

A Brief Timeline of Woody Island

By Gordon L. Pullar Jr.



Map of Alutiq villages



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6,740 Years Ago

- First known occupation of people on Woody Island based on archeological evidence found in 2008.
- Four periods of prehistory
 - Ocean Bay I
 - Ocean Bay II
 - Kachemak
 - Koniag



Photo by Gordon L. Pullar



Archeologist Rick Knecht on Woody Island in summer of 2008. Photo by Gordon L. Pullar

1761

- Russians arrive on Kodiak Island but are met with fierce resistance from Natives.

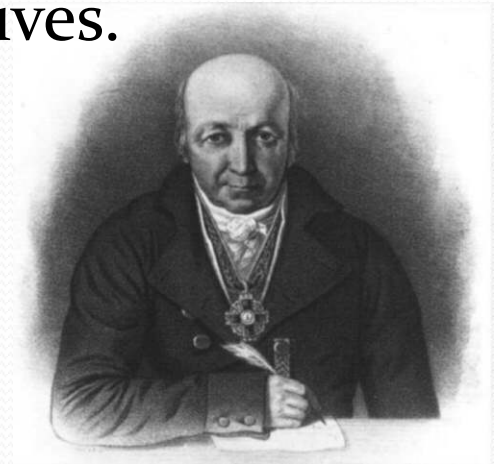


Painting by Mikhail Tikhanov. In Museum of Russian Academy of Arts.

1784

- Woody Island Village also known as Tangirnaq (“Ton-eek-nock”) was one of the first villages taken by the Russians.
- Russians were attracted to Woody Island because of easy access to spruce timber for boat building
- Shelikhov, then Baranov led the Russians in their fur trading efforts and atrocities against Natives.
- Refuge Rock

Alexander Baranov



Refuge Rock 1784

- Turning point for Russian-Native relations.
- Located near present day Old Harbor.
- 500-2000 Alutiiq people were killed on the rock as they sought shelter from the Russians.

Refuge Rock. Photo by Sven Haakanson Jr.

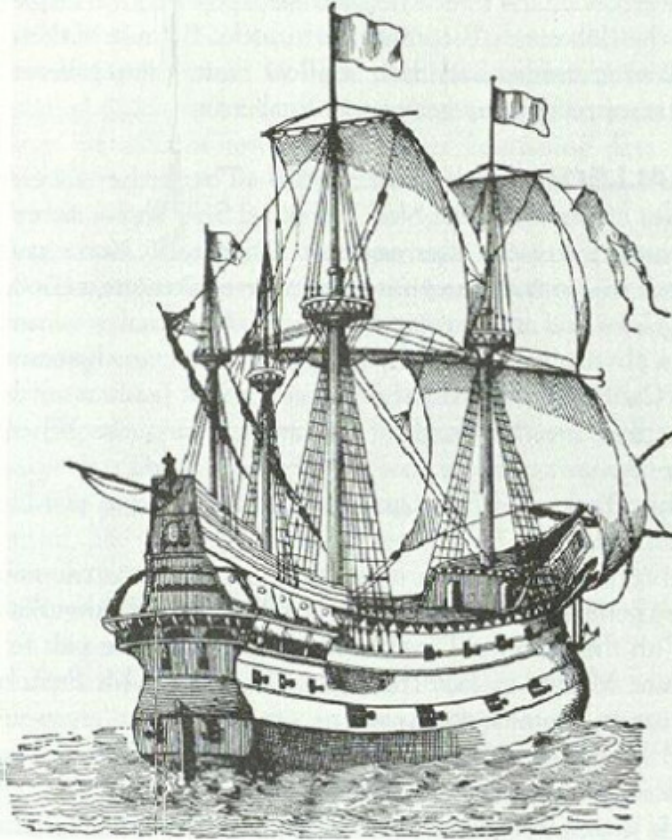


1784-1818

- Dark Period
- Russian fur traders commit many atrocities which causes the population to shrink nearly 90 percent.
- Czar of Russia replaces Alexander Baranov with a new manager of the Russian-America Company and ends atrocities.

1794-1795

- Russians build two wooden boats on Woody Island.



1818-1867

- Russian-America Company develops schools and hospitals for Alutiiqs in Kodiak area.
- Most Alutiiqs during this time became bilingual and bicultural adopting much of Russian culture.

1837-1840

- Smallpox pandemic
- Number of villages shrinks from 65 to seven.
- Woody Island is one of the seven villages that survivors were relocated to.

1850-1860s

- Woody Island Ice Company is developed by the Russian American Company and ships ice to California.



"THE BIG THING."

OLD MOTHER SEWARD. "I'll rub some of this on his sore spot: it may soothe him a little."

1867

- Seward's Folly
- Alaska purchased for \$7,200,000
- \$200,000 for Woody Island Ice Company.

1867-1930's

- American school system enforces English only policy even though many students speak only Alutiiq and Russian.

1891

- U.S. Post Office opens on Woody Island



1893

- Kodiak Baptist Mission is established on Woody Island which brings in Native children from a large geographic area.
- Children are required to speak English



Woody Island Tribal Council Collection

Baptist Mission



Children carrying wood at the Baptist Mission. Learn Collection.

- Children perform hard labor to provide food for the Baptist Mission.

1904

- A small group of Woody Island residents are invited to be part of the “Eskimo Village” display at the World’s Fair in St. Louis.

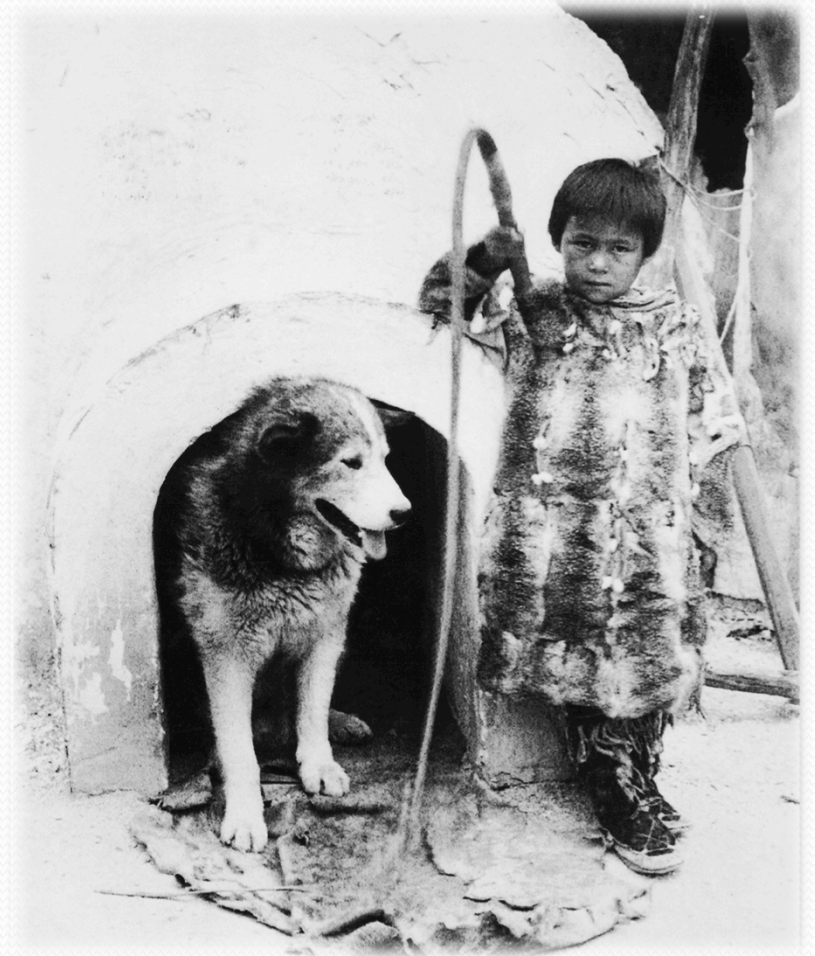


Photo by Charles H. Carpenter, Field Museum



Photo by Charles H. Carpenter
Field Museum

World's Fair in St. Louis.



Photo by Charles H. Carpenter
Field Museum

World's Fair in St. Louis.

•Famous Apache leader Geronimo was also on display at the 1904 Worlds Fair in St. Louis

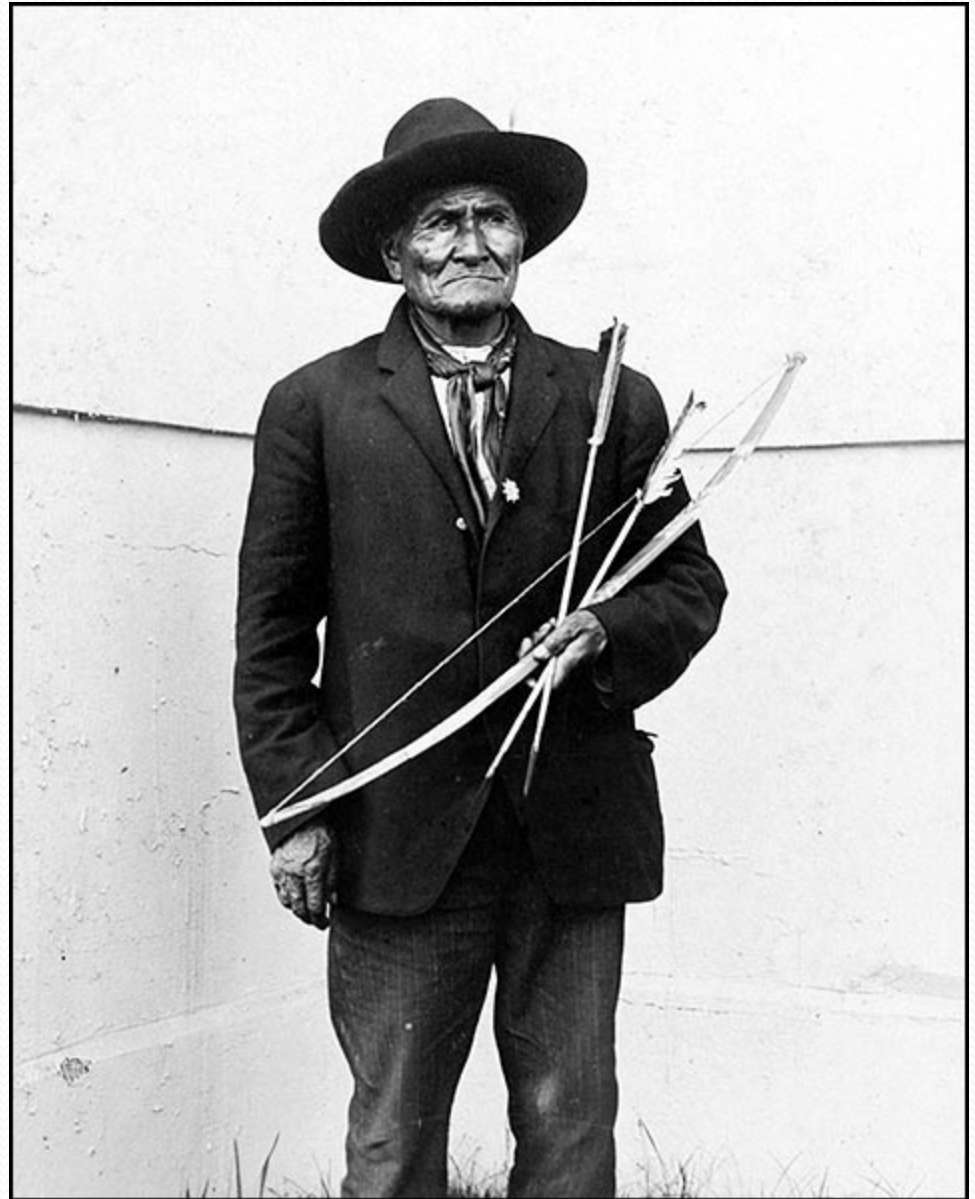


Photo by Charles H. Carpenter
Field Museum

1911

- A wireless radio facility is established by the U.S. Navy on Woody Island.



- The two towers become a landmark on the island.

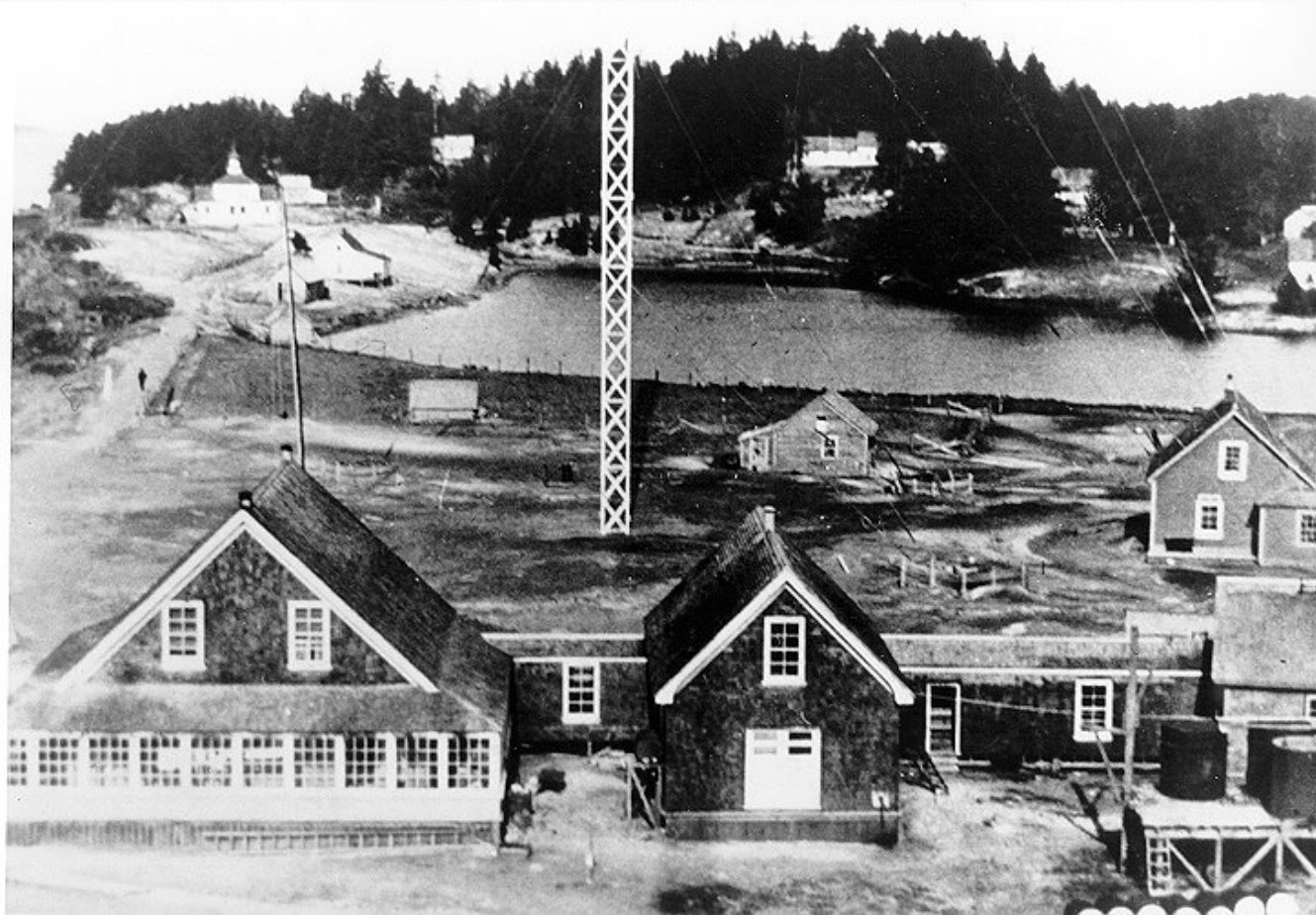
Navy Wireless Towers



University of Alaska Anchorage. Archives & Manuscripts Dept.

Photo from 1918 National Geographic Collection in UAA archives

Navy Wireless Station



U.S. Navy wireless station on Woody Island. Russian Orthodox Chapel visible top left. Pavloff Collection.

1912

- Lightening from the eruption of Mt. Novarupta volcano strikes the radio towers and causes them to burn down.



- Woody Island is covered in three feet of ash.
- The towers are rebuilt in 1914.

1918

- The influenza pandemic reaches Woody Island when new matron for the Baptist Orphanage comes to the village from Seattle.
- In the span of two weeks during November of 1918, 26 people die.
- The bodies are buried in a mass grave on the Island.

1931

- The Navy wireless station is decommissioned and one of the buildings becomes used for a territorial school called Longwood School (a combination of Long Island and Woody Island). People also refer to it as Woody Island School.



Longwood School, National Archives Photo

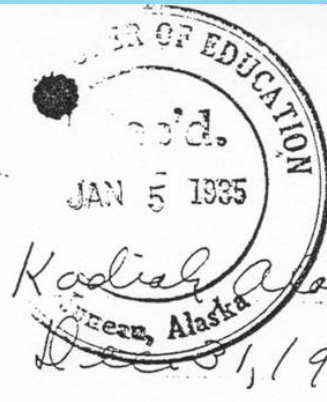
1935

- Olga Rossing is the first high school graduate of the Woody Island School



Photo of Olga Rossing. Pullar Collection.

1935



Mr. Anthony E. Karnes
Commissioner of Education
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Mr. Karnes:

We will have one high school graduate this year, Miss Olga Rossing. Does the Territory give diplomas for graduates from the outlying schools? If so, will you please order one for us

Very truly yours,
B. O. Boettcher

January 15, 1935.

1935

B.O. Boettcher,
Principal, Longwood School,
Kodiak, Alaska.

Dear Mr. Boettcher:

We have no high school diplomas at present, but are expecting to provide some for the graduates of our rural high schools this year. We are making note of the fact that the Longwood school will have one high school graduate, Miss Olga Rossing.

Very truly,

Secretary to the
Commissioner of Education

1937

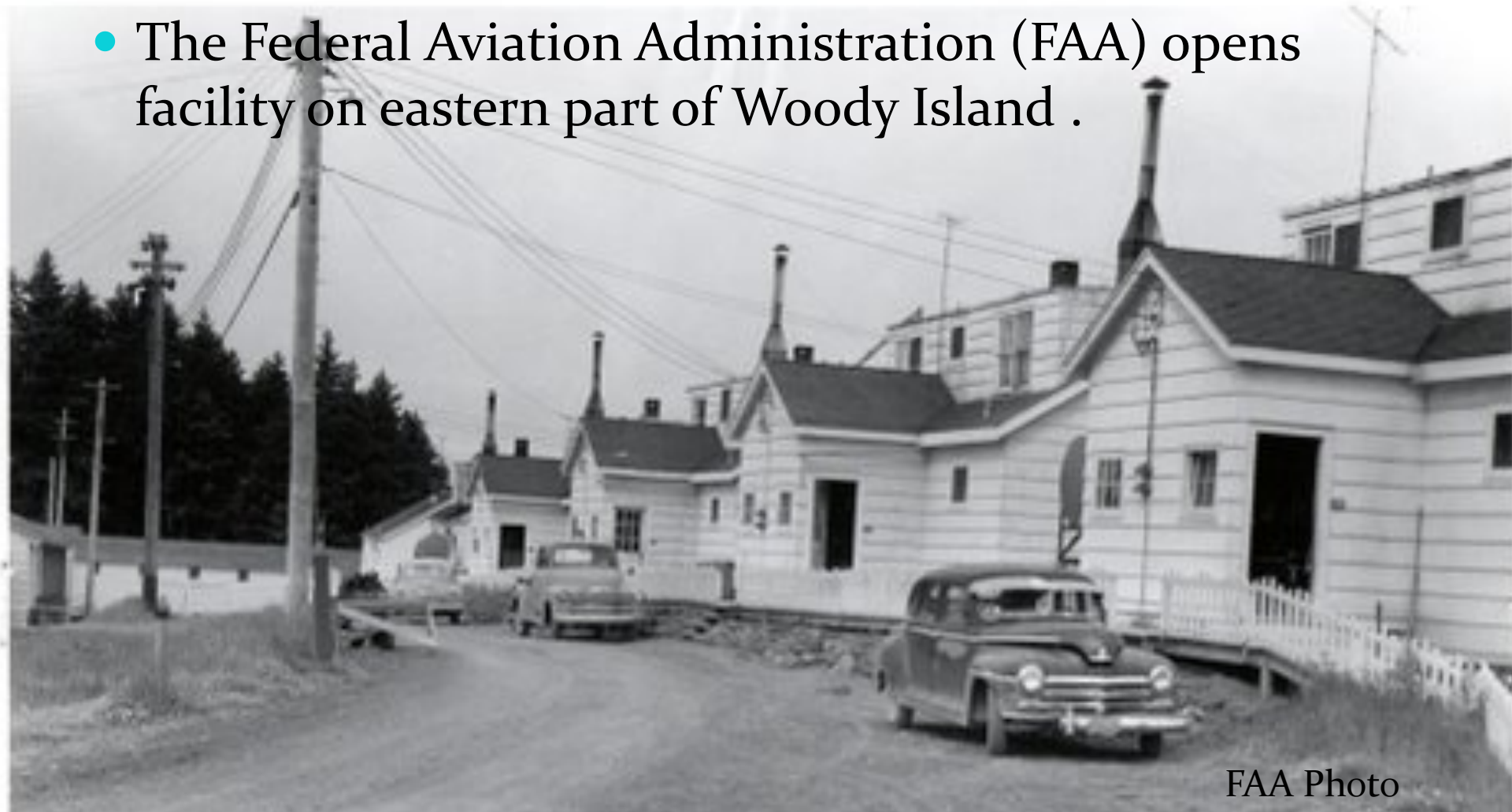
- The Baptist Orphanage burns to the ground and is rebuilt in the City of Kodiak, just across the water from Woody Island.



Baptist Orphanage
Collection

1941

- The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) opens facility on eastern part of Woody Island .



1941-1945

- World War II
- Thousands of US and Canadian troops come to Kodiak
- Both the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy establish small facilities on Woody Island
- Army builds a sawmill to provide lumber for the the war effort in the Aleutian Islands
- Navy builds a "net depot" to guard against Japanese submarines

1960's

- Public school closes on the island which makes it necessary for village kids to commute to school in Kodiak
- The FAA has a daily boat service between Woody Island and Kodiak called the Fedair IV
- Fedair IV was primarily for FAA families, but allowed village kids to use it for transportation to school until the late 60's.

Fedair IV



FAA photo

1967

- Woody Island resident, Daniel Harmon, was killed heroically during battle in Vietnam.



Daniel Harmon. Photo from Harmon collection.

1971

- Daniel Harmon's childhood best friend and cousin Frederick Simeonoff was also killed in Vietnam



Freddy Simeonoff. Pagano Collection.

Harmon and Simeonoff



Harmon
Collection

1971

- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act passed
- Woody Island was not on list of ANCSA eligible villages. Secretary of Interior has authority to declare villages eligible.
- The total population on the day of the census is 41, however, it includes FAA families living on the island.

1974

- Woody Island is declared an eligible village under ANCSA by the U.S. Department of Interior after federal hearings are held.
- Leisnoi, Inc. Village Corporation is formed with 296 original shareholders and the right to select 115,200 acres of federal land.



1975

- Cattle rancher files the first of several lawsuits challenging eligibility of Leisnoi, Inc. under ANCSA.
- Stratman v. Leisnoi, Inc stays in the courts until June 2009 when the U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear the case thus finally confirming Leisnoi eligibility.



1994

- Lesnoi (new spelling) Village is listed in the Federally Recognized Tribe List Act passed by Congress

1998

- A formal tribal council is elected which is the first in nearly 100 years
- The Woody Island Tribal Council begins offering services to tribal members
- One of the most notable services offered to tribal members are higher education scholarships

2002

- Johnny Maliknak leaves Woody Island and moves into senior housing in Kodiak due to failing health and dies about a year later
- He was the last village member to live on Woody Island

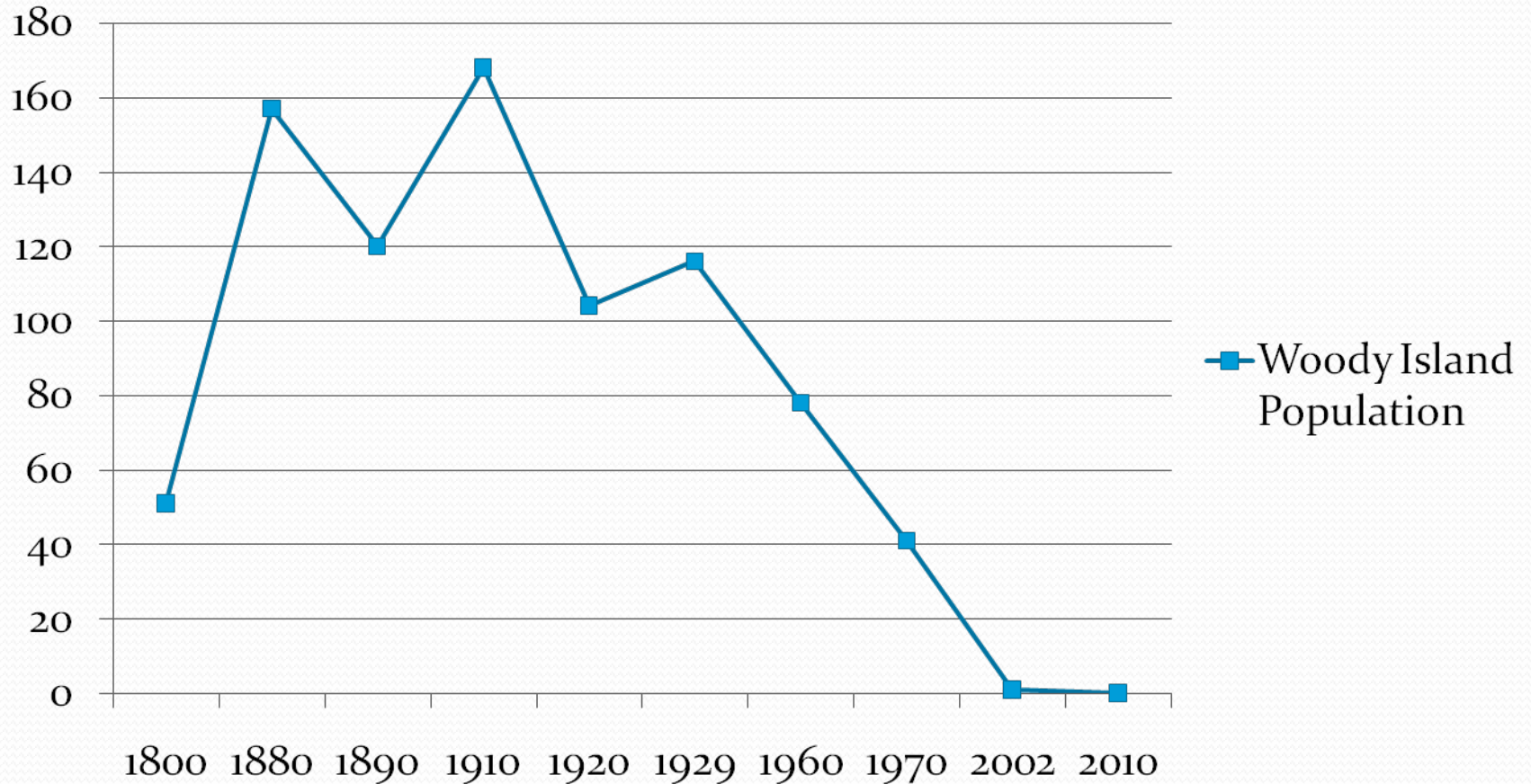


Woody Island Tribal Council Collection



Robertson Collection

Woody Island Population from 1800 to 2010



2003, 2006, 2008

- Tribal Retreats
- Retreats are focused on celebrating culture and history of Woody Island Natives

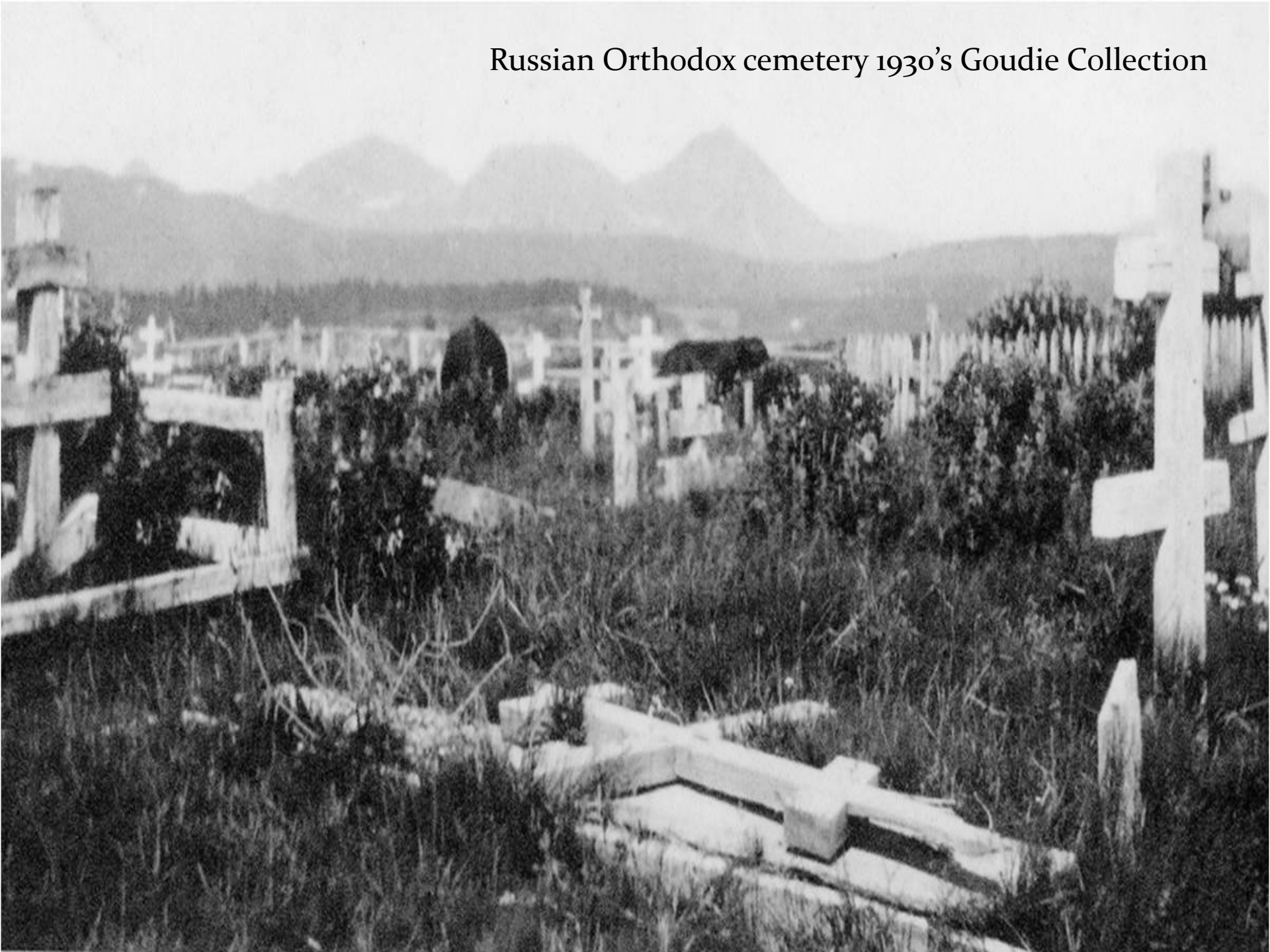


Tribal retreat 2002. Pullar collection.

2010

- Secretary of Interior grants approval for the formal name of the tribe to change from “Lesnoi Village” to “Tangirnaq Native Village.”

Russian Orthodox cemetery 1930's Goudie Collection



Russian Orthodox cemetery 2006. Pullar
Collection.

The grave that is still showing is Mike Chabitnoy,
who served in World War I



2003 Pullar Collection



1949 Woody Island Tribal Council Collection

