affecting our lands and futures. Tribal governments are imperfect vehicles, but regional tribal governments (as opposed to village governments, which tend to have too local a focus) could serve as an important counterbalance to corporate power when and if that counterbalance is required. When an ANCSA corporation proposes a new use for ANCSA lands and waters, the regional Alaska Native tribal governments should have an explicit responsibility to oversee a vote by enrolled Alaska Native citizens to determine the issue. I believe legislation should be introduced which requires that, whenever a corporation is proposing an economic development project that will have a significant impact on the lands and waters in a particular region, the shareholders and descendants of shareholders of that region should be given the opportunity to vote on the question.

There may be other, better, solutions. This is a vital question to address within the Alaska Native communities as we face together an uncertain future. What is clear to me is that the people for whom these lands and waters have been and continue to be homelands from time immemorial should have first say about how to protect this vital inheritance. Most of the problems we experience in our Alaska Native communities stem from the fact that we have not had and still do not have enough control over our own political, economic, cultural, and social destiny; I believe most of the answers to our challenges will come when large numbers of Alaska Native people are able to do more than offer commentary that is duly noted and then usually ignored with respect to the decisions that affect our lands and futures.

I am an Alaska Native and a shareholder in a corporation with a history of marginal management. To me, it seems desirable when a for-profit Native corporation tries to make a profit for its shareholders. Ideally, as with all corporations, it should do so within the limits of good stewardship of the earth. Corporate managers need to keep the well-being of the next generation as well as the next shareholder meeting in mind (not as common a practice as one would hope).

If this is what the questioners are trying to address, then Native people welcome them into the fray of the dilemmas faced by ANCSA corporations today. Those involved in Native issues wrestle with the huge challenge of how to help lift the economic boats of Alaska's Native peoples while simultaneously protecting the cultures, lands, and waters of our peoples. If the questioners are committed to both goals as well, we welcome the discussion. However, if they wish us to maintain pristine lands and waters without being equally concerned with our cultural, social, and economic well-being, it seems to me that they are asking us to do something unacceptable—to sacrifice our relationship to and use of our lands and waters on behalf of non-Natives who can, in the future, afford to fly in and enjoy what would then be our former homelands.

ANCSA corporations try to achieve both of these goals in the face of some unique conditions. Thrown into the mix of these goals is the relatively new nature of Native corporations in Alaska, and the continued lack of enough Alaska Native professionals at all levels of these organizations. (In part, this lack derives from the historical tendency of educators to view Alaska Native people merely as sources of unskilled or entry-level labor throughout most of the educational history of Alaska.) Consider, too, that some of the newly minted Alaska Native professionals may lack any sense of the history and nature of the unique role and purposes of these Native corporations. I am not aware of any MBA programs, including those here at the University of Alaska, that offer any real understanding of the structure, mission, or histories of Native corporations as a part of their programs. This is especially surprising given that ANCSA corporations have dramatically changed the economic landscape of Alaska. Toss in the fact that Alaska Native shareholders now make up less than half of the

Alaska Native people today and things become even more volatile, both socially and organizationally. Now try to make a profit. Given all these factors, it would seem irresponsible for ANCSA corporations not to consider mineral resources, oil, gas, and timber as potential sources of profit.

From my perspective, oil development on land has been far less harmful than oil development offshore. The major disasters concerning oil have been off the coasts of the world—Spain, South Africa, France, the Gulf of Mexico, California’s southern coast, and Ireland to name a few. Given that, I am surprised that conservationist efforts in Alaska have not been more focused on offshore oil production rather than proposals for development on land, especially the small fraction of lands owned by Alaska Natives. It would seem like an environmental bargain to trade offshore leases for limited onshore exploration and development. This position neatly offends both the oil companies and the conservationists—not an uncommon situation when your interests differ from both camps at times.

“The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was a giant act of compromise on the part of Alaska’s Native peoples; we had to make huge sacrifices of our lands in order to arrive at any kind of a settlement.”

Paul Ongtooguk

As an Alaska Native, I can offer a personal view on the question as well. Some see ANCSA corporation economic development projects as being at odds with the responsible stewardship of these lands. I agree that within the ANCSA corporations there is a built-in tension between profitability and stewardship goals and that sometimes some of the ANCSA corporations (like many non-Native corporations) have seemingly been driven more by short-term bonuses and quarterly profit reports than a “marathon awareness” that these ANCSA lands are also the last lands that future generations of Alaska Native people might inherit. In this regard, I share some of the conservationists’ concerns, as do many other Alaska Native people.

However, I am also reminded by history that many of the non-Native conservation organizations that commonly oppose ANCSA corporation resource development projects also opposed the Alaska Native effort to obtain title to some of our traditional lands through ANCSA. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was a giant act of compromise on the part of Alaska’s Native peoples; we had to make huge sacrifices of our lands in order to arrive at any kind of a settlement. The price of support from the major conservation organizations was section 17(d)2 of ANCSA. This provision promised that up to 85 million acres of Alaska would be considered for further protection as parks, preserves, refuges, etc. These lands had historically been Native lands. Native corporations were allowed to keep only 44 million acres. In effect, the much more powerful conservationist lobby won twice the land for its purposes than Alaska Native peoples did in our own land claims settlement. This fact comes to mind when conservationists criticize what Native corporations do to try to provide

economic benefits for their shareholders on the lands left to them, many of which are set aside for subsistence purposes.

Indeed, over the decade following the passage of ANCSA, conservationist organizations went on a "shopping spree" for additional lands, visiting many parts of Alaska normally considered home only by Alaska Native peoples. For a great snapshot of this time, if a sympathetic one for the conservationist, read John McPhee's bestselling book *Coming into the Country*. As it turns out, like many shoppers, the conservationists ended up wanting more than they had first thought they would, and so the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) was born—the step child of ANCSA. Among other things, ANILCA enlarged the amount of land set aside for protection, creating over 100 million acres of conservation lands. This act almost immediately turned many Alaska Native lands into "in-holdings"—surrounded by newly minted parks, monuments, etc. In fact, the term is misleading; if we consider who was here first, the ANILCA creations are actually "out-holdings."

What does all this have to do with the original question? I am hoping to provide a larger framework for a responsible discussion of ANCSA economic development activities. Over 300 million acres of Native lands were taken under ANCSA for which we received far less than fair market value. We also received title to less than half the amount of land that was set aside for conservation. These earlier generations of non-Native conservationists took much of our Alaska Native land and calmed their collective conscience far too easily with the rhetoric that taking our lands was justified because these lands were now being put to better use. This paternalistic attitude describes federal policy towards indigenous peoples in the United States in general and in Alaska. The larger question of ANCSA corporations and their rightful or wrong place in the future of Alaska Native people is beyond the scope of this essay. Whatever your position is about economic development on ANCSA lands, please keep in mind that unless you are an Alaska Native person you are talking about our last lands—not yours.

For further reading on this topic, I suggest the book *Alaska Native Land Claims* edited by Robert Arnold. Other materials can be found at www.alaskool.org, www.ANKN.org, and the many websites of Native organizations, mining and development associations, the various branches of the federal and state governments related to Alaska lands, and the conservation organizations. Grappling with these issues will sometimes be overwhelming, but then so is Alaska.

“Over 300 million acres of Native lands were taken under ANCSA for which we received far less than fair market value. We also received title to less than half the amount of land that was set aside for conservation.”

Paul Ongtooguk

Another Response: ANCSA and Economic Development

by Ilarion (Larry) Mercurieff

Ilarion (Larry) Mercurieff is an Aleut, born and raised on St. Paul Island, who has held a wide range of positions, including Deputy Director of the Alaska Native Science Commission, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development, city manager of the city of St. Paul, CEO of the Tanadgusix Corporation of St. Paul Island, and chairman of the board of the Aleut Corporation.

I believe there is one significant area in which the ANCSA corporate structure and profit mandate is completely inappropriate, at least in its present form—and that is as it applies to use and development of traditional use lands selected by the regional corporations under ANCSA.

Although under U.S. laws ANCSA corporations are structured as any modern day for-profit corporations, they differ in that the lands they selected include large areas that have been, and continue to be, traditionally used by Alaska Native peoples for subsistence camps, subsistence hunting and fishing, berry picking, gathering of herbs and medicines, ceremonial and burial grounds, and sacred sites. They also differ from non-Native corporations in that non-Native corporations purchase lands for the sole purpose of development in order to generate profits and have shareholders who buy shares purely as financial investments.

ANCSA corporation shareholders are Alaska Native peoples with historical and ancestral ties, going back thousands of years, to the lands and waters owned by their corporations. ANCSA shareholders with roots to ancestral and traditional use lands still depend on the natural conditions of their lands and waters for their sustenance, spirituality, cultural viability, nutrition, and individual and community well-being. It is through hunting, fishing, and gathering that young people learn about the ethics and values of their cultures, including sharing, cooperation, reciprocity, and respect for the land, fish, and wildlife. Traditional activities on the lands and waters help strengthen family bonds and nurture relationships to others engaged in similar activities.

Experientially, hunters, fishers, and gatherers develop an intimate relationship with the land and waters; they embed knowledge gained from this intimacy within their traditional languages. This relationship to the lands and waters makes the local language “alive” because it is place-based. These facts place a special and profound moral, ethical, and cultural obligation upon ANCSA corporations to protect the pristine nature of these lands for the perpetuation of the cultures, ways of life, and well-being of the people they represent. Corporate laws and U.S. accounting systems do not place any value on well-being, subsistence ways of life, and cultural survival, and so there is no place for such things when corporations calculate the

“bottom-line.” If such important values were included in these laws and accounting systems, ANCSA corporations would be considered some of the richest corporations in America.

These special obligations of ANCSA corporations places them, vis- a-vis American corporate laws, in a schizophrenic situation. When I served as CEO of a village corporation in the 1980’s, I searched for ways to protect and maintain traditionally valuable lands in their pristine state in perpetuity. Legal analysis showed that such action would be tantamount to “liquidating” corporate assets, and corporate laws (designed to protect shareholders) require the approval of a super majority of shareholders to take such action. As I discovered, the sad fact is that a significant number of the shareholders in most village or regional corporations no longer live on the lands or in the village that form the basis for their corporations. Of those who live in cities, many are struggling to survive economically and need cold hard cash. Such a situation makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to secure the approval of a super majority of shareholders.

Corporate laws create corporate responsibilities that can and do conflict with traditional, cultural, and social responsibilities. Because of corporate laws, any corporate asset can be taken by creditors if the corporation files for bankruptcy or is unable to pay creditors. Land, by definition, is an asset of ANCSA corporations. Any ANCSA corporate executive is fully aware that failure to create or maintain a solvent corporation could result not only in loss of traditionally valuable lands, but also in those lands ending up in the hands of creditors whose only concern is to recover losses from a bad debt or, worse yet, make profits off the lands. If the area lies within an organized borough under Alaska state laws, failure to pay taxes on the lands can also result in the lands being taken by the borough government. Furthermore, corporate laws are unequivocal in holding that boards of directors and chief executives are liable for any actions they take that are not in the “best interests” of the corporation. Such actions could result in being sued by any shareholder for “breach of fiduciary duty” or for not acting as any “reasonable” person would act under similar circumstances. By definition, under such laws, what is in the best interest of the corporation is profitability, among other things. Conceivably, failure to “develop” assets (even if the intent was to ensure cultural survival) could be construed as not acting in the best interests of the corporation, particularly if the corporation is, or is likely to be, struggling financially as a result. And the primary asset of most ANCSA corporations is their lands.

Given these scenarios, in conjunction with the primacy of American corporate laws, what can or should ANCSA corporations do when offered the prospect of making

“Corporate laws and U.S. accounting systems do not place any value on well-being, subsistence ways of life, and cultural survival, and so there is no place for such things when corporations calculate the ‘bottom-line.’ ”

Ilarion (Larry) Merculieff

millions or hundreds of millions of dollars by developing their lands for oil, gas, mining, and timber cutting? Well, we can just look around to see the results of the corporate profit paradigms operating around the world: the fouling of our air and water; the warming of our planet from greenhouse gases; acidification of the world's oceans; the commoditization of plants and drinking water; deforestation; depletion of the nutrients in soils; elimination of genetic variation in industrialized agriculture; destruction of habitat; extinction of plants and animals; destruction of indigenous cultures; and the exploitation of earth's bounty to the point that, for the first time in human history, the life-sustaining systems of our planet are threatened. According to scientists around the globe, this paradigm may well spell the end of civilization as we know it.

I maintain that ANCSA corporations can model another way—perhaps a better way—where businesses work with nature to generate profits, rather than exploiting the natural world while giving nothing in return. We Native peoples should not adopt the ways of greed and power that are killing life-sustaining systems worldwide. ANCSA corporations

“I maintain that ANCSA corporations can model another way—perhaps a better way—where businesses work with nature to generate profits, rather than exploiting the natural world while giving nothing in return.”

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should reject the destructive ways of western corporations and develop more culturally-compatible ways of making profits. Doing so is not an easy task, for ANCSA corporations or any other businesses. It requires thinking outside the box to find creative solutions, including changing laws that give corporations more powers than individuals and communities. When an individual or organization outside an ANCSA region criticizes an ANCSA corporation for what it is doing, the critics should also step forward to help these corporations find other options that are less destructive but still profitable.

As the former Commissioner of the (then) Alaska Department of Commerce and Economic Development, city manager of the city of St. Paul, CEO of the Tanadgusix Corporation of St. Paul Island, and chairman of the board of the Aleut Corporation, I am well aware of the economic and investment challenges and realities in rural Alaska.

Rural communities have a relatively small human resource base to draw on; financing institutions are reluctant to provide loans for rural investments because they are considered high risk; the cost of doing business in rural Alaska is inordinately high compared to that in Alaska's urban centers; the cost of transportation, fuel, and construction are considerably higher than in urban Alaska; and investment opportunities in remote parts of Alaska are scarce. Nevertheless, it is possible to tackle these daunting issues. To develop non-destructive investment opportunities requires real creativity and critical strategic thinking.

When I served as president and CEO of the village corporation of St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, we faced these challenges and more. St. Paul is 800 air miles west of Anchorage in the middle of the Bering Sea. It is accessible only by air, with supplies barged

in two or three times a year. The village corporation committed to its shareholders that it would not engage in activities that disrupted our way of life or the 1.2 million fur seals and 2.5 million seabirds that breed in the Pribilofs.

In order to live up to that commitment, we first conducted a visual “audit” of our cultural and other strengths through the use of video, utilizing the principle that we would focus our investments in areas in which we had strengths. With the help of two researchers, we completed a one-hour documentary on our cultural strengths and showed the first draft of this film to the community for review and approval. We then canvassed possible economic and investment activities that would utilize our cultural strengths. Prior to this time, our people had never engaged in private enterprise except to run coffee shops. As a result of this audit, however, we developed a small eco-tour operation, a restaurant and hotel, construction contracting, and a commercial day-boat fishery.

Two of the community strengths identified in our audit were our people and wildlife. We started the hotel and restaurant because our people are friendly and know how to cook for large groups of people because of experience with our own extended families. The eco-tour endeavor included the following requirements: all tourists had to participate in an island orientation program upon arrival; all tours were conducted by a local guide; no dogs or firearms were allowed on the island; and independent camping was prohibited to minimize disruption to wildlife and protect habitat. Tourists stayed at our hotel and ate at our restaurant. This eco-tour enterprise has been touted statewide as a rural success story.

Another of the community’s cultural strengths is that our people know how and where to fish for halibut in small boats. The commercial day-boat operation started with two small demonstration halibut longline boats. Within four years, we had a fleet of boats catching almost a million pounds of halibut annually; our catch per unit effort exceeded by a factor of four that of the highly experienced halibut schooners out of Seattle and Kodiak.

Using our newly-acquired experience in hotel and restaurant operations, we purchased a major hotel in Anchorage near the airport (now called the Anchorage West Coast International Inn) using favorable financing guarantees offered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The hotel has generated consistent profits every year of operation since it was purchased. We then pursued government funding for a port, contracted to provide various services, and leased land for fish and crab processing once the port was built. Since then, the corporation has succeeded in acquiring government contracts to test software for the military, and has become involved in several other innovative investments.

Given upcoming changes in the U.S. federal administration, regional and village corporations should position themselves to take advantage of likely new directions and priorities, particularly in areas involving “bringing our jobs back to America.” We are limited only by our creativity and imagination in terms of exploring viable and realistic opportunities.

- If U.S. airlines contract with people in India to handle airline reservations, and bankcard companies use employees in other countries to field customer service calls, what stops Alaska Native peoples from being competitive and securing those contracts?
- Federal government agencies are required to set aside five percent of their contractual budgets to contract with minority companies. Village and regional corporations can develop investment consortia to aggressively pursue those kinds of contracts, in addition to the military contracts many have already taken advantage of.
- Billions, perhaps trillions, of dollars will eventually be budgeted to support global warming and climate change technologies, research, habitat restoration, and trade. Regional corporations in partnership with village corporations, and village corporation investment consortia, must position themselves to be active participants in these new investment opportunities.
- Given that we are immediate neighbors to Russia and the Far East, why are there only six or so foreign trade zones in Alaska? When I served as city manager for St. Paul, we succeeded in getting a foreign trade zone designation for our community. If a small rural community in remote Alaska can secure such a designation (and there are only a little over 100 such zones in the entire U.S.) why can't rural regional hubs?
- Why should the multi-national tour companies control tourism in Alaska when Alaska Natives have the cultures and many of the pristine lands in which visitors are keenly interested?
- Given the financial strengths of our corporations today, what prevents us from developing world class strategic investment "think tanks" that engage some of the world's most forward-thinking, innovative visionaries to work with us?

Another area in which Alaska Native corporations could make profitable investments is alternative energy technologies. Rising power and fuel costs threaten the viability of many rural Alaska communities and cultures, as many people, especially the young and elderly, migrate to regional hubs and cities where the cost of living is more bearable. Remote villages have a critical need for business investments in alternative energy and energy efficiency technologies (and in making these technologies accessible to rural Alaskans). Technologies already exist to significantly improve the efficiency of trucks and power generators and could, with sufficient commitment and capitalization, be adapted to existing four wheelers and outboard motors. Use of wind power is expected to increase dramatically over the next decade. What better proving ground for wind power than Alaska's coastal and tundra communities? Native corporations could become leaders in such initiatives, simultaneously generating profits, lowering costs, and preserving cultures and communities.

I frequently note with pain the dearth of allies when it comes to helping Alaska Native people address ongoing high rates of poverty and exorbitant costs of living in much of rural Alaska, or supporting Alaska Native peoples in their fight to protect subsistence ways of

life before Congress, the state legislature, or the Boards of Fish and Game (all of which continue to allow more and more sports hunting and fishing in rural areas). The subsistence ways of life are integral to the health and well-being of all Alaska Native communities, and certainly integral to their economies.

I vividly recall arguing before the North Pacific Fishery Management Council that it should recognize and honor Alaska Native peoples' subsistence rights to take only one percent of the annual halibut harvest (the other 99 percent of the halibut catch is taken by sports and commercial fishers). One member of the Council argued that, one day, Alaska Natives might want another one percent of the overall catch for subsistence purposes; on that basis, he stated that if there was a need for an additional one percent at some future time, it would not be taken out of the allowance for his sports fishing constituents. That argument was made just six years ago. When this struggle was going on, only Alaska Native peoples argued for their subsistence rights. No other group came forward in support of this modest demand.

What I describe is, unfortunately, not an isolated incident. Many similar stories play out across the state each month. But if Alaska Native corporations try to do something to improve the lot of the people they represent by developing their lands, vocal critics tend to show up in force. I ask such groups to make a shift in their paradigms. Alaska Natives need not only opponents to some proposed developments, but also allies to create some better possibilities for their lives and futures. Environmental organizations and concerned citizens should propose real solutions and back up these solutions with real support. What else can ANCSA corporations do to lift Alaska Native peoples out of poverty while simultaneously protecting the lands and waters that are our lifeblood? We welcome your ideas.

ANCSA corporate leaders, likewise, must think outside the box to find ways to make profits while protecting the pristine nature of the lands they hold for their people. Because of the enormous responsibility ANCSA corporations carry to protect the subsistence ways of life of a majority of their shareholders, corporate policy should mandate that any time corporate leaders are considering major developments that may significantly alter the pristine nature of their land holdings, such proposals must be approved by a majority of shareholders (and their children and grandchildren of voting age) before acting. If the laws of our nation don't allow this action, we should change the laws.

Currently, if Alaska Native shareholders object to a particular economic development project on their lands, their only recourse involves voting out directors who took the action; this response, however, will always be after the fact, after the corporation is contrac-

“Tragically, the mandates of tribes and corporations are conflicted, guaranteeing that we politically fight our own people within a western paradigm in which only one side prevails. Using traditional ways and wisdom, we can show the world that there is a better way.”

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tually bound to the project. Even that response is limited, given that all boards, by law, have staggered terms. It would take two years for unhappy shareholders to vote out the majority of the directors with whom they disagree. Even then, average shareholders who seek change must be able, at great personal expense, to contact all shareholders and communicate in such a way that the message is not invalidated because it is deemed “misleading” according to corporate law. To do this requires a reasonable knowledge of corporate law and the ability to contact over two thousand shareholders (in the case of the smallest regional corporation) or over 20,000 shareholders (in the case of the largest). At best, replacing board members could prevent similar actions in the future, but such action would not stop what is being done in the present. As a result, it is incumbent upon executives of ANCSA corporations to apply much higher standards to their decisions about Alaska Native lands than what is provided for in U.S. corporate law.

Additionally, there are organized tribal or traditional governments and regional non-profit corporations in every area of Alaska with a mandate to protect the cultures and ways of life of their constituents. Given the constant threats to the viability of cultures throughout Alaska, profit corporations and tribes should ally with each other to protect the life-sustaining ways that allowed Alaska Native peoples to survive and thrive for thousands of years. The alternative is unthinkable. Loss of cultures and languages and diminishing populations of fish and wildlife will result in profound damage to the health and well-being of families and communities. Tragically, the mandates of tribes and corporations are conflicted, guaranteeing that we politically fight our own people within a western paradigm in which only one side prevails. Using traditional ways and wisdom, we can show the world that there is a better way.

ANCSA corporations, and indeed all corporations in industrialized society, should reject the destructive ways of western corporations and develop strategic plans and policies mandating that any development in which they engage must do no lasting harm to the earth or the ways of life of the majority of their shareholders. That is what our Alaska Native ancestors taught us and showed us how to do. We need to do this for all our people, for coming generations, and for the earth on which we depend.

If any corporations can do this, ANCSA corporations can. Our people have survived and thrived for millennia by ensuring that the lands, water, fish, and wildlife upon which all life depends also survived and thrived. This is the legacy of Alaska’s Native peoples.

READINGS

Please visit our web site at
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>
for a variety of supplemental readings

Online Readings

Subsistence

Alaska Federation of Natives, 2006 Federal Priorities, “Subsistence”

Alaska Natives Commission, *Final Report, Volume III*, “Alaska Native Subsistence”

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Angasan, Trefon. “Subsistence is What Connects You to the Land.”

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Attungana, Patrick. “Whale Hunting in Harmony.”

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Burwell, Mike. “Hunger Knows No Law: Seminal Native Protest and the Barrow Duck-In of 1961.” United States Department of the Interior, Mineral Management Service.

Paper presented to the 2004 Alaska Historical Society detailing the protest by Alaska Native people against federal control over their hunting rights, and, therefore, their lands and lives.

Burwell, Mike. “The 1976 Decline of the Western Arctic Caribou Herd: Contested Constructions of Ecological Knowledge,” 2006.

Research paper written for UAA Anthropology class which details the sources of tension between rural Native subsistence hunters and non-local game management decision-making entities and policies.

Mercurieff, Ilarion (Larry). “Heart of the Halibut.”

Essay by deputy director of the Alaska Native Science Commission, former Alaska commissioner of Commerce and Economic Development, and former chairman of the board of the Aleut Corporation describing his coming of age as an Aleut youth by internalizing the wisdom of his Elders for subsistence fishing for halibut.

Pingayaq, Teresa. “Girls Do Not Get Seal.”

Essay by student from Chevak enrolled in English 106 at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1973, describing the unusual occurrence of capturing a seal as a girl, since most girls did not hunt.

Climate Change

Cochran, Patricia. “Alaska Natives Left Out in the Cold.” BBC News, January 5, 2007.

Article by Inupiaq executive director of the Alaska Native Science Commission and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference arguing that inaction by government agencies is forcing Native communities to adapt to the rapid effects of climate change on their own.

Mustonen, Tero. *Stories of the Raven: Snowchange 2005 Conference Report.* Anchorage, Northern Forum, June 2006.

Report on conference held in Anchorage, Alaska to gather indigenous observations of effects of climate change in Alaska and identify necessary action steps. Published by the Northern Forum, a non-profit, international organization of subnational or regional governments from 10 northern countries.

Native Communities and Climate Change: Protecting Tribal Resources as Part of National Climate Policy. University of Colorado at Boulder Law School report, 2007.

Report describing the disproportionate effects of climate change on indigenous communities and the special problems faced by tribes as a result of these changes.

Indigenous Knowledge

Online course syllabi from the Center for Cross-Cultural Studies, UAF (www.uaf.edu/excs)

- Documenting Indigenous Knowledge
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Economic Development

Alaska Natives Commission Final Report, Volume II, Economic Issues and Rural Economic Development, 1998-2004.

Berger, Thomas R., *Village Journey: The Report of the Alaska Native Review Commission,* October 1985.

Ongtooguk, Paul, *ANCSA: What Political Process?* Alaska History and Cultural Studies Curriculum Project, Alaska Humanities Forum.

Hard Copy Readings

Subsistence

Blackman, Margaret. *Sadie Brower Neakok: An Inupiaq Woman*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1989.

Biography of Inupiaq magistrate and judge Sadie Neakok, who played a key role in the 1961 Barrow “Duck-in,” in which Alaska Native people resisted federal control over traditional hunting rights.

Recommended excerpts:

- Pages: ix-xi, (biographical details)
- Pages 180-186, “Barrow Duck-in and Subsistence Law”

Breinig, Jeane. “Alaska Haida Narratives: Maintaining Cultural Identity Through Subsistence.” In *Telling the Stories: Essays on American Indian Literatures and Cultures*, Malcolm A. Nelson and Elizabeth Hoffman Nelson, eds., Peter Lang Publishing, 2001.

Article analyzes the significance of Haida food gathering traditions to the people themselves.

Case, David S. and David A. Voluck. *Alaska Natives and American Laws*, 2d ed. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2002.

Major work on the legal status of Alaska Natives.

Recommended excerpt:

- Chapter 8, “Subsistence in Alaska.”

Gallagher, Hugh Gregory. *Etok: A Story of Eskimo Power*. St. Petersburg: Vandamere Press, 2001.

Biography of Charles Edwardson, Jr., political leader from the Arctic Slope of Alaska and one of the architects of ANCSA.

Recommended excerpt:

- Pages 106-123, Chapter 8, covers the mid-1960s in Barrow, with a discussion of Barrow’s famous “duck-in,” and the birth of North Slope Native Association.

Jones, Anore. *Nauriat Ni_iĩnaquuat Plants That We Eat*, Maniilaq Association, Kotzebue, Alaska, 1983.

Description of traditional plants used for food by Inupiaq peoples.

Recommended excerpts:

- Pages 66-70, “Berries” (Introductory overview to gathering and using berries).
- Pages 134-135, “Appendix F” (Warnings on safety concerns with gathering and using wild plants).

McClanahan, Alexandra J. “April 20, 1995-9th Circuit rules in Katie John’s favor.” *Anchorage Daily News*, April 25, 2004.

Article about Alaska Native victory in legal case about subsistence rights involving Athabascan Elders Katie John and Doris Charles of Mentasta.

McClanahan, Alexandra J. Subsistence priority prevails in election.” *Anchorage Daily News*. Nov. 2, 1982.

Article describing how Alaska voters defeated a ballot initiative which would have repealed the state's priority for subsistence taking of fish and game in times of shortage,

Merculieff, Ilarion (Larry). “Alaska Native Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Summit Final Report.” Anchorage: RurAL CAP, 2001.

Staton, Norman A. *National Treasure or A Stolen Heritage: Position Paper on the Administrative History of Glacier Bay National Park & Preserve With a Focus on Subsistence*. Juneau: Sealaska Corporation, 1999.

Recommended excerpt:

- Pages 4-7, “Foreword,” Robert W. Loescher Kaa Toosh Tú explains that the land now encompassed by Glacier Bay National Park belonged to the Tlingit people who used it for subsistence hunting and fishing and that they have been dispossessed.

Climate Change

Merculieff, Ilarion, (Larry). Alaska Native Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Summit Final Report. Anchorage: RurAL CAP, 2001.



Group portrait of Athabaskan Chiefs adorned with traditional garments, and ornaments, July 1915.
(L to R sitting) Chief Alexander of Tolovana, Chief Thomas of Nenana, Chief Evan of Koschakat, Chief Alexander William of Tanana. (L to R standing) Chief William of Tanana, Paul Williams of Tanana, Chief Charlie of Minto.

Tribal Government

Are there tribal governments in Alaska?

Are there reservations in Alaska?

Why are there no casinos in the state?

“When [in] 1971, the Native land claims [act] came into law we had a choice of whether to take the land or take the money. And the people very wisely took the land...We call ourselves a sovereign people. And that's the way it should be, because we have our own laws to follow that [have] been in existence before the white man law came into the village, came into the country. And we still follow that. That's a traditional law.”

Larry Williams

Are there tribal governments in Alaska?

Editor's note: Issues of tribal status, sovereignty, and jurisdiction are highly complex and in constant motion; they may be advanced, constrained, clarified, or otherwise changed with each new state and federal court ruling. We asked attorney Heather Kendall-Miller to provide brief responses to the three questions in this chapter. Ms. Kendall-Miller, an Athabascan, is senior staff attorney in the Native American Rights Fund Anchorage office. She argued the Alaska Native sovereignty rights case before the Supreme Court in 1997.

Yes. Alaska's tribes are recognized as sovereign governments with inherent jurisdiction over members and, in some limited cases, non-members as well. Recognition of tribal sovereignty acknowledges a tribe's right and power of self-government—attributes all tribes had prior to contact with European nations. Most of the powers of self-government are not bestowed by federal action; instead, court rulings have established that inherent powers of a limited sovereignty have never been extinguished.

Historically, however, the legal status of Alaska's tribes and tribal governments has often been unclear or in dispute. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 left two questions regarding tribal status unanswered: 1) Do federally recognized tribes exist here? 2) Do they have jurisdiction over members and non-members? That is, do tribes' inherent powers permit them to adopt rules and regulations that are binding on tribal members and non-members alike?

Alaska state courts generally resisted and tried to limit tribal status and power in Alaska, but federal courts tended to reach the opposite conclusion. In fact, a number of federal cases establish that the inclusion of Alaska Native groups on a Bureau of Indian Affairs listing of tribes nationwide amounts to recognition of inherent authority, entitling Alaska tribes to claim jurisdiction over their members in some legal matters, such as adoptions.

Federal recognition

In 1993, in the closing days of the first Bush Administration, an Opinion of the Solicitor issued by the Interior Department concluded that while tribes existed in Alaska, their territorial jurisdiction had been limited by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. A few months later, in the early days of the Clinton Administration, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) revisited the matter and produced a listing that identified 226 federally recognized tribes in Alaska. The BIA listing specifically noted that Alaska Native tribes enjoy the same tribal status as tribes in the lower 48 states.

Congressional review of the listing resulted in the *Federally Recognized Indian Tribes List Act of 1994*, action that ratified the 1993 listing and effectively endorsed the

inclusion of Alaska Native tribes. Under the Tlingit and Haida Clarification Act, Congress also directed the listing of those two Alaska Native groups omitted in 1993.

Inclusion on the BIA listing is important not only to support claims of inherent powers but also to secure federal services reserved for tribes. The 1994 *List Act* authorized the Indian Affairs Secretary to acknowledge Native American peoples as “tribes” and to annually publish a listing of all such federally recognized entities. The term “Indian tribe” is defined in the Act to mean “any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe.” It is this backdrop of federal recognition that informs Alaska state courts as they consider matters of inherent powers, sometimes called Native tribal sovereignty.

The Alaska Supreme Court in 1999 acknowledged federal recognition of Alaska tribes in a subsistence fishing case brought by Katie John, an Athabascan Elder from Mentasta in the Copper Valley north of Valdez. Among key findings was an acknowledgment that Alaska Native tribes have jurisdiction concurrent with Alaska’s state courts over the internal domestic relations of tribal members, even in the absence of federally designated “Indian country.”

Are there reservations in Alaska?

Yes, but only one. Nearly all Alaska Native reservations were abolished in 1971 under Section 9 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. An exception was made for the reservation of Metlakatla in Southeast Alaska. Metlakatla is the only reservation in Alaska today.

After ANCSA, the question still remained: Do former ANCSA lands belonging to a tribe constitute “Indian Country?” Indian Country is the legal term for an area where tribes have specific jurisdiction in matters like policing or regulating alcohol sales. The designation is important because an area deemed Indian Country can be considered as a “dependent Indian community,” afforded certain protections under the federal government.

A 1996 United States Supreme Court decision effectively foreclosed the existence of Indian Country in Alaska in most instances. In the case involving the Interior village of Venetie, the court held that two

A Brief History

In 1871, four years after the purchase of Alaska, the federal government developed a policy to stop creating both treaties and reservations and hence “Indian Country.” An exception was made in 1891 with a Congressional Act to create the reservation of Metlakatla. In 1936, an amendment to the Indian Reorganization Act allowed for the formation of Alaskan “reserves” (as distinct from “reservations”) that did not have the “Indian Country” status. The amendment also allowed the half dozen groups that had formed such reserves rights to tribal land. In 1971, ANCSA extinguished aboriginal rights, including the right to create reservations. As a result of these laws, only one entity in Alaska (Metlakatla) has the regulatory jurisdiction over community affairs that comes with the legal status of reservations.

Dr. Phyllis Fast

essential characteristics of a dependent Indian community are that land be set aside for the use of Indians, and that the land—not merely the tribe—be under the superintendence of the federal government. The court concluded that Venetie’s lands were neither “validly set apart for the use of Indians as such” nor under the superintendence of the federal government. The ruling did not affect Metlakatla, a few parcels of trust land in Southeast, and restricted Native land in the form of Alaska Native allotments and townsites.

In sum, Alaska’s tribes possess inherent jurisdiction over their members, but regulatory jurisdiction over non-members has been limited by the *Venetie* case which held that very little Indian country exists in Alaska post-ANCSA.

Why are there no casinos in the state?

If you’ve heard of Indian-owned casinos in the lower 48 states, you may have wondered why Native-run casinos don’t exist in Alaska. There are two main reasons.

First, to build and run a casino, a Native tribe must own land the federal government designates as within “Indian Country,” a legal term referring to land governed by a sovereign tribe but subject to the superintendence of the federal government. In Alaska, only one tribe currently meets this requirement: Metlakatla in Southeast Alaska. Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (see ANCSA section), all other Native lands—including Native corporation lands—have the same status as private lands, those “fee simple” tracts owned by any Alaska resident or corporation. Native corporations own their lands outright; unlike reservation lands in the lower 48 states, they are not under the superintendence of the federal government. Following the 1996 *Venetie* decision, these Native-owned lands are not considered Indian Country and therefore can’t be used for casinos.

The second reason is less complicated: Indian-owned casinos can only operate in states that allow gambling. Currently, Alaska doesn’t permit gambling except for limited gaming by non-profit organizations on behalf of charitable causes. Alaska Native non-profits can, therefore, obtain permits for bingo and pull tabs under certain conditions. But casinos remain prohibited under state law.

The question of whether to revise Alaska’s gambling prohibitions surfaces every few years, especially as Indian-run casinos in the lower 48 states have become proven money-makers. Some Alaska Native people join other voters who believe that Indian-run casinos generate income necessary for tribal welfare, like funding scholarships or home building. Still others say that gambling should remain outlawed because it damages families and fuels other addictions.

If Alaska cleared the way for Native-run casinos, how would you weigh in?

READINGS

Please visit our web site at
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>
for a variety of supplemental readings

Online Readings

Achieving Alaska Native Self-Governance: Towards Implementation of the Alaska Natives Commission Report. May 1999, The Economics Resource Group and the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage.

Report addressing such questions as: Can Native self-governance do a better job of dealing with Native problems than non-Native efforts have done? What should be the extent of such governance? What forms should it take?

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Essay by Alaska Native Heritage Center's Alutiiq cultural ambassador.

Cornell, Stephen and Joseph P. Kalt. "Alaska Native Self-Government and Service Delivery: What Works?" Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, 2003.

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Alaska Natives were legally prevented from establishing mining claims under the terms of the mining act. As this photograph indicates, there were other barriers preventing or discouraging Alaska Natives from participating in the establishment of the social and economic structures of modern Alaska.

Effects of Colonialism

Why do we hear so much about high rates of alcoholism, suicide, and violence in many Alaska Native communities?

What is the Indian Child Welfare Act?

“The children that were brought to the Eklutna Vocational School were expected to learn the English language. They were not allowed to speak their own language even among themselves.”

Alberta Stephan

Why do we hear so much about high rates of alcoholism, suicide, and violence in many Alaska Native communities?

Like virtually all Northern societies, Alaska suffers from high rates of alcoholism, violence, and suicide in all sectors of its population, regardless of social class or ethnicity. Society as a whole in the United States has long wrestled with problems of alcoholism. As historian Michael Kimmel observes, "...by today's standards, American men of the early national period were hopeless sots...Alcohol was a way of life; even the founding fathers drank heavily...Alcohol was such an accepted part of American life that in 1829 the secretary of war estimated that three quarters of the nation's laborers drank daily at least 4 ounces of distilled spirits." ¹

Many scholars have speculated that economic anxiety and social disconnection fueled this tendency towards alcoholic overuse in non-Native men of the early American nation. Non-Native explorers and traders brought alcohol to indigenous Alaskan communities, one aspect of colonialism. Higher rates of alcohol and other forms of substance abuse are tied with higher rates of violence in every sector of society.

Alaska's indigenous peoples have experienced colonialism at the hands of the Spanish, British, Russian (1741-1800s), and United States governments (1800s on). The terms "colonialism" and "imperialism" refer to the expansion of a nation's powers of governance over lands, cultures, and peoples outside its own national borders, thereby displacing and/or directly dominating the indigenous peoples. With colonialism, populations from the conquering nation generally settle in the new lands; with imperialism, the domination may be through political, economic, and military control alone. In either case, the lands, economies, natural resources, labor, and, often, the religious, spiritual, educational, and linguistic systems of the colonized people suffer major disruptions. Although colonizing forces may bring some positive influences, the overall effect is to displace, if not extinguish, pre-existing cultures and societies. Being forced to give up an entire way of life and adapt to a new one often results in self-destructive or destructive behaviors, as communities and individuals cope with the losses and disempowerment that attend colonization.

Alaska Native citizens now experience higher rates of substance abuse and violence (whether directed at others or at themselves, as in suicide) than do non-Natives. Researchers have attributed the high rates of these problems to several factors, mostly related to the impact of colonialism. A few are discussed below.

First, as Harold Napoleon's book *Yuuyaraq* details, the epidemics of smallpox, tuberculosis, and influenza sparked by contact with non-Natives of European ancestry

1) Kimmel, Michael, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. Free Press, 1997, pages 47-48.

decimated vast proportions of Alaska's Native peoples across the state from the 1700s until the turn of the 20th century. According to Jared Diamond, Pulitzer prize-winning author of *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, people of European descent developed immunity to these and other diseases through thousands of years of contact with domesticated animals, while indigenous peoples did not, as there were so few animals in the Americas that were—or even could be—domesticated. As a result, diseases were able to spread through indigenous populations virtually unchecked. Alaska's Native communities have struggled for generations with the emotional and physical trauma these plagues left in their midst.

Second, due to the rapid influx of non-Natives, many Alaska Native cultures have experienced the loss or serious erosion of entire, integrated ways of life involving languages, economies, kinship structures, educational and spiritual practices, community cohesion, and creative expressions. Such dramatic change has stressed many individuals and communities almost to the breaking point. Only one or two generations ago, many rural Native communities were Elder-led, subsistence societies characterized by oral traditions, close-knit extended families, a communal view of the land, ancestral languages, and almost exclusively face-to-face interactions. Almost overnight, many villages have become dominated by TV, radio, telephones, computers, cash jobs, snowmobiles, the English language, private property, and youth culture. Deprived of the critical subsistence-provider role played by their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, and often lacking entry into the cash economy, many young Alaska Native males struggle with feelings of despair, grief, and anger. The suicide rate for young Alaska Native males is among the highest of any group in the nation.

Third, although many missionaries and educators worked respectfully with and on behalf of Native communities and cultures, others believed the success of their efforts depended upon the destruction of traditional ways. Thousands of Alaska Native youth were exported from their villages to boarding or mission schools far away from home. Although some benefited from the experience, the practice left emotional scars on many others, as Jim LaBelle's essay addresses (see Readings, Education section). To varying degrees, the price of a western education included severance of connection to family and culture as well as direct attacks upon traditional ways of life. Young people were sometimes physically punished for speaking their own languages or honoring their cultural traditions. The personal and cultural injuries and losses inflicted in such cases are still being healed. In addition, as recent media coverage has highlighted, a tragic piece of Alaska's history involves a minority of religious leaders serving in Native villages who perpetrated sexual and other forms of abuse against village children. The effects of this abuse then spread to future generations.

Fourth, some groups of Alaska Native peoples have experienced actual slavery and extreme economic exploitation and cultural violence at the hands of colonial powers. As the pieces by Torrey, Corbett, and Mercurieff describe, Russian enslavement of the Aleut peoples as workers in the fur seal harvest was replaced in the late 1800s by continuing exploitation

by the United States government after Russia sold Alaska to the U.S. In addition, the internment of the Aleuts during World War II resulted in death and dislocation for many villagers. (In 1988, at the direction of the United Nations, the U.S. government issued a formal apology to the Aleut and Japanese-American people interned during WWII.) Such traumas contribute to the high rates of alcoholism and suicide amongst Alaska's Native peoples, as individuals and communities try to cope with internalized intergenerational pain.

Sousan Abadian, Ph.D., discusses the "collective trauma" of indigenous and other peoples in a 2008 *Harvard Magazine* article:

The social and economic conditions we are seeing—the violence, suicide, addictions, endemic poverty, alcoholism—are to a large extent the symptoms of trauma...If you attack symptoms separately without attending to the underlying condition, other symptoms will show up. Right now, in many parts of the world, people are doing bits and pieces of what needs to be done to address poverty and violence. But because they come from particular specialties, few take an integrated approach, and almost no one also recognizes the incidence and the effects of trauma. Monetary assistance, housing, better schools, reforming political and legal institutions, are all essential for improving Native people's lives. But all these efforts will fall short if you aren't also channeling resources into addressing trauma. ²

Lastly, although the Anti-Discrimination Act was passed in 1945, discrimination against Alaska Native people (as well as other non-dominant groups) persists in subtle and not-so-subtle ways in modern society. Native people regularly report instances of mistreatment, ranging from long waits to receive service in business establishments to being on the receiving end of negative jokes and slurs to threats or incidents of physical or sexual violence. Such mistreatment contributes to the stresses that can fuel episodes of drinking or violence.

Researchers have speculated for years about the possibility of there being a genetic explanation for the higher rates of alcoholism amongst Native Alaskans and indigenous peoples of the "Lower 48" and Hawaii. To date, no conclusive evidence exists to confirm this theory.

Native communities and organizations have taken strong steps in recent decades to interrupt these painful cycles and help people recover from the effects of them. There are many resources for people who choose to break the cycles of addiction and violence or who need help to prevent suicide. Counseling resources at both universities are listed at the end of this volume.

2) Lambert, Craig, "Trails of Tears and Hope: 'Collective trauma' takes a ferocious toll on human societies—yet there are pathways to healing," in *Harvard Magazine*, March-April, 2008, pages 42-43.

What is the Indian Child Welfare Act?

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), a law passed by Congress in 1978, requires that Alaska Native or Native American tribes have jurisdiction in foster care or adoption placements involving children of Alaska Native or Native American ancestry. In such cases in state courts, the Native tribe of which that child is (or is eligible to be) a member determines where the child is placed. Prior to passage of ICWA, welfare agencies, private adoption agencies, and state courts were taking up to 25-35 percent of children of Indian ancestry out of their family homes and placing them in non-Native homes.

According to B.J. Jones, litigation director for Dakota Plains Legal Services, *Non-Indian judges and social workers—failing to appreciate traditional Indian child-rearing practices—perceived day-to-day life in the children’s Indian homes as contrary to the children’s best interests...in Minnesota, for example, an average of one of every four Indian children younger than age one was removed from his or her Indian home and adopted by a non-Indian couple. A number of these children were taken from their homes simply because a paternalistic state system failed to recognize traditional Indian culture and expected Indian families to conform to non-Indian ways.*³

With the passage of ICWA, Congress recognized that not only was this placement of so many Indian children in non-Indian homes deeply disruptive to the lives of the children taken from their families and cultures, but it was also a threat to the very viability of Native cultures. By enacting ICWA, Jones states, “Congress was acknowledging that no nation or culture can flourish if its youngest members are removed. The act was intended by Congress to protect the integrity of Indian tribes and ensure their future.”⁴

Non-Native families still can and do adopt Native children or take them into foster care. However, the existence of ICWA now makes it more likely that considerable effort will be made to ensure that fewer children lose contact with their families and cultures and that those who are placed in non-Native homes have a better chance of maintaining strong connections with their traditions and roots.

3-4) Jones, B.J. The Indian Child Welfare Act: The need for a separate law, <http://www.abanet.org/genpractice/magazine/1995/fall/indianchildwelfareact.html>

READINGS

Please visit our web site at
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>
for a variety of supplemental readings

Online Readings

Bissett, Hallie. "I am Alaska Native"

Recent UAA graduate and current MBA student, Dena'ina Athabascan Hallie Bissett discusses her struggle to understand her indigenous identity. She not only comes to terms with her culture, but also realizes how central it is to her life.

Burch, Ernest S. Jr. "The Inupiat and the Christianization of Arctic Alaska." *Etudes/Inuit/Studies* 18, nos. 1-2 (1994): 81-108.

"In 1890, when the first missions were established in Alaska north of Bering Strait, not a single Native in the region was a Christian. By 1910 Christianity was nearly universal." This paper by a Smithsonian Institute anthropologist documents the course of these changes and presents an explanation of why they occurred as they did.

Covenant Restriction drafted in 1948 in Anchorage

List of restrictions regarding property rights drafted in 1948 for Airport Heights subdivision in Anchorage, Alaska, including an article which excludes all non-whites from owning property in the area. Similar restrictions existed in many other areas of Alaska as well.

Jim Crow Laws Warranty Deed 1953

Warranty deed which outlines property ownership and dwelling rights for a tract in the Turnagain Heights Subdivision in Anchorage Alaska. Article 5 refused to allow ownership or dwelling to non-whites except in the case of servants employed by the owners.

Marston, Muktuk. "Beam in Thine Own Eye" in *Men of the Tundra: Alaska Eskimos at War*. New York: October House Inc. 1969, 1972.

Firsthand documentation of racial injustice and segregation in Nome, Alaska by major in the United States Army Air Corps and delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention.

McKinney, Debra. "Shari Huhndorf: Helping the Nation Find a Conscience."

Shari Huhndorf, Phd., (Yup'ik) is Associate Professor of English at the University of Oregon. This article discusses her book, which tells the story of Minuk who along with four other polar Eskimos were abducted by Robert Peary as "specimens" for scientific study in 1897.

Merculieff, Ilarion (Larry). "The Aleut Mouse that Roared, Parts I and II." Essays, 2003.

Personal recollections of Aleut deputy director of the Alaska Native Science Commission and former city manager of Saint Paul Island, Alaska, describing the extraordinary tensions and devastating social and economic effects brought on by the United States government's abandonment of St. Paul in 1983. The government pull-out came in response to demands from the animal rights movement and a weakened market for the fur seal pelts that had long been harvested by a captive Aleut work force. These two pieces tell the story of a remarkable 48 hours out of that tumultuous year.

Peter, Evon. "The Colonization of Alaska Natives."

Essay by the executive director of Native Movement and former chief of the Neetsaii Gwich'in people in Vashraii K'oo (Arctic Village).

Ulmer, Fran. Speech to the Alaska Legislature Honoring Elizabeth Peratrovich, 1992

Speech by then Representative (and now UAA Chancellor) Fran Ulmer honoring Tlingit civil rights activist, May, 1992.

See also articles under Education section.

Hard Copy Readings

Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. "A Recollection of Civil Rights Leader Elizabeth Peratrovich, 1911-1958," compiled by Central Council Employment and Training Division, Sharon Olsen, Division Manager, Wanda Culp, Researcher, August, 1991.

Detailed history of the struggle for civil rights for Alaska Native peoples led by Tlingit activist Elizabeth Peratrovich.

Corbett, Helen and Suzanne Swibold. "The Aleuts of the Pribilof Islands, Alaska," in *Endangered Peoples of the Arctic: Struggles to Survive and Thrive*, Milton M.R. Freeman, ed. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, London: 2000, pages 1-15.

Describes the unique case of cultural survival by the Aleut/Unangan people who only attained their full independence and United States citizenship in 1966.

Fenno, Mary, with Dean Kholhoff and Terry Dickey, eds. *Forced to Leave: WWII Detention of Alaskan Japanese Americans and Aleuts*, University of Alaska Museum. Fairbanks. Reprinted courtesy of the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner*.

Fienup-Riordan, Ann. "The Yupiit of Western Alaska," from *Endangered Peoples of the Arctic: Struggles to Survive and Thrive*, Milton M.R. Freeman, ed. Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, London: 2000.

Gallagher, Hugh Gregory. *Etok: A Story of Eskimo Power*. St. Petersburg, FL: Vandamere Press, 2001.

Biography of Charles Edwardson, Jr., political leader from the Arctic Slope of Alaska and one of the architects of ANCSA.

Recommended excerpts:

- Introduction and first three chapters.

Hope, Herb. "*Kiks.adi: Survival March of 1804*" from *Will the Time Ever Come? A Tlingit Sourcebook*, by Andrew Hope and Thomas Thorton. Anchorage: Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 2000.

Huhndorf, Shari M. *Going Native: Indians in the American Cultural Imagination*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Shari Hundorf, Ph.D., Yup'ik, is a Professor of English and Ethnic Studies at the University of Oregon. This former Anchorage resident analyzes systematic European American projections of their cultural values and psychological needs onto Native Americans, including Alaska Native people, with the attendant damaging effects.

Recommended excerpt:

- Pages 79-128, Chapter on Nanook and His Contemporaries.

Napoleon, Harold, with Eric Madsen, ed. *Yuuyaraq: The Way of the Human Being*. Anchorage: Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1986.

Describes the initial effects and continuing impact of the epidemics that afflicted Alaska Native people from the 1770s through the 1940s. Napoleon's premise is that this death on a massive scale wiped out the culture-bearers and left psychological and spiritual scars that continue today. Routes to healing are also discussed. This is a UAA/APU Book of the Year, 2008-09.

Oleksa, Michael. "Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich / Kaaxgal.aat; Roy Peratrovich, Sr. /Lk'uteen." In *Haa Kusteeyí, Our Culture: Tlingit Life Stories*, Nora Marks Dauenhauer and Richard Dauenhauer, eds., pages 525-544. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994.

Story of two Tlingit civil rights activists.

O'Neil, Dan. *The Firecracker Boys*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Excerpt from history of the how the federal government considered exploding a series of nuclear bombs south of Point Hope, Alaska and how the community stopped the project.

Torrey, Barbara Boyle. *Slaves of the Harvest: The Story of the Pribilof Aleuts*, St. Paul Island: Tanadgusix Corporation, 1978.

Story of the enslavement and exploitation of the Unungan (Aleut) people of the Pribilof Islands and Aleutian Chain first by the Russians and then by the United States government (until 1966) in search of profits from the seal harvest.

Znamenski, Andrei. *Through Orthodox Eyes: Russian Missionary Narratives of Travels to the Denai_na and Ahtna, 1850s-1930s.* Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2003.

Collection of translations of Russian missionary records that shed new light on the spread of Orthodox Christianity among the Athabascan-speaking peoples of the Cook Inlet, Iliamna, Lake Clark, Stony River, and Copper River areas.

Other Resources

Benson, Diane. *When my Spirit Raised its Hands*

One-woman play written and performed by Tlingit artist, writer, activist, and Congressional candidate Diane Benson about Tlingit civil rights leader Elizabeth Peratrovich, whose decisive speech before the Alaska Legislature in 1945 helped pass the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Lekanoff, Anatoly. Aleut Internment. Audio tape.

<http://www.alaskool.org/resources/audiovisual/StoriesOfOurPeople.Intro.htm#AleutInternment>

Recollections of an 11-year-old Aleut boy from the Pribilof Islands on the internment of the Aleut people during WWII.

McBride, Rhonda. *Consider This*, "Jim LaBelle, Native Boarding Schools," #135. VHS recording of Channel 7 KSKA program hosted by McBride.

Interview with UAA adjunct professor of Alaska Native Studies on his boarding school experience at the Wrangell Institute. 28 minutes.

McBride, Rhonda. *Wrangell Institute: Legacy of Shame.* Award-winning 3-part video series by KTUU Channel 2, 2003.

Details incidents of repeated sexual abuse at a remote Alaska boarding school. Includes interviews with former students and follows them back to the Wrangell Institute where they participate in a healing convocation sponsored by the Episcopal Archdioceses in Fairbanks.

Williams, Marla. "Aleut Story." Film, 2005.

http://www.aleutstory.tv/flm_main.html

Made-for-television film which documents the Aleut struggle for human and civil rights and the internment of Aleut citizens during World War II.



Michael Dimmeen

Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) students celebrate in front of their new building on UAA's Anchorage campus. The ANSEP program successfully integrates Alaska Native values into a higher education context. The University of Alaska has graduated 101 Alaska Native scientists and engineers since 2002.

Education and Healthcare

How are traditional Alaska Native ways of educating young people different from non-Native educational practices?

Is the dropout rate for Alaska Native high school and college students higher than rates for other students?

Why are some scholarships for Alaska Native students only?

Do Alaska Native people get “free” medical care?

"The health, housing, and other benefits that are conferred on the Alaska Natives as partial payment for the past takings of land are of importance not only to the Native community but to the economy of the state itself."

Roy M. Huhndorf

How are traditional Alaska Native ways of educating young people different from non-Native educational practices?

In all cultures, the ultimate purpose of an education is to ensure that each new generation is capable of surviving and contributing to society. The current western educational system prepares students to become productive citizens in a global market economy. Very different economies existed in Alaska Native communities prior to contact with Europeans and still exist today in much of rural Alaska. In these subsistence societies, different skills, attitudes, values, and information are prioritized within the indigenous educational process. People make their living directly from the land and water through hunting, fishing, gathering berries, grasses, roots, seeds, nuts, bird eggs, seaweed, and other materials and foodstuffs. Instead of working in an office for the money to purchase food, shelter, and the other necessities of life, people travel in boats, on foot, or, in recent times, on snow machines and all terrain vehicles to bring home the fish, wildlife, and plants that sustain them. During the summer, people gather food and prepare and store it for winter. In such economies, a highly “place-based” educational system has evolved.

People in subsistence economies need to be able to observe the local natural environment with extraordinary, disciplined attention, noticing overt and subtle changes in the winds, waters, clouds, temperature, wildlife behaviors, precipitation, and plant life. They must be able to experiment with and innovate in real-life situations and adapt quickly to changes in environmental conditions. An individual’s ability to accurately “read” and respond to the land and water and all its elements—and to place current observations within the context of previous seasons and cycles—may determine whether his or her family will eat that night or that season. The ability to quickly adapt to changing conditions on the tundra or the ocean may determine whether he or she will live or die. Humility and a recognition of and respect for the interdependence of all life forms and systems has been key to survival in some of the harshest environments on the planet and is at the heart of Alaska Native worldviews and traditional Native education.

Until relatively recently, Alaska Native cultures have been exclusively oral, rather than writing-based, cultures. Instead of relying on the written word to transfer information and worldviews to the next generation, indigenous Alaskans relied for thousands of years upon the stories of hunters, gatherers, and Elders to pass critical knowledge to youth. Storytelling played and still plays a vital role in passing along cumulative knowledge and wisdom about physical survival, spirituality, and individual and social well-being. Stories are told for many reasons. They provide important information about wildlife and weather, com-

municate the proper attitudes and actions required for a successful hunt, warn people against foolish behavior that could jeopardize their own survival or the survival of the group, caution against actions that create disharmony in the community, entertain people during long winter nights or at hunting and fishing camps, and convey cultural values. Information is communicated not only in words spoken, but in nonverbal gestures, intonation, and expressions as well. Children in Alaska Native cultures are taught to respect and honor their Elders not only as human beings, but also as repositories of generations of knowledge and wisdom critical to the survival of a whole way of life. “When an Elder dies,” they say, “a library burns.”

Accordingly, Alaska Native systems of educating young people differ markedly from dominant non-Native systems of education. Education is “place-based,” specific to the locale in which people live; much of it occurs outdoors. It takes place in real-life situations by means of experiential learning. Young people learn how to survive and live properly by observing and learning from the actions and behavior of their Elders and by something akin to apprenticeship under the tutelage of a more experienced relative or community member. They are encouraged to hone and utilize all their observational, intuitive, and sensory skills to succeed at hunting, fishing, and gathering, to survive on land and water, and to create harmony in interpersonal relationships. All lessons—whether about mathematics or linguistics, physics or philosophy—occur within the matrix of community relationships and the natural world and involve concordant responsibilities within those relationships. Little is abstract; learning is contextualized and rooted within the lives of the students and community. Adults are responsible for providing opportunities for young people to learn, and for providing guidance rather than rote instruction.

This system allows young people to learn as much as they can, in the manner they learn best, and to exercise their own judgment in the context of life and living. Many Alaska Native Elders call this the “way of the real human being,” providing the next generation with opportunities to learn how to live rather than teaching them how to make a living.

In Native ways of educating, the process of learning—the relationships and attitudes amongst and between the people involved—is considered as important as the content. Many Native educational processes do not involve direct verbal instruction or the correction of mistakes; instead, young people are expected to speak little, listen well, and watch closely, learning by imitating those around them with more experience and heeding the guidance conveyed in the stories, teasing, and talk of their Elders.

Research indicates that instructors in western universities and primary and secondary schools who tie course material to real-life situations, use examples from Alaska Native cultures, encourage small group activities and learning, develop personal relationships with their students, and allow students a range of ways of demonstrating mastery of material tend to be most effective with Alaska Native students. Research also indicates that what works well for Alaska Native students works well for most students from all backgrounds.

Is the dropout rate for Alaska Native high school and college students higher than rates for other students?

Yes, the retention and graduation rates for Alaska Native and American Indian students at universities in the United States are lower than any other student groups. Currently, for every 35,000 Alaska Native and American Indian students who complete the ninth grade, only one will earn a Ph.D. ¹ Nonetheless, efforts to make learning and living at UAA and APU more welcoming for Native students seem to be paying off, as retention rates have continued to improve over the last few years. Both universities have resources available to support Native students. A list of those resources is provided at the end of this volume.

Today many Alaska Native college students try to succeed within, or at least to hold onto, both ways of learning. They wish to succeed within the dominant culture and economy while also maintaining strong and deep connections with their cultures, families, and communities. This requires them to “walk in two worlds,” often a difficult task. The same attitudes

**"Dena'ina galeq qbegh qigheste
k'usht'a k'el qihlilnesh, qudiq'
q'u k'ech' qulyu...The Dena'ina
didn't have any books, and they
didn't read, but they had beliefs
of their own."**

Peter Kalifornsky

and behaviors that bring social and educational success in the Native world (e.g., watching closely and saying little) can make things difficult in the western system (where, for example, students are often rewarded for speaking up and penalized for staying silent).

Some Native Elders fear that students who participate in the dominant higher education system risk an atrophy of the skills and worldviews necessary in traditional Native cultures, as well as a loss of connection to village life. To attend a university, many Native students have to relocate to a densely populated urban setting with unfamiliar ways of relating. They also have to eat different foods and, at least temporarily, give up most subsistence activities. Combined with homesickness, personal or family

losses back in the villages, language struggles, and financial obstacles, these challenges can make succeeding within a university setting difficult. Urban dwellers may not understand the contrast experienced by Native students moving from small, tight-knit, village communities in which people have known each other for a lifetime to the relatively isolated experience of life in the city. This challenge is shared by non-Native students from rural Alaskan communities; however, the additional cultural differences experienced by many Alaska Native students can make things even tougher.

The troubled historical relationship between Alaska Native cultures and western systems of education also contributes to the challenges faced by many Alaska Native students. For generations, the United States government’s policy of forcibly trying to assimilate Native

1) Postsecondary institutions in the United States: Fall 2003 and degrees and other awards conferred: 2002-03. National Center for Education Statistics, 2005.

peoples into western society translated into school policies and practices actively hostile towards Native worldviews and students. Students were required to attend mission or boarding schools far from home where they were often punished harshly for speaking Native languages or participating in activities or customs from home. Whole generations of people suffered (and continue to suffer) the effects, which range from feelings of disconnection and isolation, to a loss of identity to alcoholism or even suicide. A deep mistrust of the educational institutions of the dominant culture is one of the legacies of those traumatic policies and practices.

Why are some scholarships for Alaska Native students only?

Many Alaska Native students who attend colleges, universities, and vocational institutions receive some form of scholarships. Some of the scholarships are from Alaska Native corporations, foundations, or tribal organizations. Most Native organizations are interested in encouraging education among their members and their descendants. Generally speaking, they do not offer scholarships to people who are not associated with the corporation or the tribe in some manner.

Alaska Native corporations are private business entities that were created under the auspices of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971. Section 2(b) of the act states that the settlement is to be accomplished “in conformity with the real economic and social needs of Natives.” It is this language that is often cited as the reason why Alaska Native corporations concern themselves not simply with bottom line profits, but with the social and economic needs of their shareholders. And it is for that reason that many of the corporations provide scholarships to their shareholders and descendants or provide funding to associated non-profit entities that in turn award scholarships.

Tribal entities often provide scholarship funding from federal grants specifically targeted to Alaska Native students. Because of the taking of land from indigenous peoples by the United States government in years past, a number of benefits have been negotiated through treaties or other agreements. These benefits have included health services, scholarship funding, and other social services.

It should be noted that virtually no Alaska Native students garner enough scholarship money to pay all their tuition, books, fees, and room and board. Most students consider themselves fortunate to receive \$500 to \$1,000 a semester in scholarships and still need to avail themselves of student loans and/or part-time employment in order to make ends meet during their college careers. Also, most scholarships have specific standards and guidelines that must be adhered to, such as maintaining a particular grade point average.

Do Alaska Native people get “free” medical care?

Along with questions about corporate dividends, this is perhaps the most commonly asked question about Alaska Native people by non-Natives who live in the state. A better understanding about the history of Alaska Native peoples and American Indians and their relationship with the federal government can clear up the confusion this question represents.

In essence, health care for indigenous peoples in the United States has been “pre-paid” through trades of land and resources owned by indigenous nations for basic services from the United States government. In its simplest sense, Alaska Native and American Indian health care today came from a series of government-to-government agreements (“treaties”)—essentially business deals—struck between the various tribes and the United States government over the last 200 years. Indigenous nations ceded their lands, and the resources on or under those lands, to the United States government in exchange for the protection of certain rights and the provision of certain services. Because they were the only groups whose lands were taken by the United States government, indigenous peoples are the only groups for which the United States must—by legal, contractual obligation—indefinitely provide health care services. Established in 1787, this relationship is based on Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution. The organizational vehicle for fulfilling this obligation is the Indian Health Service (IHS).

In the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, Congress stated that “from the time of European occupation and colonization through the 20th century, policies and practices of the United States caused and/or contributed to the severe health conditions of Indians.” For over 200 years, the federal government (Congress, Presidents, and courts) has acknowledged its responsibility as well as its legal obligations to indigenous peoples by passing enabling legislation and providing funding for health care for indigenous citizens. One of the latest pieces of legislation is the Indian Health Care Improvement Reauthorization Act, which has been stalled in Congress for nearly a decade.

The land acquired by the United States in these deals has yielded—and continues to yield—immeasurable value to the American people. Some is still owned and managed by the United States government (national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges), and is widely used for Americans’ business pursuits, such as logging and mining, as well as for recreation. Many of these lands were given or sold to private United States interests. This allowed individual Americans to profit from resources on those lands: by mining or drilling for precious minerals, coal, and oil; by farming (both small farms and agri-businesses); by paving for the roads and runways of commerce; and by building the thousands of towns and cities—and millions of homes—where Americans live and work.

In return for this land, the IHS serves as the principal federal health care provider and health advocate for Indian people, with a goal of raising their health status to the highest

possible level. The IHS currently provides health services to approximately 1.5 million Alaska Native and American Indian people from more than 557 federally recognized tribes in 35 states. Under Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (Titles I and III), tribes may choose to take specific program shares or to become totally self-governing. Title III self-governance tribes have total control over their health-related programs. Alaska tribes have taken over all contractible functions from the IHS, including all aspects of health care delivery to the Alaska Native people.

Two things should be noted about the health care received by Alaska Native citizens today.* First, the quality of health care received is often far from the “highest possible level”



The new Alaska Native Medical Center, located in Anchorage’s U-Med district near the UAA and APU campuses, was built in 2000 (top photo). It replaced the old hospital that formerly existed just east of downtown Anchorage (bottom photo).

David Freeman

UAA Archive and Special Collections, Robert Fortuine Papers

*On a separate topic, it should also be noted that the Alaska Native Medical Center submits claims to private insurance companies for services rendered for those Alaska Native people who have private insurance—in other words, when they can, Alaska Native people pay their own way, on top of their pre-paid health services.

goal espoused by the IHS. In spite of the best efforts of many medical providers, access to health care is often sporadic and difficult in the nearly 200 rural Alaska villages. Dental care is even scarcer; Alaska Native individuals suffer rates of dental decay two-and-a-half times higher than other Alaskans. More than one-third of rural Alaska schoolchildren have missed school due to dental pain. ² For much medical care, people must be flown into regional hospitals in Bethel, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Juneau, or Anchorage; for major medical care, they must come to Anchorage. When they do, long waiting times and lack of certain providers add to existing stresses. Currently, for example, there is only a single oncologist (cancer specialist) in Anchorage to address the needs of a rapidly expanding population of Alaska Native cancer patients. This situation exists in spite of the fact that cancer is the leading cause of death for Alaska Native people, whose rates of death by cancer are increasing at a much higher rate than other Alaskans. ³

Second, according to its own calculations, the U.S. government falls massively short of providing sufficient funding for the provision of even the most basic health services to Alaska Native and American Indian people. The Federal Disparities Index demonstrates that the Indian Health Service is funded at approximately 60 percent of the level needed to provide basic health care. That figure drops to 40 percent if a wider range of services covered by Medicaid or private insurance plans for other citizens are included, such as dental, optometry, home health, assisted living, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and rehabilitation treatments. More is spent per inmate in the federal prison system than is available for each American Indian and Alaska Native person for health care. ⁴

Why don't other groups in the United States have access to affordable health care? This second question is totally separate from the first. Indigenous citizens of the U.S. have access to health care because they "pre-paid" for it—not with dollar bills but with vast amounts of land that originally contained their homes, food, and the sources of their livelihood. The question of whether and how the United States should provide affordable health care to all other groups in the country (who did not trade land for such services) is a hugely important, but unrelated, question. Issues related to insurance, Medicare/Medicaid, health care costs, access, and disparities, can only be grappled with separately by getting involved in local, state and national political processes.

Response courtesy of Southcentral Foundation.

2) Rural Alaska's Dental Access Problem. Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. <http://www.anthc.org/cs/chs/dhs/upload/Access6-6-06sos5.0.pdf>

3) Cancer in Alaska Natives 1965-2003: A 35-Year Report. Office of Alaska Native Health Research, Alaska Native Epidemiology Center, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, January 2006. Pages 1-4 http://www.anthc.org/cs/chs/oanhr/upload/Cancer_Incidence_35-Year_Report.pdf.

Also, "Comprehensive Cancer Plan for the Alaska Native Tribal Health System, 2005-2010," Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Program, www.anthc.org, Page 45.

4) Personal Health Services Funding Disparities. Indian Health Service, January 2007. info.ihs.gov/Files/FundingDisparity-Jan2007.doc.

READINGS

Please visit our web site at
<http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year>
for a variety of supplemental readings

Online Readings

Education

Barnhardt, Ray, and Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley. “Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Alaska Native Ways of Knowing.” *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (2005): 8-23.

Article by Dr. Oscar Kawagley (born at Mamterilleq, now known as Bethel, Alaska) and Dr. Ray Barnhardt, two highly esteemed University of Alaska Fairbanks professors, which “seeks to extend our understandings of the learning processes within and at the intersection of diverse worldviews and knowledge systems” and to “move the role of Indigenous knowledge and learning from the margins to the center of educational research.”

Cotton, Stephen. “Alaska’s Molly Hootch Case: High Schools and the Village Voice.”

Documents the landmark court case in 1972 which provided for the establishment of a high school in 126 villages (unless people in the village decided against it), and effectively spelled the end of the regional boarding school program in which most Native students had to leave home to attend high school.

Dinwoodie, Dawn. “CIRI’s Native Pride Program.”

Program to help address Native dropout rate.

Haycox, Stephen. “Desegregation in Alaska’s Schools: Alaska Yesterday.”

Article by UAA Professor of History Stephen Haycox outlines the historical problems of segregation in Alaskan schools and the struggle toward integration. First published in the *Anchorage Times*, January 26, 1986.

Hirshberg, Diane and Suzanne Sharp. *Thirty Years Later: The Long-Term Effect of Boarding Schools on Alaska Natives and Their Communities*. Institute for Social and Economic Research, University of Alaska Anchorage, September 2005.

Research study that examines the positive and negative impacts of 61 Alaska Native individuals who attended boarding schools or boarding home programs between the late 1940’s and early 1980’s.

Hopson, Eben. "Inupiaq Education." Mayor, North Slope Borough, Barrow Alaska, 1975
Speech by Inupiaq leader Eben Hopson, chief architect of the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, about the need for the Inupiat to maintain control over the education of their children. The piece begins with an introduction by Doreen Spear, Hobson's granddaughter, who won the 2002 UAA Alaska Native Oratory Society declamation competition by performing her grandfather's speech.

Iluksik, Esther. "Oral Traditional Knowledge: Does it Belong in the Classroom?" *Sharing Our Pathways* 7, no. 3. (Summer 2002). <http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/SOP/SOPv7i3.pdf>

Kleinfeld, Judith, and Joseph Bloom. *A Long Way From Home: Effects of Public High Schools on Village Children Away from Home.* Center for Northern Educational Research and Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, University of Alaska, 1973.

Study of the discontinued state regional boarding programs for Alaska Native high school students which required most village students to attend school a long way from home.

LaBelle, Jim. "Boarding School Historical Trauma among Alaska's Native People."

Essay by UAA adjunct professor which examines the traumatic impacts of the Wrangell Institute Boarding School and the significant role the Episcopal Church of Alaska played in recognizing, implementing, and organizing a "Healing Convocation" for some of its parishioners. It also discusses the broader aspects of historical trauma among Alaska's indigenous people, beginning in the late 1880s and continuing through most of the 1900s. Topics include: the introduction of western illnesses and diseases, western education (boarding schools), and forced western Christianity. The author's personal experience informs the essay.

McClanahan, Alexandra J. "A Look Back in History: Clock is Ticking on Saving Jesse Lee Home." <http://jesseleehome.net/history>

Ongtooguk, Paul. "Aspects of Traditional Inupiat Education."

Discussion of some of the myths and realities of traditional Inupiaq education by UAA Assistant Professor of Education Paul Ongtooguk, an Inupiaq from Northwestern Alaska.

The Nelson Act.

This legislation created racially segregated schools in Alaska.

Health

Alaska Natives Commission. *Final Report, Volume III*, Native Tribal Government, Section II, Tribal Sovereignty and Federal Indian Law and Policy.

Other Web Sites of Interest

Education

Alaska Native Knowledge Network Curriculum Resources

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu>

Resources for compiling and exchanging information related to Alaska Native knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

Hard Copy Readings

Education

Barker, Robin. “Seeing Wisely, Crying Wolf: A Cautionary Tale on the Euro-Yup’ik Border.” In *When Our Words Return: Writing, Hearing and Remembering Oral Traditions of Alaska and the Yukon*, Edited by Phyllis Morrow and William Schneider, 79-97. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1995.

Blackjack, Ada and Billy Blackjack Johnson. papers in UAA Archives: Billy Blackjack Johnson (b. 1924). Papers; 1923, 1929, 1946, 1969-1986, 1990-1997.

Collection relating to various Alaskan Native organizations in which Billy B. Johnson was involved as well as papers related to his personal life, his mother Ada Blackjack Johnson, and the Jesse Lee Home, a Methodist orphanage and school, about which Johnson wrote a book. The Jesse Lee Home became home to many Alaska Native children “often sent there as a result of the ravages of epidemics of influenza and tuberculosis that hit villages for years throughout Alaska.”

Case, David S. and David A. Voluck. *Alaska Natives and American Laws*, 2d ed. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2002.

Major work on the legal status of Alaska Natives peoples.

Recommended excerpts:

- “Dual Systems of Education”
- “The White v. Califano Approach”

Dauenhauer, Richard. *Conflicting Visions in Alaskan Education Revisited*. Anchorage: Tlingit Readers, Inc., Alaska Native Knowledge Network, 1997.

Documents the life and work of two men, John Veniaminov and Sheldon Jackson, who had profound and differing influences on the history of education in Alaska and its impact on Alaska Native peoples and cultures.

Gooden, James R. “The New Teacher.” In “Miss Thompson’s Bigotry Really Hurt,” *Tundra Times*, July 26, 1989.

Piece written by James Gooden, Inupiaq from Kiana, Alaska, for a distance-delivered UAA writing class, which describes the author’s experiences at a Fairbanks elementary school in the late 1950s.

Okakok, Leona. “Education: A Lifelong Process.” In *Native Heritage: Personal Accounts by American Indians, 1790 to the Present*, edited by Arlene Hirschfelder. MacMillan, 1995.

Former deputy director of the North Slope Borough School District, Leona Okakok, an Inupiaq woman, discusses Inupiat educational philosophy in this excerpt from an article published in the *Harvard Education Review* in November 1989.

Health

Barry, Doug, and Libby Roderick. “Della Keats: Hands of a Healer.” *Alaska Woman Magazine*, 1982.

Profile of renowned Inupiaq healer who blended traditional Native and modern western healing practices.

Fortune, Robert. *Chills and Fevers: Health and Disease in the Early History of Alaska*. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1992.

History of Western diseases and medicine among Alaska Native peoples.



Clark James Mishler

Four generations of Cup'ik doll makers: Rosalie Paniyak (lower left), Ursula Paniyak-Irvin (upper left), Janice Tamang (upper right) and Jaderiane Paniyak (lower right), at the AFN Craft Fair, Anchorage

The Future

What does the future look like for Alaska Native communities and cultures?

Where do we go from here?

“Native people in every region of the state fundamentally desire more control over their lives. To the greatest extent possible, Native communities should have the power to address conflicts, educate children, and make decisions about their own lives themselves.”

Ilarion (Larry) Mercurieff

What does the future look like for Alaska Native communities and cultures?

Over the past several hundred years, and particularly in the last century, Alaska's Native communities and peoples have faced, adapted to, and survived an onslaught of change and challenge. Epidemics of flu and tuberculosis decimated Alaska's indigenous populations in the early 1800s and 1900s, wiping out as much as 60 percent of the population. Throughout the 20th century, the burgeoning non-Native population diminished Native visibility; Alaska Native people now represent 16 percent of the total state population, whereas in 1930, they constituted over half the state's population. The accelerated search for oil, minerals, timber, and fish; the increased presence of sports hunting and fishing interests; the impact of western religions and boarding schools; the selection of lands by the state; the encroachment of television, the internet, and other distance technologies into village life; majority rule laws and representation—all these factors and more have required Native peoples to adapt rapidly as traditional ways have been eroded and modern, non-Native forces have gained strength.

Challenges abound for the future. What does it mean to be Alaska Native in a world in which fewer and fewer Elders remember the old ways, speak their ancestral languages, and live fully subsistence-based lives, while more and more young people intermarry, move out of the villages, and adopt “western” values and lifestyles? Where are Native corporations headed? How will climate change continue to impact Native villages and the wildlife on which they depend? Can Alaska's legal, political, scientific, and educational leaders learn from the wisdom of Native Elders in terms of shaping the future? All this remains to be seen.

Some things are relatively certain. Climate change will profoundly and adversely affect all subsistence-based communities as sea ice, snow, and fresh and salt water levels change, riverbank erosion increases, fish and wildlife populations plummet or dramatically change their migratory patterns, storms intensify, and new species are introduced. Some areas will be more affected than others. Some villages will be forced to move to other locations if they can muster the financial and technical wherewithal to do so. Barge and air transportation costs are escalating, and essentials such as home heating fuel and groceries are becoming more costly. In response to skyrocketing petroleum-based fuels, and lacking alternatives, some smaller Native villages will either have to return to more basic means of survival, or simply disappear as their populations migrate to less expensive regional hubs or urban centers. It is likely several villages will band together to create new and larger communities. “Urban Natives” may not keep close ties to the lands, waters, and fish and wildlife; thus, cultural erosion may intensify.

As Alaska's non-Native population increases and more new people migrate to the state, Alaska Native voting power will continue to diminish, with several potential implica-



Clark James Mishler

Philip Blanchette and John Chase sing and beat traditional Yup'ik drums at a dedication ceremony at the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

tions. Alaska Native communities may not be able to prevent legislative and state administrative initiatives that are adverse to Alaska Native and rural Alaska interests. For example, the legislature may change laws to, in effect, force unincorporated boroughs to incorporate. Such an action would, in turn, result in taxation of lands, including lands originally selected for subsistence and other cultural (non-commercial) purposes. The state could create legislation that further emasculates tribal powers or promulgate laws and regulations increasingly hostile to Alaska Native subsistence rights; it could use state funds to lobby the federal government to change subsistence protection laws or legally challenge such laws in courts. Politicians may no longer court the Alaska Native constituency if it is no longer a potential “swing vote” in statewide elections, further diminishing Alaska Native influence in the political arena.

Yet, for millennia, Native communities and cultures have remained resilient and fought to protect the integrity of and a deep connection to the traditional ways of their ancestors. With the passage of the Alaska Native Land Claims Act in 1971, Alaska Native communities retained some of their lands and became major political and economic forces within the state and beyond. New movements for tribal sovereignty and community wellness have

spread statewide, blossoming in some regions more than others. Efforts to document and revitalize Native languages have sprung up throughout Alaska, as well as initiatives to ensure that Native Elders pass their knowledge and wisdom to new generations. Native artists blend traditional art forms with modern innovations to create exciting new works. Subsistence hunters, fishers, and gatherers are adapting new technologies to ancient practices. Young Native leaders are finding ways to take advantage of new opportunities while embodying Elders' values.

Whatever the case, the future will depend on the will, strength, and intentions of new generations of Alaska's Native peoples, and the degree of support they can muster from allies in the non-Native community. As always, in Alaska, it is clear that we shape our collective future by the decisions we make and the actions we take today.

Where do we go from here?

Editor's note: Although many Alaska Native people share common experiences and values, no one voice can speak for them all, as Alaska Native leaders have consistently expressed and as the varied viewpoints articulated in this book make abundantly clear. However, in an effort to leave readers with a clear picture of the kinds of steps that could be taken to ensure a more equitable future, we asked one of our contributors, Larry Mercurieff, to summarize a few highlights of what many in the Native communities have been working to achieve over several decades.

Where Do We Go From Here? One Vision for the Future

By Ilarion (Larry) Mercurieff

Although Alaska Native peoples and leaders have multiple visions for the future, I believe most of us agree that the following actions would greatly improve relations between Natives and non-Native people and move us towards a more culturally, socially and economically equitable and vibrant Alaska.

■ **Greater Local Control**

Native people in every region of the state fundamentally desire more control over their lives. Village life is vastly different from city life, and Native values are often at odds with non-Native values. Laws need to be modified so that non-Native city-based laws aren't applied inflexibly and insensitively to situations encountered in Native village life. To the greatest extent possible, Native communities should have the power to address conflicts, educate children, and make decisions about their own lives themselves. Where this is not possible, regulations should be designed to be fully sensitive to the need to protect the cultural integrity and subsistence ways of life of the people they regulate. Lacking such regulations, a village officer often has no choice but to arrest the elder who has taken a 3-foot halibut to feed himself or the elders (like those in Fairbanks arrested some time ago) who take a road-killed moose to use in a potlatch. There is no justice in such actions. There needs to be more room for local decision-making.

■ **More Equitable Allocation of Resources**

Both Native and non-Native rural citizens agree that rural Alaskans often get the short end of the stick when it comes to the allocation of state resources. For example, Alaskan cities tend to have highly trained and highly paid law enforcement officers, ensuring a high level of security for most citizens. In rural Alaska, communities are forced to rely on the services of Village Police and Safety Officers (VPSO's) who are often poorly paid and inadequately trained. In addition, there are often few Native people in these jobs, so non-Natives disproportionately exercise authority over Native citizens, a situation that contributes to tensions in the village. Allocating resources more equitably would result in higher levels of security and harmony in many rural Native communities.

■ **Educational Programs about Native Ways of Life**

Educational efforts that create a much more informed public about the important and significance of Alaska Native cultures would help make the public into more of an ally than an adversary when it comes to protecting subsistence ways of life and the integrity of Native cultures. Currently, many people—particularly new immigrants to Alaska—make decisions and form opinions about key issues in a virtual vacuum. A better understanding of who Native peoples are—our histories, our cultures, our values, our ways of life—could do much to create an environment in which we work together to ensure that all Alaskans—Native and non-Native—can peacefully co-exist.

■ True Partnerships in Decision-Making Bodies That Affect Our Lives

Native citizens deserve to be included as full partners at all levels of government decision-making and on all regulatory and other bodies that make decisions affecting Native communities and ways of life. Currently, Native people are most often consigned to “token” seats on advisory boards and commissions that have enormous impacts on our daily lives and our futures. This needs to change.

■ Greater Equity in Legal and Educational Systems

There is currently little in the Western legal system that recognizes and gives legal standing to communal approaches and structures, the basis for the traditional Native way of life. Instead, the legal system has an almost exclusively individualistic orientation. The result can be needless conflict. For example, Native hunters who obtain fish or game for an entire community have been cited for exceeding individual game limits. Recognition of communal structures within the legal system would permit Native people to live in a way that best supports their communities and honors their cultural values.

Similarly, our educational systems need to have more respect and support for Native ways of teaching, learning, and living. Native communities desire allies who will support local initiatives to restore or enhance cultural programs in village schools—not as “poor stepchildren” to the “mainstream” educational programs, but as fully equal, fully supported aspects of our school systems.

■ Environmental Justice

Like “people of color” elsewhere in the U.S., Alaska Native peoples tend to suffer a disproportionate impact from environmentally dangerous actions taken by governments at all levels. As just one example, many old contaminated military sites are located adjacent to Native villages and subsistence lands. More resources need to be devoted to help communities clean up these toxic sites and to recover from the negative impacts they have had on the local people, habitat, and wildlife. Great care needs to be taken to ensure that Native peoples and communities are fully involved and have sufficient resources to protect themselves as fully as possible from future effects of climate change, environmental toxins, and other health and environmental threats.

■ Support for Economic Survival and Development

Native communities—and the entire state—would be well-served if the general leadership and the public demonstrated a higher level of sensitivity to the harsh economic realities of much of rural Alaskan life and offered more assistance in dealing with the daunting issues facing rural communities struggling to survive economically. The entire state benefits when Native communities survive and thrive.

Clark James Mishler



Janie and Jonna Michel from Kwethluk.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Alaska Federation of Natives

www.nativefederation.org/

Statewide Native organization which seeks to promote the cultural, economic and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community.

Alaska Native Brotherhood/Alaska Native Sisterhood

http://www.anbgrandcamp.org/about_us.htm

Oldest Indian organization in the United States, formed in 1912 to promote and protect the interests of Alaska Native peoples.

Alaska Native Heritage Center

www.alaskanative.net/

Educational and cultural institution that provides workshops, demonstrations, indoor exhibits, and outdoor village sites.

Alaska Native Knowledge Network

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/>

Resources for compiling and exchanging information related to Alaska Native knowledge systems and ways of knowing.

Alaska Native Language Center

<http://www.uaf.edu/anlc/>

Center for the research and documentation of Alaska Native languages.

Alaska Native Science Commission

www.nativescience.org/

Clearinghouse, information base, and archive for research related to the Alaska Native community.

Alaska Native Youth Media Institute

http://www.knba.org/training/tc_anymi.php

Program offered through radio station KNBA in Anchorage to help Alaska Native students explore careers in the media.

Alaskool

www.alaskool.org/

Online materials about Alaska Native history, education, languages and cultures.

First Alaskans Institute

www.firstalaskans.org/

Non-profit working to advance Alaska Native peoples by means of community engagement, information and research, collaboration, a policy institute and leadership development.

Inuit Circumpolar Conference

www.inuitcircumpolar.com/

International non-governmental organization representing approximately 150,000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Chukotka in Russia.

Native American Rights Fund

www.narf.org/

Non-profit law firm dedicated to asserting and defending the rights of Indian tribes, organizations, and individuals nationwide. Has an Alaskan office.

University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Center for Cross-Cultural Studies Course Syllabi

www.uaf.edu/cxcs/syllabi.html

University-level course syllabi associated with educational policies, programs and practices in culturally diverse contexts, with an emphasis on Alaska Native, rural and distance education.

Alaska Native history timelines

The following timelines are good beginnings. We hope your research will help make them even more accurate and complete and will help identify other timelines.

Alaskool:

<http://www.alaskool.org/cgi-bin/java/interactive/timelineframe.html>

Commonwealth North: <http://www.commonwealthnorth.org/studygroup/timeline.html>

Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) Alaska's Digital Archives:

<http://vilda.alaska.edu/cdm4/timeline.pdf>

Cultural Sensitivity

Alaska Native Knowledge Network Curriculum Resources

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/curriculum/resources.html>

Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools

<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/publications/standards.html>

McIntosh, Peggy. “White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women’s Studies”, 1988, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, Massachusetts.

Seminal article on becoming aware of and responding to institutional racism.

Mica Pollock, ed. *Everyday Anti-Racism*. The New Press, 2008.

Recommended excerpt:

■ Chapter by Paul Ongtooguk and Claudia Dybdahl. Two UAA professors from the College of Education offer concrete, realistic strategies to combat racism in schools.

http://www.thenewpress.com/index.php?option=com_title&task=view_title&metaproductid=1366

Roderick Libby. *Steps Towards Creating Inclusive Adult Learning Environments: A Manual for Instructors and Facilitators*, 1999.

Research-based ideas for creating more inclusive learning environments for students of all ethnic backgrounds.

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Alaska Native Student Programs and Services

APU	Rural Alaska Native Adult Distance Education Program (RANA) http://rana.alaskapacific.edu 564-8222
	Alaska Native and Rural Outreach Program (ANROP)/Dept. of Residence Life 751-7452
	Alaska Native Oratory Society 786-6135 http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/native/aknos/
	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) 786-1860 http://www.ansep.uaa.alaska.edu/
UAA	Alaska Native Student Services 786-4000 http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/nss/
	Alaska Native Studies Department 786-6135 http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/native/
	Alaska Natives into Psychology (ANPsych) 786-6131 http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/anpsych/
	Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RANN) 786-4550 http://nursing.uaa.alaska.edu/rann/

General Counseling

APU	Counseling and Wellness Center 561-1266 Atwood Center Room 110 http://www.alaskapacific.edu/apucc
UAA	Student Health and Counseling Center 786-4040 Rasmuson Hall Room 116 http://www.uaa.alaska.edu/studenthealth/

SOURCES: QUOTATIONS

Identity, Language, and Culture

Boraas, Alan. in *Anchorage Daily News*, July 7, 2002

Buretta, Sheri. *Malrugni Yuuluni: Walking in Two Worlds With One Spirit. Alaska Native Corporations Annual Economic Report.* Association of ANCSA Regional Corporations Presidents/CEOs, 2005.

Fast, Phyllis. “Alaska Native Language, Culture and Identity.” Essay, 2008.

Swan, Clare. Cook Inlet Tribal Council Board Chair. In *Dena'ina: Nat'uh Our Special Place*, Alexandra McClanahan, Aaron Leggett, and Lydia L. Hays, eds. Anchorage: Cook Inlet Tribal Council, 2007.

Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and Corporations

Shively, John. “Alaska Native Corporations and Native Lands,” Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, pages 4-5.

Wright, Don. Testimony, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, April 29, 1971, page 475.

Subsistence and Relationship to Land, Waters, and Wildlife

Angapak, Nelson. Quoted in *Stories of the Raven: Snowchange 2005 Conference Report*, Tero Mustonen, ed.

Brown, Margaret L. President and CEO, Cook Inlet Region, Inc. (CIRI). In *Dena'ina: Nat'uh Our Special Place*, Alexandra McClanahan, Aaron Leggett, and Lydia L. Hays, eds. Anchorage: Cook Inlet Tribal Council, 2007.

Dinwoodie, Dawn. In *Growing Up Native in Alaska*, Alexandra J. McClanahan, Ed. Anchorage: The CIRI Foundation, 2000 (pages 253-271).

Hopson, Eben. Quoted in “Hunger Knows No Law” by Michael Burwell.

Huntington, Orville. Quoted in *Stories of the Raven: Snowchange 2005 Conference Report*, Tero Mustonen, ed. pages 14-15

Rock, Rex. In *Growing Up Native in Alaska*, Alexandra J. McClanahan, Ed. Anchorage: The CIRI Foundation, 2000 (pages 91-100).

Shively, John. Alaska Native Commission, Final Report, Volume III, October 28, 1991, page 11.

Stephan, Alberta. *The First Athabascans of Alaska: Strawberries.* Pittsburgh: Dorrance, 1996.

Tribal Government

Williams, Larry. In *Village Journey: The Report of the Alaska Native Review Commission* by Thomas R. Berger. New York: Hill & Wang, 1985.

Effects of Colonialism

Stephan, Alberta. *The First Athabascans of Alaska: Strawberries.* Pittsburgh: Dorrance, 1996.

Education and Healthcare

Huhndorf, Roy M. *Reflections on the Alaska Native Experience.* Anchorage: The CIRI Foundation, 1991, page 36.

Kalifornsky, Peter. *A Dena'ina Legacy: K'TI'egh'I Sukdu: The Collected Writings of Peter Kalifornsky.* Fairbanks, Alaska Native Language Center, 1991, page 73.

The Future

Merculieff, Ilarion (Larry). "Where Do We Go From Here? One Vision for the Future." Essay, 2008.

This book addresses some of the questions Alaska Native people are most frequently asked about their histories, their cultures, and the important issues that affect their lives today. The questions—and the answers—may surprise you. Do Alaska Native people get free medical care? No, they paid for it in advance. Are there reservations in Alaska? Yes, but only one. What is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act? It's either an historic act of self-determination or yet another step in a long history of forced assimilation—or a mix of both.

The responses and recommended readings were compiled by a group of Alaska-based individuals and scholars, including members of the Alaska Native community and professors from Alaska Pacific University and the University of Alaska Anchorage. Together, these resources provide a brief introduction to some complex and highly charged issues in Alaska today.

See our website for a selection of supplementary readings.

www.uaa.alaska.edu/books-of-the-year


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