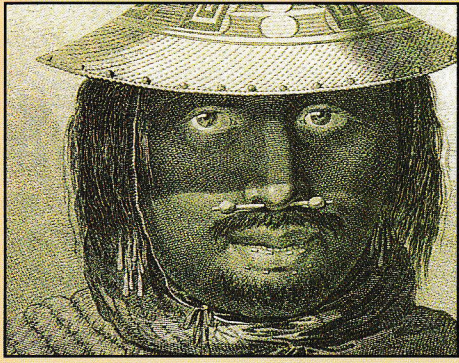


Anchorage History: From The Beginning



From Russia they came, over a land bridge that connected Siberia to Alaska some 29,000 or so years ago. For hundreds of years they slowly wandered south, reaching Cook Inlet about 4,000 B.C. These were the first settlers of Anchorage, descendants of those original Natives who migrated from what is now Siberia. In the years since, their culture has melded with immigrants from the east and the west and the south to form the distinct personality that sets apart Anchorage today.

Promyshleniki, (pronounced promish-lena-key)—Russian trappers and hunters), came next, stepping ashore in the mid-1700s in search of furs and trade. Their indelible mark can be found today in surnames like Stepovich, communities like Nikolski and institutions like the Russian Orthodox Church. On the heels of the Russians sailed the greatest British navigator of them all—Capt. James Cook, searching for the elusive Northwest Passage. He explored the waterway that now borders



downtown Anchorage, Cook Inlet, only to be frustrated when it split into two landlocked arms now known as Turnagain and Knik. Russia claimed all of Alaska but financial struggles eventually forced it to sell the territory to the United States. Negotiated by U.S. Secretary of State William Seward, the treaty was signed on March 30, 1867, buying what is now Alaska for \$7.2 million, or about two cents an acre. Cries of gold echoed through the region in 1882 when prospectors discovered Crow Creek near Girdwood, just 40-miles/64-km south of what today is downtown Anchorage. The rush was on as new strikes were made in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys, luring prospectors by the thousands. By the turn of the century, the census listed Alaska's population at 29,500 Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts; 4,300 Caucasians "Alaskans" and 26,000 Cheechakos (newcomers) ■ But it was coal, not gold, that brought permanence to Alaska's largest city.

(continued on next page)

May 1700 • With the spring thaw Aluets from the Aluetian Islands and Pacific Coast Eskimos come to barter with the region's chief inhabitant's, the Upper Tainaina Indians, a branch of the inland Athabaskan Indians.

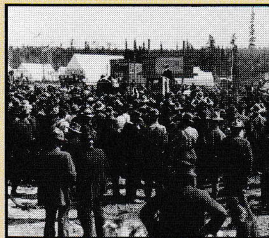
June, 1778 • Frustrated in his attempt to locate the Northwest Passage, Capt. James Cook becomes the first European to explore the great inlet of Southcentral Alaska which now bears his name.

May, 1794 • During his second month of charting, Cook Inlet Capt. George Vancouver encounters Russian settlers in what will become the Anchorage area.

March, 1818 • Russian settlements now dot the Upper Cook Inlet. Missionaries, traders and Natives bring the population to about 1500.

October 18, 1867 • The United States becomes the official owner of Alaska in the largest land acquisition since the Louisiana Purchase.

April 8, 1900 • The first Alaskan census shows the population at 29,000 Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts, 4,300 white Alaskans and 29,500 cheechakos (newcomers).



July 10, 1915 • 2,000 people gather to kick off the new township site lot auction. With Ship Creek chosen by the Government to be the mid-point construction headquarters for the new railroad, job-seekers and adventurers pour into the area.

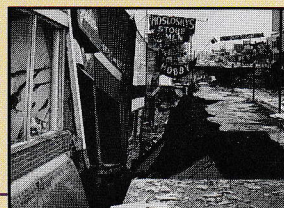
July, 1923 • President Harding drives in the golden stake completing the Alaska Railroad.

November 20, 1942 • The Alaska Highway is dedicated.

June 30, 1958 • The United States Senate passes the Alaska Statehood Act.

January 3, 1959, Alaska becomes a state.

Good Friday, 1964 • The largest quake to ever hit the North America rips through Southcentral Alaska registering 9.2 on the Richter scale.



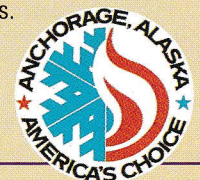
March 3, 1973 • The first Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race takes place.

June 20, 1977 • Oil begins to flow through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

October, 1979 • Project '80s—Plans for building begin on a new sports arena, convention center, the Alaska Center for the

Performing Arts and the expansion of the Anchorage Museum of History & Art as the state begins to reap the benefits from Prudhoe Bay.

June 15, 1985 • Anchorage is honored by the United States Olympic Committee as its choice to host the 1992 Winter Olympic Games.



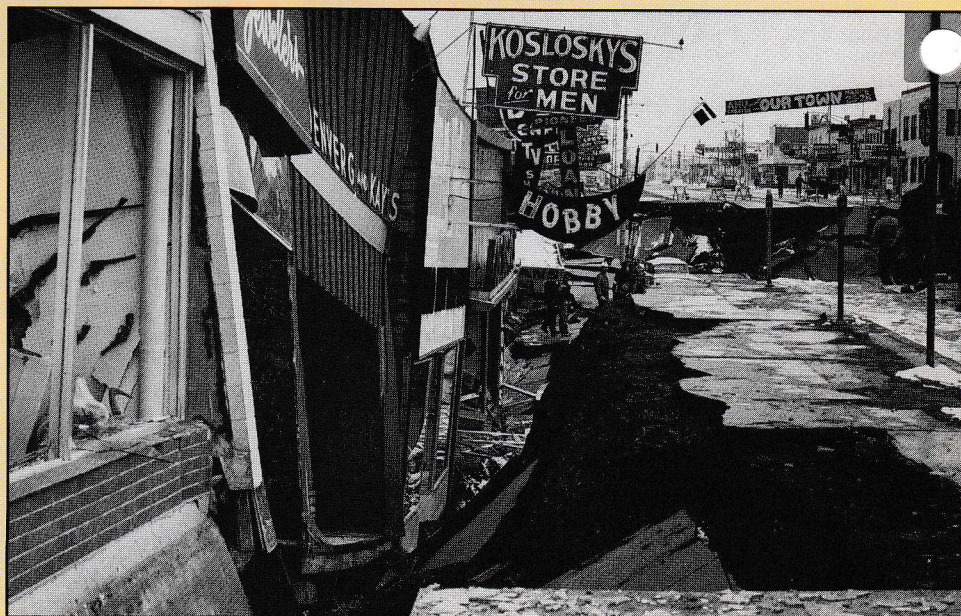
Anchorage History (cont'd.)



Construction began in 1914 on a railroad from the Port of Seward through the coal fields of the Interior to the gold claims near Fairbanks, and Anchorage was chosen as the mid-point headquarters. Thousands of job seekers and adventurers poured into the area, living in a tent city on the banks of Ship Creek. July 10, 1915 saw the "Great Anchorage Lot Sale," a land auction that shaped the future of the city. Some 655 lots were sold for \$148,000, or an average of \$225 each. Residents celebrated this new beginning at the "Anchorage Grand Opening Ball," hailed by one and all as the social event of the year. A month later, the town formalized its name when voters went to the polls to choose from such monikers as Matanuska, Alaska City, Ship Creek, Winalaska, Gateway, Terminal, Homestead and Lane. Voters picked Alaska City but the federal government decided to retain the existing title: Anchorage ■ In 1918, the first train from Seward steamed into Anchorage, marking the completion of the southern half of the line. By the time the city incorporated in 1920, it contained a year-round resort, two- and three-story buildings, a movie theater, baseball park and a winter carnival featuring dogsled races. The city bus tour lasted an hour ■ President Warren G. Harding arrived

in July 1923 to drive the golden spike that signaled the completion of the railroad which remained in federal hands until 1985 when it was sold to the State of Alaska. In the 1930s, more than 200 families from the drought-ravaged Midwest were resettled on the rich valley lands north of Anchorage where they received federal support to build a farming colony. Today, some of the families of those original colonists grow record-breaking vegetables, including cabbages that tip the scales at more

than 90 pounds/41 kg ■ World War II spurred a period of rapid growth. With the Japanese invasion of the Aleutian Islands, Anchorage's strategic location prompted the construction of Ft. Richardson and the completion of the Alaska Highway in 1942, linking Anchorage with the rest of the nation. Anchorage entered the war years with a population of 7,724 and emerged with 43,314 residents ■ In the '50s, Anchorage established itself as the "Air Crossroads of the World," with the opening of an international airport to serve transpolar airline traffic flying between Europe and Asia, along with domestic and in-state carriers. The population exploded by another 157% during the decade, and most of it turned out January 3, 1959 to celebrate the passage of the Statehood Act with a 50-ton bonfire—one ton of wood for each state, with an extra ton tossed in for Hawaii. Alaska was now the 49th state ■ On Good Friday, 1964, a massive earthquake measuring 9.2 on the Richter Scale ripped through Southcentral Alaska. It was the largest quake ever recorded in North America and 131 people in Alaska and the Pacific coast lost their lives. Thousands more lost their homes and businesses. Residents rebounded in record time, and within a year, Anchorage's first high-rise hotel started reshaping the skyline. Oil fueled a modern-day boom with



Anchorage History (cont'd.)



Photo courtesy of the Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.

the discovery and development of the Prudhoe Bay oil field, the largest in North America. It was a discovery that changed the course of history, providing Alaska with the money it needed to mature and develop as a state. Anchorage has been honored three times as an All-American City, and today its horizons are global. With its strategic location, incredible scenic beauty and the state's immense natural resources, Anchorage is establishing itself as a trading partner with the world as well as a first-class spot to visit. 🐾

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