



## Timeline of Important Laws and Events Impacting Tribal Governments in Alaska

### The Early Years

- **"Time Immemorial"**
- **1493** Papal Bull and the Rule of Discovery
- Early epidemics of small pox, measles, flu. In some areas of Alaska, est. ½ people died
- **1741** 'Discovery' of Alaska by Vitus Bering
- **1743** Russian commercial fur voyages to Alaska begin
- **1763** Unungan attack and destruction of 4 Russian ships in retaliation for Russian attacks and enslavement. Two were at Unalaska, one at Umnak, and one at Unimak
- **1766** Tsarina Catherine declares Aleut/Alutiiq to be Russian subjects
- **1784** Shelikov assault on Refuge Rocks- Massacre marks the decline of Aleut/Alutiiq independence.
- **1784** Russian colony started in 3 Saints Bay, Kodiak
- **1802** Tlingit destroy Russian fort at Sitka
- **1824** First Russian-American Treaty allowed both nations to commercial fish and trade with Native people
- **1848** Beginning of Yankee whaling in Alaska
- **1855** Russian coal mine established in Cook Inlet
- **1865** Last shot of Civil War fired in Alaska, months after the official end of the War
  - Start of Survey of Overland Telegraph Route through Alaska
- **1867** Treaty of Cession – Quit Claim purchase of Alaska by US
- **1867-1884** Department Era- Army, Treasury, Navy authority in Alaska
- **1867** Letter describing US Indian Policy in Alaska called for vigilance in dealing with Tlingit, always have guns ready to fire, hold entire tribe responsible for crime of individual
- **1869** Secretary of Interior Seward tours Alaska with military commander of Alaska, Gen. Jefferson Davis who reminds Sitka that with only 2000 whites and 25,000 Indians in Alaska, a display of military force is needed. US Navy shells and burns Kake and later the same year the Army shells Wrangell.
- **1870** Testimony to Congress expressing 'dissatisfaction among the tribes...from the fact that (Alaska) was sold without their consent, arguing that their fathers originally owned all the country, but allowed the Russians to occupy it for their mutual benefit' and that proceeds from a sale should have gone to Tribes.
  - "The Tlingit do not like the idea of whites settling in their midst without being subject to their jurisdiction," Gen. Davis reported in 1869.
- **1871** Letter from Aleuts of St. George Island complaining of slavery under the federal governments leasing of the island to the American Fur Seal Company.
- **1878** Start of large-scale commercial fishing in Alaska. First salmon canneries established and commercial Salmon Traps become widespread.
- **1873** Sale and importation of Alcohol in Alaska made illegal
- **1875** Sale and importation of breech loading firearms in Alaska made illegal

- **1877** Administration of Alaska transferred from Dept. of War (Army) to Dept. of Treasury
- **1879** Osprey Affair. White residents of Sitka request help of British government because they felt the US was not protecting them from the Tlingit
- **1882** US Navy shells and burns Angoon.
- **1884** Alaska District Organic Act – Alaska's first civil government calls for education without regards to race and creation of Commission to report on needs of Alaska Native people
- **1887** General Allotment (Dawes) Act passed
- **1889** President Harrison Inauguration address supports Allotment and Assimilation policy through the Dawes Act and says that it is 'fortunate' that the US has not extended reservation policy into Alaska
- **1890** Tlingit protest salmon canneries in letter to President Harrison
- **1891** Alaska Townsite Act
- **1891** Establishment of first Indian Reservation in Alaska, with over 150 reservations eventually formed, most with the express purpose of protecting subsistence resources.
- **1898** Alaska Homestead Act
- **1898** Klondike Gold Rush over 100,000 people flood to the Yukon region searching for gold, with more to come to Nome and the Interior. Widespread commercial hunting (Market hunting) wipes out wildlife resources.
- **1900** Pneumonia Epidemic, 'The Great Sickness' struck Aleutians and SW Alaska particularly hard with as many as ½ perishing.

#### The Middle Period

- **1905** Berrigan decision- Alaska Tribes hold title to their traditional lands as Aboriginal Title
- **1905** *Report to Congress on Conditions and Needs of Alaska Natives*, in noting that the "...rush of prospectors has literally swept the country clean, denuding it of life...leading to destitution and semi-starvation", calls for modification of game laws and a moratorium on commercial fishing north of Aleutians, due to importance of Yukon and Kuskokwim fisheries to the interior, as well as the mouth of the Copper River. (Never implemented)
- **1905** Creation of Tongass National Forest with no compensation for Aboriginal Title (until 1968)
- **1905** Nelson Act- Segregation in Alaska. Territory schools only allow Native students if 'civilized' and no tribal ties. US Federal Govt takes over Native education.
- **1906** Letter from Chief Ivan and Chief William (Tanana area) to US Secretary of War complaining of 'troubles we are having with white people since 1898'. Focus is on hunting, fishing, commerce and justice
- **1906** Alaska Native Allotment Act. (1906-60 only 80 approved, 1960-80 apx. 10,000)
- **1912** First Native advocacy group in the state, Alaska Native Brotherhood, forms in Juneau
  - First 'Kake Days' held to observe that residents have 'adopted white culture'
- **1915** Territorial Act- Alaska's 1<sup>st</sup> legislators- Native Citizenship Act (modeled after Dawes Act), Women's Suffrage. Wickersham meeting with Tanana area Chiefs
- **1918** Worldwide Influenza Epidemic hits Alaska – Spanish Flu
- **1924** Indian Citizenship Act extended citizenship to Alaska Natives without terminating tribal rights/identity. Among other rights, extends the right to vote.



- **1925** Alaska Voter Literacy Act passed by Territorial legislature, required literacy test to limit voting
- **1926** Alaska Native Townsite Act
- **1930** Formation of Tetlin Indian Reserve, as a Public Purpose Executive Order Reserve: "... to promote the interests of the Natives... in restocking the country and protecting the fur bearing mammals."
- **1931** Alaska Native programs transferred from Bureau of Education to BIA
- **1936** Indian Reorganization Act (AK) – Expansion of reservations in Alaska
- **1943** Venetie Reservation set aside 1.8 million acres, "to protect the Native community from Non-Native trappers"
- **1943** Karluk Reservation formed. USFWS opposed to creation of Native fishing reserves in Alaska and refused to enforce the reservation, *Grimes Packing* case holds that reservation can only be enforced through trespass action brought by Dept. of Justice. Contributes to the failure of reservation policy in Alaska.
- **1945** Territorial legislature passes Alaska Anti-Discrimination Act. Legal segregation in Alaska ends
- **1957** Project Chariot proposed. The project entails using atomic explosions to create a harbor near Point Hope in northwest Alaska
- **1959** Tlingit-Haida win federal court case requiring federal compensation for taking of Aboriginal Title with creation of Tongass (1929, 1935, paid 1968)
- **1959** Alaska Statehood Act - State allowed to select 120 million acres of land
- **1960** Fish Traps made illegal in Alaska. While intended to stop commercial use of fish traps, the ban outlawed indigenous use of traditional subsistence traps as well.
- **1961** Barrow 'Duck-in', 138 people presented themselves for arrest for shooting ducks in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty.
  - State starts selecting lands in the Minto Flats area.
- **1963** Rampart Canyon Dam and Reservoir proposed, raising protests by Stevens Village, and other Yukon River villages
- **1965** U.S. Interior Secretary Udall issues a preliminary injunction freezing land conveyances to the state from the federal government.
- **1967** First Alaska Native land claims settlement bills introduced in Congress
- **1968** Oil discovered at Prudhoe Bay

#### ANCSA to the Present

- **1971** Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA)- Extinguished aboriginal land claim. Ended the Alaska Native Allotment Act. Formation of ANCSA Corporations
- **1976** Federal Land Planning and Management Act (FLPMA) – ended Alaska Native Townsite Act
- **1979** In *Frank v State*, Alaska Supreme Court rules that the US Constitution guarantee of free exercise of religion protects taking of moose for potlatch.
- **1980** Congress passes Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which protects the subsistence needs of rural Alaskans. It began as a Native Priority, but was changed to a 'Rural Priority' as a compromise between the federal government and the State of Alaska, which promised to administer a Rural Priority on ALL lands and waters in Alaska.
- **1993** Federal take-over of subsistence on federal lands
- **1998-1999** Venetie Tax Case and *John v. Baker*- Tribal Sovereignty without territory
- **2000** Administrative Order 186 and the Millennium Agreement

- **2001** Katie John Case –expands federal authority to include ‘reserved waters’. Gov Knowles declines to appeal. 2005 Gov. Murkowski challenges rules implementing the ruling. 2010 Parnell appeals
  - **2014** US Supreme Court Rejects Appeal by State of Alaska.
- **2009** Secretary of the Interior announces the failure of the federal government in its legal obligation to protect Alaska Native subsistence and orders a comprehensive review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program.
- **2013** Akiachak case and Land into Trust