Alaska Constitutional Convention, 1955 (ALASKA)

MUNUC 34

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CHAIR & CRISIS DIRECTOR LETTERS

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to MUNUC! We are beyond excited to have you participating in this committee! My name is Amanda Eckels, and I will be your Chair for the Alaskan Constitutional Committee. This year, I'm a second year at UChicago and I'm hoping to major in Political Science and Something Else™. Whatever the second major is, I'm hoping law school is in the future for me.

After realizing that speech and debate in college was completely different from high school, I made the decision to join Model UN at the start of last year. Since then, I've AC'd committees with both MUNUC and ChoMUN (our conference run for college students). I've also had the chance to compete with our traveling team, and I've made some of my closest friends through this organization.

Burke and I are incredibly excited to be running this committee at MUNUC this year. Even though I have less of a personal connection to the subject matter (did you guys know Burke is from Alaska??), this time period has been incredibly engaging to me. I'm particularly interested to see how you will use your perspective and knowledge from 2021 to establish a (hopefully) democratic state in the 1950's. During conference, you face the task of designing a democratic system that is inclusive and representative of the people of Alaska. Not only that, but it will be put to the test over the course of this weekend.

Within this committee, there are a lot of opportunities to put forth your ideas and have your voice heard! I'm not only excited to see all of the creative plans you will present about how to form and structure this government, but I look forward to seeing how you adapt on the fly to the various crises that will invariably pop up. Most importantly, I want to see how each and every one of you can grow over this weekend. No matter your experience level, it's my job to make sure that everybody leaves with more knowledge and skill than they came in with. With all that being said, respect is of the utmost importance. I don't just require respect for the subject matter and the content of this committee, but respect for your fellow delegates as well.

If you ever have a question about anything (committee mechanics, the historical context, how Model UN works, why the 2017 Tony Awards were the beginning of the end for Broadway) please feel free to send me an email at any time! I'm always available in the months, weeks, and even days and hours before conference starts. My job is to make sure that you all understand how to participate in this committee, and I will do everything I can to help! Again, I am so excited to see this committee in action, and I can't wait to meet all of you!

Best,

Amanda Eckels

Welcome folks to Alaska's Constitutional Convention!

My name is Burke Croft, and I'll be your Crisis Director for MUNUC 34. I could not be more excited to have a committee about my home state of Alaska.

But first, an introduction. I am a third-year in the college majoring in chemistry and minoring in data science originally from (you guessed it) Anchorage, Alaska. Across MUN at UChicago, I serve as Vice President of our competitive team and I will also be chairing the Ad Hoc for ChoMUN. In previous years I have served on the dias of SOCHUM for MUNUC, Johnson and Johnson 2010 for ChoMUN, and World Health Organization for MUNUC. Outside of MUN, I am an intern at the UChicago Institute of Politics and at Ship Creek Group, a small political firm in Anchorage. I also try to get outside whenever possible, from biking to hiking to hammocking to roller blading. And in whatever time left, I try to make as many hyper-specific playlists as I can on Spotify.

I'm truly looking forward to seeing what you all can do in this opportunity to remake history. The Alaska Constitution is a well-written document, and you will have the opportunity to make it even better, add your own flare, or try something totally new! I hope you're as excited as I am. If you are (or even if you're not), feel free to reach out to me through the MUNUC website for any questions or comments.

Best,

Burke Croft

Hello Delegates,

We are incredibly excited to have each and every one of you in our committee this coming conference! As your execs, we have poured countless hours into preparing for this weekend. We are finally ready to place the fate of Alaska in your hands and see where you take it from here. In order for everybody to feel welcome, comfortable, and valued, we want to be as transparent as possible about what kind of conduct is expected in committee.

First, it is important to note that this committee takes place in the year 1955. The standards of conduct were much different at that time, and many beliefs that were common are no longer acceptable. There are many areas where this will intersect with the content of committee, such as discussions on ensuring native rights, protecting women's rights, and creating a democratic government in which all people can participate. We are expecting all delegates to operate based on the current standards of equality and tolerance. Any actions furthering discriminatory practices at the time, such as voter disenfranchisement, will not be accepted. We will also not tolerate bigotry against any belief system, nationality, or cultural identity. Additionally, while we want for you to be engaged with your assigned character, some of them held racist, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic beliefs that you should not incorperate into your actions on committee. Finally, it is important to ensure that all delegates are using inclusive language within committee. This includes referring to indigenous persons using appropriate terms.

Again, the reason that this is so important for having an enjoyable conference is because we want every delegate to feel welcomed and included, and we need to treat this subject with the respect it deserves. Remember, these were real people. The struggles that native Alaskans and other marginalized communities experienced at this time were real and continue to have consequences to this day. Within this committee, you are deciding how these people will be treated going forward. This is not a light responsibility.

We understand that these guidelines are strict and that can be stressful. We want to maintain our standards of conduct for your benefit. If you have a question about whether or not a certain action would be acceptable, please reach out to your executives! We are here to help you navigate this committee and make sure that you succeed. In order to do that, we are always available to answer

questions or define these standards more explicitly if you encounter any grey areas. Additionally, if another delegate violates these standards of contact or behaves in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable, please let a member of the dias know immediately. Once again, we are incredibly excited to meet all of you and embark on this adventure together!

Sincerely,

Amanda Eckels and Burke Croft

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE & MECHANICS

This committee will be a hybrid, meaning it will use both traditional and crisis elements. Below is a summary of what each of those mean. If you're already familiar with traditional and crisis elements, I'd suggest reading it over anyways. If you really really think you know your stuff, please do still read the committee section, where we'll discuss how these mechanics will be used in our committee specifically.

Traditional

The goal of traditional mechanics (sometimes referred to as GA, as it describes the structure of the General Assembly) is to create a single document–in our case, a constitution–as the result of multiple sessions. Delegates will have time to give speeches, form writing groups (known as blocs), and work together to write.

Crisis

The crisis structure is how Model UN simulates live interactions between committee and the outside world–except instead of the outside world, delegates will be interacting with our crisis director and assistant chairs. These interactions happen through two channels: **frontroom** and **backroom.**

Frontroom is, if we're speaking literally, the committee room itself, where delegates give speeches and debate. In a broader sense, it is anywhere the delegates are during session. Frontroom goes through a cycle, starting with a crisis break. **Crisis breaks** are how committee learns what is happening in the outside world. The crisis director and assistant chairs will act out an emergency to which the committee must respond. Delegates will then write and pass **directives** in response to each crisis. Directives are documents of similar structure to those on the traditional side but are much shorter, as directives are written in a relatively short amount of time–anywhere from 30 minutes to about 2 hours. While directives are being written, delegates are expected to debate, disagree, and decide which paths are best for the committee. Delegates will vote on directives once

they are finished. A majority vote means the directive passes, and delegates can pass as many directives as they would like. Once directives are passed, there will be another crisis break, and the cycle continues.

Backroom is likewise, in a literal sense, an actual room. It is where the crisis director and assistant chairs are when committee is in progress. What are the crisis directors and assistant chairs doing? Responding to delegates' **crisis notes**. During crisis sessions, delegates will be writing notes on notepads to the outside world. While directives are how the committee as a whole interacts with the outside world, crisis notes are how individual delegates interact with the outside world, often in more secretive ways. Delegates use notes to build a **crisis arc**. A crisis arc is how each delegate achieves his/her/their personal goal, whatever that goal may be. Usually delegates will want to, in this order:

- Begin writing to someone who can act on the delegate's behalf (for example, to a secretary, a sibling, a friend, etc.). and make clear to them the delegate's goals

- Build resources (for example, buy a farm and sell the crops, embezzle money, make secret trade deals, etc.)

- Once the resources are in place, execute a plan to achieve the goals

Committee

Committee will start with traditional mechanics in order to write the constitution. Ideally, this process will take around 2 sessions, but much of the weekend's plans are flexible. Once the constitution is written and passed, we will transition to crisis mechanics. That transition will include a transformation of the committee itself–from a constitutional convention to a legislature. For the next several sessions, we will run committee as the newly founded state of Alaska. After some time, we will likely return to the constitutional drawing board to make a new and revised constitution.

These plans are subject to change, as delegates and executives alike are going to be able to change the course of committee.

TOPIC: ALASKA

Statement of the Problem

Introduction to Statement of the Problem

So you're being asked to write a constitution for the newest American state. Where do you start? You have a nearly blank slate; aside from federal laws dictating some basic rules about state governments, the convention can do what it wishes and even some federal laws are subject to litigation. Accordingly, there's a lot of ground to cover. In this section, we'll explore a few topics that should be covered in an Alaskan constitution. This is not an exhaustive list, but it should serve as a good guide.

You'll find many of these topics to be similar or identical to those that the framers of the U.S. Constitution faced in the 18th century. We have a chance to revisit these ideals with a century and a half of additional perspective. We can start with the basic structure of the government.

Legislative Branch

The Legislative Branch of a government writes and passes laws. It is made up of elected representatives of designated districts. Past that basic outline, legislative branches can take many forms.

The first question is whether the legislature should have one or two bodies within it (unicameral or bicameral… or multicameral?). For instance, The United States has a bicameral system with two legislative bodies: the House of Representatives and the Senate. Traditionally, one body (the House of Representatives in the case of the U.S.) is more fast-paced, both in terms of its rules of operation and frequency of elections, while the other (the Senate) is slower and less susceptible to swings in public opinion. Proponents of a bicameral system argue that the balance of two bodies means that the public's view is represented but never acted upon too rashly. That said, states such as Nebraska and countries such as Canada, France, and Germany use a unicameral system with a single legislative

body. Proponents of a unicameral system are often critical of having a body like the Senate, which intentionally slows democratic processes or counteracts public opinion.

Alaska's constitution can also break that mold, as multiple legislative bodies do not necessarily have to be distinguished by their devotion to public opinion. Alaska could establish an indigenous legislative body. Alaska could establish rural, urban, and statewide legislative bodies. There are many options.

Once you have decided on a unicameral, bicameral, or multicameral system, the constitution must delineate how many legislators there will be in each body. It is important to remember that Alaska's population in 1950 was 128,000 and rising. The number of representatives (and senators if you so choose) must be set so that each represents a reasonable number of citizens. State legislatures vary widely—across the states, representatives have districts of anywhere from a few thousand residents to a few hundred thousand. If you stick with a bicameral system, traditionally the House has more representatives than the Senate does (often double). Furthermore, you will have to decide how Senate districts differ from House districts. They can be completely distinct or they can operate along the same borders (for instance, if one Senate district has two house districts within it).

Then, you will need to decide on terms and term limits. Once again, the terms in the Senate are often longer than in the House. Make sure term limits align with when you would like to have elections, a topic we will cover soon.

Finally, there are a few miscellaneous questions to ask. Should there be a term limit at all? Who is eligible to be a legislator—should there be any age, residency, or other restrictions?

Executive Branch

The executive branch deals with the office of the Governor, or a senior executive title of the convention's choice, and those around that position. This branch is tasked with enforcing the laws made by the legislative body.

The constitutional convention will need to outline the powers of the chief executive. A stronger executive, which can have a larger impact on the legislative and judicial branches, is often critiqued as anti-democratic or as a threat to checks and balances in government. Opponents question if the Governor has nearly complete control of the state government, what prevents them from only benefiting themselves and not the citizens? On the other hand, a weaker executive, who has few powers, will often mean a slower and more dysfunctional government–without a single leader calling the shots, things can get messy. It's up to the convention to decide whether they would like to give the chief executive veto power, emergency powers, and the role that legislative approval plays in executive decision making.

The chief executive may also be checked if there are other elected officials in the executive branch which hold some executive powers themselves. Many states have elected attorneys general, secretaries of state, or other positions. If the convention decides to make these elected positions, they must outline the powers of each.

Judicial Branch

The judicial branch is tasked with interpreting laws. They determine if people are guilty of crimes outlined in the law (criminal court), rule if laws are constitutional (civil court), or resolve other disputes through legal paths (also often civil court). The judicial branch is among the most complicated to construct, so for this section, the dias will make a few suggestions on how to make this branch of the Alaska State Government:

- Create a system of district courts, spread across the state. These courts will rule on all criminal and civil cases under Alaskan law.[1] Any case that deals with Alaskan law will go through a district court, but may be appealed to higher courts.

[1] It's important to note that this does not mean all criminal and civil cases that happen in the state of Alaska. If the issue being brought up in court has to do with federal law, that will instead go to a federal court, and has a different jurisdiction than these courts being set up in the Alaskan constitution.

- Create an appellate court, which will hear appeals from the district courts on civil and criminal cases.

- Create an Alaska Supreme Court, which will have the final say on all appeals from lower courts.

The topic that is entirely up to the convention is judicial appointment, or how judges get onto the courts. Typically, this is done by the chief executive–an important part of the powers of the executive branch. But that power can be limited or fully stripped from that branch. Judicial appointments could become subject to legislative approval, but that could give too many duties to the already heavily burdened legislative branch or politicize judges before they even make one ruling, shortening the distance the judicial branch attempts to keep from politics. Along those lines, judicial appointments could also completely become the responsibility of the legislative branch, which would limit executive power but intensify the previous concerns. Judicial appointments could also be restricted by limiting candidates, in which case the chief executive must choose a judge from a list made by an independent judicial council. In this scenario, the constitution should also create such a council and explain how it is to be run. Of course, this power could be left completely to the chief executive, unchecked. It is up to the members of the convention to decide.

Elections

The convention will also have to sketch out a process through which candidates are elected to the executive and legislative positions created in the constitution. This mostly has to do with timing and process. First of all, the convention may choose to have elections whenever they would like during the year and however far apart they choose. Usually, states place their state elections on the same day as national elections in November to save the costs of another election and to raise turnout for the **down-ballot** elections. In terms of process, the traditional model is a first-past-the-post method, where each voter casts their ballot for one candidate and the candidate with the most votes wins.

But there are alternatives, such as **ranked-choice voting**, **approval voting**, **and proportional representation**.[2]

Initiative, Referendum, and Recall

A question discussed substantially in the United States Constitution makes a comeback: how much power should the people have to directly govern themselves? The framers of the U.S. constitution initially made a government with very little direct action, only allowing citizens to affect federal change through representatives.

In the 20th century, a movement pushed three reforms to create direction action in the United States:

1. **Initiative**: Initiative is the ability of the people to pass legislation themselves. Usually, legislation passed through initiative must be vetted in some way, but the constitution should specify in what way. If a majority votes for a given bill, can anything be passed through initiative? Can constitutional amendments? Can budget appropriations?

2. **Referendum**: The power of referendum can in many ways be seen as the opposite process of initiative as it entails that citizens can repeal a law passed by the legislature.

3. **Recall**: Recall is the power of the people to remove elected officials from office through a vote in the middle of their term.

Arguments for strong initiative and referendum powers usually ground themselves in democratic values–that the people should be able to pass or repeal legislation themselves because it is a government of, for, and by the people, and that a majority should be able to directly determine whether it wants or does not want a law. Similarly, with respect to the merits of recall, the people should not have to wait until the next election if an elected official is working against the will of the

[2] Potyondy, Patrick. "Alternative Voting Systems." National Conference of State Legislatures, June 25, 2020. https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/alternative-voting-systems.aspx.

people. Arguments against these powers are usually more practical or process-oriented. For initiative and referendum, legislators are hired to negotiate and write policy, while citizens are not, so a heavy reliance on public initiatives could result in poorly-written or bad policy. For recall, there is usually an aversion to the public meddling in government affairs between elections, as it could disrupt the process or make officials only try to avoid recall rather than focus on doing what they were elected to do.

Resource Development

Resource development gets at the core of land management and use in the state. Resource development–be it gold mining, logging, or fishing–is extremely profitable, but can cause damage to the environment, to sustainable development, and to indigenous life if not done responsibly. Who earns that profit and who suffers that damage can shape the makeup of the state.

Finally, feel free to add in anything else that you wish. Should all mountains be owned by all residents? Can individuals own waterways, or are they accessible to everyone? If a citizen buys a piece of land, does that include underground land rights (where gold, coal, and oil are), or are those rights reserved by the state, or indigenous people?

Natural Rights

Though the U.S. Constitution already did a pretty good job of outlining basic human rights that every citizen has, many state constitutions have their own article dedicated to human rights or a Bill of Rights. This can be redundant with the U.S. Constitution, protecting the rights to freedom of religion and expression, freedom from unreasonable searches, or even freedom from military quartering. But these rights can also go beyond the limits of the U.S. Constitution. Popular additions include the right to privacy, right to universal suffrage, and the further acknowledgments of the power of the people over the government.

Miscellaneous

There are a few other topics that a constitution should consider:

Constitutional Amendment: Under what circumstances should an amendment be passed? Can it simply be done by a vote of the people? If so, what percentage of people does it need to pass? Does it need legislative approval? If so, what proportion of the legislative bodies need to vote yes? Is it subject to executive veto? Pay attention to this one as it may play an important role throughout the conference.

Indigenous Rights: This is less of a stand-alone article in the constitution, but the role of Alaska Natives in the operation of the state should be emphasized throughout the writing of the constitution. Most importantly, keep indigeous voices in mind when discussing land ownership, resource development, and natural rights.

History of the Problem

Pre-Colonization

Alaska's history begins around the year 14,000 BCE. A small group of foragers, likely a few thousand, journeyed across the Bering land bridge from modern day Russia into western Alaska. This group, the Amerind, eventually travelled south to populate the Americas. Approximately 3,000 years after this human migration, there was a second wave of movement. This time, the Na-Dene and Eskimo-Aleut moved north and settled in Alaska and Canada.[3] Less than 3,000 years later, around 8,000 BCE, the Bering land bridge was covered by the sea, cutting off Alaska from the rest of the world for many years to come.[4] During this time, native Alaskans settled and formed their own distinct cultures. In order to accurately represent the people of Alaska, this section will primarily focus on diving deeper into the lives and cultures of native Alaskans. Native Alaskans can very broadly be divided into two groups: the Aleut and the Inuit. This, however, is not an exhaustive history of all native Alaskans and there are many underrepresented or completely unrepresented groups within this very short summary.

The Aleut

First, it is important to note that the Aleut people identify with multiple names. The Aleut have also self-named themselves Unangax̂ and Sugpiaq. These are two distinct groups of Aleut people, although their languages are mutually comprehensible and they share a similar culture.[5] The Aleut people, before Russian contact, had mostly settled across the Aleutian Islands, the Shumagin Islands, and the western part of the Alaska Peninsula.

Traditionally, Aleut villages were established in close proximity to water where there were gravel beaches, allowing for watercraft to be easily transported. The Aleut are known for their advanced

[3] "Alaska's History," *Alaska Public Lands Information Centers*, accessed July 11, 2021, https://www.alaskacenters.gov/explore/culture/history.
[4] Winton, Harry N. M. "A Pacific Northwest Bibliography, 1940." *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 32, no. 2 (1941): 203-14. Accessed August 29, 2021. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40486453.
[5] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Aleut." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., June 4, 2019. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Aleut.

kayaks and are often regarded as expert boat builders and sailors.[6] Villages generally consisted of multiple related families and were governed by a chief. The chief was not chosen because of their physical strength, but was instead selected for their wisdom and diplomacy.[7] The Aleut lived in large, insulated homes called barabaras that were built into the ground, which were complete with a passage to enter the home and had a vent on the top to let smoke out.[8]

The Inuit

There are an incredibly vast number of native Alaskans and ensuring that this committee treats all these groups with the utmost respect is critical. Because the Inuit people have gone by many names over the years, it is important to note how to refer to them correctly. The Inuit people were, and occasionally still are, referred to as the Eskimo people. This term is widely considered within modern Alaska to be offensive due to its colonial nature, and it is therefore inappropriate to use within committee.[9]

Within the broad classification of the Inuit people, there are many smaller groups such as the Inupiat, Yupik, and Alutiit.[10] Before Russian contact, these groups mostly occupied the Northwest Arctic Borough, the Alaska North Slope, and Little Diomede Island. The Aleut people speak different languages depending on which region they inhabit; those who live in southwestern Alaska speak Yupik, while those in northern Alaska speak Inuit with each region having a distinct dialect.[11]

[6] "Aleut Native Tribe," Alaskan Nature, accessed July 11, 2021, http://alaskannature.com/aleut.htm.
[7] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019.
[8] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019.
[9] Kaplan, Lawrence. "Alaska Native Language Center." Inuit or Eskimo: Which name to use? Accessed August 29, 2021. https://www.uaf.edu/anlc/resources/inuit_or_eskimo.php.
[10] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Eskimo." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., November 28, 2020. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eskimo-people.
[11] Bergsland, Knut. "Eskimo-Aleut Languages." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., August 9, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eskimo-Aleut-languages.

A modern Alutiiq dancer in traditional festival garb.

The defining characteristics of the Inuit people are their ingenuity and adaptation to extreme weather. In the regions they inhabit, plant life is unable to flourish, meaning they have no trees and no farming. Instead, the Inuit rely on caribou, seal, walrus, whale meat, whale blubber, and fish as their major food sources.[12] The Inuit are also known for their ability to build boats, including one-manned vessels called kayaks and larger, collaborative boats known as umiaks.[13]

There are many adaptations that the Inuit people make to survive the harsh conditions in which they live. During the winters, they typically bundle up with caribou furs in order to stay warm and protect themselves against the wind. Additionally, during the winter the Inuit create homes out of ice and snow, typically known as igloos, while in the warmer summers, the Inuit people tend to live in tents

[12] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020.
[13] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020.

made using animal skins.[14] In order to quickly travel across the snowy terrain, the Inuit utilize dog sleds.[15]

Colonization

The first introduction of colonial forces was in 1784 when Russian explorers, who had discovered Alaska in 1741, created a settlement at Three Saints Bay.[16] Due to their isolation from 'Old World Diseases,' the native population did not have any sort of immunity from these illnesses. As a result, roughly 80% of the Aleut population died because of diseases contracted from the new Russian explorers.[17] The Aleut population was also frequently attacked by Russians, who used the Aleut people to work in the profitable fur market, and were exploited and subject to poor working conditions.

Within forty years of establishing the settlement at Three Saints Bay, Russian colonizers had created settlements throughout the region and were continuing to expand outward. Although the Russians had originally named Kodiak as the capital due to its proximity to Three Saints Bay, the capital was moved to Sitka in 1806.[18] The Russians continued expanding their settlements south along the Pacific coast to follow the most valuable otters for the fur market.[19] In addition to expanding their economic horizons, the Russians also introduced missionaries from the Russian Orthodox Church. The Russian Orthodox Church would go on to have a large cultural impact on the native people of Alaska.

Russian-American Company

In 1799, the Russian-American Company was formed. This company was not only tasked with continuing Russia's economic interests but was also responsible for establishing new settlements as

[14] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020.
[15] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020.
[16] Miller, Maynard M, and Donald Lynch. "Alaska." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., March 19, 2021. https://www.britannica.com/place/Alaska.
[17] "Our History," *Aleut Corporation*, accessed July 11, 2021, https://aleutcorp.com/our-corporation/our-history.
[18] Maynard and Lynch, 2021.
[19] Gibson, James R. "Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785-1841." *McGill-Queen's University Press*, 1992. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt804t3.

well as governing over those that already existed.[20] The manager of the company's operations, Alexander Baranov, essentially acted as the governor of Russian territory in Alaska. Following the Battle of Sitka in 1804, during which Russians fought and committed many war crimes against a group of Tlingit people, the Russians established their dominance in the global fur trade.[21] Under Baranov, many local Aleut people were forced to sign three-year contracts with the Russian-American company due to their hunting knowledge and skill.[22]

The management of the company did not stay in Alaska for long; in 1818, the company was privatized by the Russian Imperial Navy. In 1820, with the population of hunted animals beginning to dwindle, the long-term success of the company began to be threatened.[23] In 1824, the Russian-American Company came to a compromise with the United States, Great Britain, and Spain that established Russian control over Alaska. During this time, the company faced several challenges, including strained economic and diplomatic relations with Great Britain and increasingly low profits from Alaskan goods.[24] Additionally, the sea otter had been hunted to near extinction by the Russians.[25] Following the continuous decline of the company, Russia sold its business ventures in Alaska and allowed for the Russian-American Company's charter to expire in 1862.[26]

U.S. Purchase

By the 1860's, Alaska was no longer a viable Russian territory. Due to the conclusion of the Crimean War and the economic decline of value in Alaska, the Russian government was eager to sell its property. In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William Seward bought Alaska for 7.2 million dollars, which

[20] Maynard and Lynch, 2021.
[21] Wharton, David. *They Don't Speak Russian in SITKA: A New Look at the History of Southern Alaska*. Menlo Park, CA: Markgraf Publications Group, 1991.
[22] Lightfoot, Kent G. "Russian Colonization: The Implications of Mercantile Colonial Practices in the North Pacific." *Historical Archaeology* 37, no. 4 (October 20, 2016): 14–28. https://doi.org/10.1007/bf03376620.
[23] Mazour, Anatole G. "The Russian-American Company: Private or Government Enterprise?" *Pacific Historical Review* 13, no. 2 (1944): 168-73. Accessed August 29, 2021. doi:10.2307/3634611.
[24] The Editors of Encyclopaedia of Britannica. "Russian-American Company." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., February 9, 2018. https://www.britannica.com/topic/Russian-American-Company.
[25] Maynard and Lynch, 2021.
[26] Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018.

is equivalent to roughly 13 million dollars in 1955.[27] The treaty was officially ratified on April 9, 1867 and the U.S. gained control six months later.[28] Even though Seward only paid about two cents per acre of land, this decision was ridiculed for years. The American public was unable to understand why a land that could no longer provide extreme economic benefits was worthy of purchase. Seward was mocked for years, with Alaska facing nicknames such as "Seward's Folly," "Seward's Icebox," and "President Andrew Johnson's Polar Bear Garden."[29]

The Department Era (1877-1884)

Because Alaska was not recognized as a state, it was controlled by various agencies before a government was established. From its purchase through 1877, Alaska was managed by various commanders from the U.S. Army. However, the Army was needed to fight in the Nez Perce War.[30] As a result, the U.S. Treasury Department and then the U.S. Navy took over control of the territory, which displeased many Alaskans as they wanted federal recognition and state autonomy.[31] After many years of speaking out, they finally received what they desired.

The District of Alaska (1884-1912)

In 1884, following frequently changing government structures, Alaska was finally named a U.S. district by Congress.[32] Due to the recent close of the Civil War and related ongoing issues, the federal government was unable to devote time to Alaska. Through the passage of the First Organic Act, Congress established a governor, federal district courts, and schools within Alaska.[33] However, this system did not quite give Alaskans the autonomy they wanted. Because the District of Alaska was

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[27] History.com Editors. "Alaska." History.com. A&E Television Networks, August 21, 2018. https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/alaska.

[28] History.com Editors. "U.S. Purchase of Alaska Ridiculed as 'Seward's Folly.'" History.com. A&E Television Networks, March 29, 2021. https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/sewards-folly.

[29] History.com Editors, 2021.

[30] "Alaska's Heritage." *Alaska Humanities Forum*. Accessed July 12, 2021. https://web.archive.org/web/20050103122630/http://www.akhistorycourse.org/articles/article.php?artID=170.

[31] Poulson, Rebecca. "The Legacy OF Sitka's First Ten Years under the American Flag, 1867-1877." Alaska Historical Society. Accessed July 12, 2021. https://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/about-ahs/special-projects/150treaty/150th-resource-library/new-articles/the-legacy-of-sitkas-first-ten-years-under-the-american-flag-1867-1877/.

[32] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.

[33] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.; Maynard and Lynch, 2021

under federal control, the president was responsible for appointing the governor and all court officials, which included judges, courts, marshalls, etc. Most of the office-holders within the territory were not native to Alaska and chose to spend very little time getting to know the land and its people. Additionally, because Alaska did not have the power to create its own laws, the act enforced all of the laws established in Oregon to also be established in Alaska, as long as they were applicable.[34]

Still, Alaskans had no federal representation. There were no Congressional representatives from Alaska, and Alaskans had no say in who would become their next governor. Because of Alaska's natural resources, however, American companies wanted to influence the federal government's decisions of appointed officials. These businesses, whose headquarters were typically located in New England, had representatives that were able to sway Alaska's leadership in a laissez-faire direction.

In 1900, Congress replaced the First Organic Act with a Civil Code for Alaska; this finally provided Alaskans with a formal penal code. It was at this time that the capital of Alaska moved from Sitka to its current location, Juneau. This code also began to enforce taxes on Alaskan businesses such as fish canneries, mines, and other establishments through business licenses.[35] In 1906, Alaskans finally gained a voice in the federal government and were allotted one non-voting member in the House of Representatives.[36]

Resources

The increased utilization of Alaskan resources in the late 1800s created a need for additional regulation. The First Organic Act extended federal mining laws to Alaska, thus allowing citizens to file claims on land as well as establishing a federal land office in Sitka to regulate properties. These types of regulations continued to increase in 1897, when the federal government established the office of Surveyor General for the District of Alaska, which was tasked with the responsibility of surveying properties and settling land disputes. Two years later, Congress expanded the Homestead

[34] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.
[35] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.
[36] "Alaska Territory Delegates Credentials," *United States House of Representatives*, accessed July 22, 2021, https://history.house.gov/HouseRecord/Detail/15032436182?current_search_qs=%3FPreviousSearch%3D%26CurrentPage%3D1%26SortOrder%3DTitle.

Act to include the District of Alaska in order to encourage settlers to take advantage of free land and, in turn, provide valuable economic stimulation for the government. In the same year, the federal government opened Alaska to new railroad routes, following the system in place for the American west. Another important development came in 1900 when Congress expanded the public land survey system to include Alaska.[37] Similarly to the office of the Surveyor General, this system was integral in helping to survey properties and create more uniformity for the district.

Even though a few federal laws were passed in order to protect certain Alaskan game, people continued to do what they do best: overhunt and drive animals to extinction.[38] Specifically, around the year 1900, commercial fishing was rapidly rising. Those in the fishing industry had no regard for the dangers of overfishing; instead, they simply continued to harvest until they noticed populations dwindling. Moreover, fish were not the only victims of this phenomenon. As whaling was also gaining popularity during this time, bowhead whales, known for their oil, were nearly hunted to extinction. And, of course, animals covered in valuable fur were exploited as well. This overutilization did an immense amount of harm to native Alaskans, who relied on those resources for their survival and way of life.[39]

Gold Rush

In 1872, national attention turned to Alaska when gold was discovered near Sitka. As a response, by 1888 over 60,000 prospectors had settled in Alaska in search of more gold.[40] However, this migration was only the beginning. In 1896, prospector Skookum Jim struck gold in the western part of Canada, near the Klondike River. Although it took a year for the news to reach the continental United States, once people realized that great fortune could be waiting for them in Alaska, a flood of prospectors poured into the territory. Routes to this area were formed across Alaska and towns and cities along these trails flourished. However, the trek to seek gold was by no means an easy journey. Many people and animals lost their lives along the treacherous path due to the harsh conditions. Not only

[37] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.
[38] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.
[39] Gislason, Eric. "A Brief History of Alaska Statehood (1867-1959)." The University of Virginia. Accessed July 22, 2021. http://xroads.virginia.edu/~CAP/BARTLETT/49state.html.
[40] "Alaska's History," Alaska Centers, Alaska Public Lands Information Centers, accessed July 11, 2021, https://www.alaskacenters.gov/explore/culture/history.

did the incoming prospectors face immeasurable harm, but the native Alaskans that lived along those trails were commonly forced off of their land and harassed by travelers. By the time that gold was found again, this time near Nome in 1898, people were far more wary. The boom of people faded away, as did the towns that they had built.[41]

The Territory of Alaska (1912-1959)

In 1912, Alaska was recategorized as a federal territory with the passage of the Second Organic Act.[42] With this change of status, the Territory of Alaska was able to establish a bicameral legislature, consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives, that were finally elected by Alaskan citizens. This legislature, however, was extremely limited in what it was able to accomplish. In fact, the federal government outlined five specific responsibilities of the legislature but blocked off seventeen others. As another check on the legislature, the federal government was allowed to overrule any law passed by the legislature. The legislature only met once every two years, and even then, was not allowed to meet for more than sixty days.[43] Within this system, Alaska was split into four districts, with each district having the same number of representatives in the legislature despite variations in population. Each district was allotted four representatives and two senators.[44] In 1942, these numbers were expanded by Congress.[45]

Even though the first action of the Legislature in 1912 was to unanimously vote in favor of giving women the right to vote, it was far from an equitable body.[46] During this time, the Alaskan legislature began to codify discrimination against native Alaskans into law. Prior to the legislature, the vast number of native Alaskans were denied citizenship. This changed in 1915, when the body voted to allow native peoples to apply for citizenship. Citizenship, however, came at a great cost; native Alaskans were forced to completely abandon tribal customs and relationships. Fittingly, this

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[41] "What Was the Klondike Gold Rush?", *National Parks Service*, last modified June 25, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/klgo/learn/goldrush.htm.
[42] Gislason, n.d.
[43] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.
[44] "Territorial Legislature Organizes," *The Alaska State Legislature*, accessed July 22, 2021, https://akleg.gov/100years/legislature.php?id=-1.
[45] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, n.d.
[46] "The Territory of Alaska," *Alaska Humanities Forum*, accessed July 22, 2021, http://www.akhistorycourse.org/governing-alaska/the-territory-of-alaska/.

decision had to be verified by five white citizens.[47] After federal legislation (The Indian Citizenship Act of 1924) was enacted, native Alaskans were automatically granted citizenship. This development was upsetting to the majority of the legislature, and they responded in a similar way to the American south during the Jim Crow era. All Alaskans were forced to pass literacy tests to vote, but they were, of course, enforced specifically for native populations.[48] After protests against segregation, the Alaskan legislature passed the nation's first law outlawing discrimination on the basis of race in 1945.[49]

World War II

During the Second World War, Alaska was a target for the Japanese government. In 1942, the islands of Attu and Kiska were occupied for fifteen months.[50] Those who lived on the islands were interned by the Japanese government and were forced to live in poor conditions. They had inadequate access to food, healthcare, and shelter.[51] After months of bombings and a naval blockade, both islands were back under American control in 1943.[52] Alaska was also subject to Executive Order 9066, and forced their Japanese citizens to an internment camp at Fort Richardson.[53]

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[47] "Federal Indian Law for Alaska Tribes," *University of Alaska Fairbanks*, accessed July 22, 2021, https://www.uaf.edu/tribal/112/unit_2/citizenshipunitedstatesstateofalaskatribal%20.php.

[48] "First Territorial Legislature of Alaska," *National Parks Service*, accessed July 22, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/people/first-territorial-legislature-of-alaska.htm.

[49] Johnson, Erik. "The 19th Amendment, Elizabeth Peratrovich, and the Ongoing Fight for Equal Rights (U.S. National PARK SERVICE)." National Parks Service. U.S. Department of the Interior, December 17, 2020. https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/dena-history-peratrovich.htm.

[50] History.com, 2018

[51] "Aleutian Campaign (1942-1943)," *National Museum of the United States Air Force*, accessed July 22, 2021, https://web.archive.org/web/20070903201213/http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=1479.

[52] History.com Editors. "Battle of the Aleutian Islands." History.com. A&E Television Networks, June 30, 2020. https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/battle-of-the-aleutian-islands..; "Aleutian Islands War," *Explore North*, accessed July 22, 2021, https://explorenorth.com/library/military/aleutian_war-usarmy.html.

[53] "Japanese Internment in Alaska During World War II," *Alaska State Archives*, last modified September 26, 2019, https://archives.alaska.gov/education/internment.html.

Push for Statehood

Beginning in 1916, Alaskan representatives in the United States House of Representatives advocated for statehood.[54] Particularly after Alaska's contribution toward the United States during World War II, many Alaskans felt that they deserved an equal say in the union.[55] At the federal level, the path to statehood was paved by Alaskan governor Ernest Gruening and Alaska's Representative Bob Bartlett. Within the state, a group called the Alaskan Statehood Association formed in 1946. Advocates began to see a breakthrough in 1950, when a bill for Alaskan statehood passed the House but died in the Senate.[56] Unfortunately, the Korean War began later that same year, taking Alaska out of the spotlight. This setback, however, failed to stop Alaskan progress toward becoming a state. In 1955, the legislature passed an act authorizing a constitutional convention to take place in November of that year.[57]

[54] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, 2021.
[55] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, 2021.
[56] Gislason, n.d.
[57] *Alaska Humanities Forum*, 2021.

Roster

1. ***Rolland R. Armstrong, Juneau***

Rolland Armstrong just wants to make sure that everybody has a little faith in the new state. Armstrong was born in the city of Grapevine, Pennsylvania in 1910. Following his high school graduation, he pursued higher education at Grove City College. He had always been a religious man, and after finishing college, he decided to attend the Princeton Seminary in New Jersey and the Louisville Seminary in Kentucky. In 1937, where he was officially ordained as a minister in the state of Kentucky and worked at a Sunday school until 1940, when he moved to Alaska. In Alaska, he moved around and served as a minister at various Presbyterian churches in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and finally, Juneau. As an important member of the community in Juneau, he was invited to the convention and quickly decided to attend. Armstrong has practically lived his entire life in the church and has the connections to prove it. Not only do his colleagues span three major areas of Alaska, but he has also formed relationships with those in the continental United States. He has also kept in contact with his former colleagues in academia. At this convention, Armstrong has vowed to represent the interests of Christian Alaskans. Although he is committed to protecting the exercise of religion, he prefers to take an approach of spirituality without indoctrination. Therefore, he must balance his faith with his appreciation for individual liberties and religious freedom.

2. ***John B. Coghill, Nenana***

Well, if it isn't Mr. Republican himself. John B. Coghill was born in Fairbanks, Alaska in 1925. He graduated from Nenana Public Schools. Following graduation, he decided to work for a store that his father had established in 1917. He liked working as a merchant, and was always happy to make connections with his customers. His entire family lived in Alaska, so he had plenty of help with managing Coghill's General Store. He decided to get into politics in 1952 when he ran for a seat on the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives. He won this seat, and serves on the legislature as the convention begins. Coghill has made a wide variety of deep connections throughout his life, especially in his hometown of Nenana. Because he was born and raised in the town, the people around him trust and respect him. In the convention, Coghill wants to make sure that Alaska's

education system gets off to a good start. Being one of the few delegates that was actually born and educated in Alaska, he has a special expertise in this area and is more than willing to share his experience. Everything he does is motivated by his love for the state and his love for his fellow community members.

3. *Victor Fischer, Anchorage*

Victor Fischer is just about as remarkable as they come. Fischer was born in Berlin and lived much of his young life in Moscow as Hitler and Stalin rose to power. He managed to flee both regimes, but returned little more than a decade later as a member of the U.S. Army fighting in World War II. On his way across the Atlantic, he started reading a book about a faraway region of Alaska and fell in love. After the war, Fischer came to the state as an Urban Planner after getting Engineering and City Planning degrees from University of Wisconsin and MIT, respectively. He worked his way into civil service and the Territorial Legislature as a strong advocate for statehood. Fischer is a humble man, and is therefore hesitant to create a strong, centralized government, and instead prefers a more local focus. Fischer has strong connections in the academic world, both at his alma maters, University of Wisconsin and MIT, and at the universities within Alaska. He also has connections within Southcentral Alaskan city planners and local governments.

4. *Frank Peratrovich, Klawock*

Frank Peratrovich is one of the few Alaska Native delegates at the constitutional convention and among those who have spent the longest time in the state, having been born in Klawock, Alaska in 1895. Peratrovich made his way into the Klawock mayor's office, the territorial legislature, and eventually the Constitutional Convention Vice President's chair, but he didn't make it there without work and a deep involvement with his community. Peratrovich worked for most of his life as a businessman and fisherman throughout Southeast Alaska, where he has gained the trust and admiration of many by being pro-development, while maintaining Alaska Native cultural identity and subsistence. Peratovich is a strong defender of fishing, as a critical part of the Southeast economy and culture, and as such is skeptical of mining projects that would jeopardize water quality and fish health. Peratrovich's most significant connections and resources are in the Southeast, particularly within the fishing industry and Alaska Native communities.

5. ***Katherine D. Nordale, Juneau***

Katherine D. Nordale has always spoken her mind, and she doesn't plan on stopping now. Nordale was born in 1902 to a family in the small town of Rearden, Washington. Following her graduation from high school, she decided to continue her studies at Washington State University. After graduating, she chose to move to Alaska in 1925. She worked as both a teacher and a bank clerk in the city of Juneau, and in 1951, became the U.S. Collector of Customs. She served in this role until 1953. Nordale has always been a prolific member of her community, and has made connections spanning from Juneau to Washington. She keeps up with her colleagues, both those in education and in finance, and is a loyal friend. At the convention, Nordale plans to make sure that every detail of the constitution is thought-out. She plans to always put forward ideas when they come to her, and will be a creative asset to the convention. Even when she has doubt about an idea that is proposed, she will make her opinion clear.

6. ***Helen Fischer, Anchorage***

If the convention were awarding superlatives, Helen Fischer would be a frontrunner for most popular. Fischer was born in 1912 in the small town of Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. After graduating high school, she pursued her education at the University of Minnesota and the Northwest College of Speech in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After she got her degrees, she decided to settle down and serve as a homemaker for a few years. Her family moved to Alaska in 1945, and she quickly became popular in her new community. As a leader in the social scene, she made friends with many of the residents of Anchorage. She had always been engaged in politics, and joined the Anchorage Democrats to stay active. Fischer makes connections wherever she goes, whether that be through various universities in Minnesota or with her many friends and neighbors in Anchorage. Fischer wants to represent women's rights at this convention and plans to ensure that women are explicitly protected in the new constitution. She carries her passion for individual liberties and representation with her.

7. Marvin R. Marston, Anchorage

Marvin R. Martson has always been in command, and plans to treat this convention no differently. Martson was born in a log cabin in Tyler, Washington in 1889. At age five, his family made the move to Seattle on a covered wagon. He moved to Alaska at the age of fifteen to find work as a longshoreman, but returned to Washington to graduate high school. He then joined the Washington National Guard. He moved to Illinois in 1909, graduated from Greenville College, and joined the Illinois National Guard. Following his service, he spent the 1920's investing time into multiple businesses. When World War II broke out, he served as a major for the Army Air Corps. This took him back to Alaska again, where he was able to travel and see various native cultures. From his experience in service, he organized the Alaska Scouts. He truly has been everywhere, and made many friends along the way. He's made stops in Washington, Illinois, and all over Alaska. He has made a commitment to keep Alaska safe and secure. At the convention, this means balancing the security of his state with the individual liberties of its citizens. He will make sure that his opinions on Alaska's military are heard, and that he stays dedicated to his principles.

8. Burke Riley, Haines

Burke Riley was never one to stay in the same place for long. Riley was born in the small town of Swan Lake, Montana in 1914 but moved to Washington to pursue his education shortly after high school. He graduated from Yakima Valley Community College, and decided to attend classes at the University of Washington. In 1937, he was forced to drop out as a result of his financial situation. He moved to Alaska the following year, and worked as a clerk until he began serving as a courier for the U.S. Air Force during World War II. Following the war, he became a lawyer, served as Secretary of Alaska, and won a seat on the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives in 1954. Riley has connections across the nation as he keeps in contact with those with whom he served, writes to his classmates in Washington, and keeps up with his family in Montana. Following his invitation to the convention, Riley has strengthened his resolve to gain Alaska the full autonomy that it deserves. He wants to ensure that this convention guarantees Alaska a strong constitution and that Alaska begins its statehood as an example to all others.

9. Frank Barr, Fairbanks

When Frank Barr was invited to the convention, he knew that he wanted to help move Alaska in the 'flight' direction. Born in Colorado in 1903, he began travelling when he joined the U.S. Army in 1918. It was here that he found his love for flight as he began training to be a pilot. Following his service, he moved to Michigan and joined the National Guard. In 1932, he made the move to Alaska and founded the North Canada Air Express where he piloted for the airline until 1937, when he moved to Fairbanks and began work for Alaska Airlines. It was here that he became involved in politics. He won a seat on the Alaska Territorial Senate in 1949 and is currently serving as this convention begins. Barr has a host of connections, including colleagues in the U.S. Army, National Guard, and various airlines, as well as significant political power. During this convention, he plans to balance his business interests with his love for Alaska's beautiful nature. He plans to bring his strong, democratic principles into the convention and have his voice heard.

10. John C. Boswell, Fairbanks

John Boswell was born with a pickaxe in one hand and lantern in the other. Growing up in Oregon with a family of miners, he developed a love for mining and natural resource extraction at a young age. After moving to Alaska in 1926, he took a job working for the Fairbanks Exploration Company and he continues to serve in an influential role at the company as the convention meets. Besides his corporate connections, John also has ties to the University of Alaska, where he was the alumni association president. A cautious man, John pays attention to even the most minute details being included in the constitution. John wants this committee to prove to the United States that Alaska has what it takes to become the next state in the Union.

11. Dorothy J. Awes, Anchorage

If Dorothy Awes saw a glass ceiling in front of her, it became her job to shatter it. Dorothy was born in 1918 and grew up in the small city of Moorehead, Minnesota. She earned her degree in law from the University of Iowa College of Law and quickly landed a job in government. To continue her work for the Office of Price Administration, she moved to Alaska in 1945. She became the first woman to be admitted to the Alaska Bar Association and held various public offices in Alaska: she served in the

Territorial House of Representatives, was an Assistant District Attorney, and served on the Board of Directors for the League of Women Voters in Anchorage. Her connections are truly limitless, from colleagues in academia to coworkers in many state and a few federal agencies. With her dedication to public service, Dorothy hopes to create an inclusive and representative constitution for all Alaskans. Ensuring that women are represented and protected is her top priority, especially as she advocates for a Bill of Rights to be included.

12. Benjamin D. Stewart, Sitka

Benjamin D. Stewart lived by one key principle, both in life and in work: integrity. Originally born in 1878 in the town of Missoula, Montana, Stewart earned his degree in mining engineering from the University of Montana. Shortly thereafter, he took a job as a mine engineer and consultant. He quickly transitioned into government service; in 1919, he was awarded the position of Territorial Mine Inspector. Following many successful years in this position, he became the Commissioner of Mines from 1935 to 1949. In this role, he created the Territorial Department of Mines, which created a public library of geological information about the land of Alaska. In addition to this role, he was also ex-officio Labor Commissioner for Alaska and worked to promote safety standards for laborers. Throughout his time in Alaska's mining and government scenes, Stewart has formed connections in many departments. He knows individuals from mining companies, colleagues in the offices that regulate them, and information about how mining and natural resource extraction work. Stewart is a futurist and has high hopes for Alaska. He hopes to create a state where people can work safely and natural resources can be protected.

13. James P. Doogan, Fairbanks

James P. Doogan was born to stand out. The oldest of twelve children, Doogan is one of few delegates at the convention that was born in Alaska. After his father died when he was fifteen, he decided to drop out of high school to support his family. Although he returned to school at the University of Alaska in 1937, he never graduated. Instead, he worked for several mining companies over the years, including the Alaska-Juneau Gold Mine, the Fairbanks Exploration Company, the Deadwood Creek Mining Company, and even a mine in Canada. When World War II began, Doogan enlisted in the Air Force as a mechanic. Following the war, he bought and operated a delivery

company. Afterwards, he began to pursue politics; he served on the city council of Fairbanks and was an active member of the Democratic party. Doogan has connections throughout the mining industry, colleagues in the military, and contacts within his political party. A devout Christian, Doogan wants to ensure that the Alaskan constitution provides religious protections and strives to use his powerful voice to protect Alaska's natural resources.

14. Sadie Neakok, Barrow

Sadie Neakok led a life of firsts. Born in 1916 to a white father and an Iñupiaq mother, she was the first of ten children. Although she attended high school in San Francisco, California, she returned to Alaska to attend the University of Alaska. Over the years, she worked at both a hospital and a school. Her path from medical care to teaching to social work was unprecedented at the time. Neakok has many resources available to her: peers in academia, friends and family in native culture, and her many colleagues from various jobs. Neakok is motivated at this convention to ensure the protection of native rights. As a child, she saw discrimination against native people at the hands of the U.S. Navy and will do everything in her power to ensure that this practice will not continue into the future. A proud advocate for both native people and women, she has a powerful voice at the convention and plans to use it.

15. Nora Guinn, Bethel

Nora Guinn is exactly what this committee needs: a strong woman that will advocate for native rights. Guinn was born in 1920 in the Akiak Native Community. Although she initially went to school in Eklutna, another native community, she moved to Portland to attend and graduate from high school. It was here that she met her husband and they moved back to Alaska shortly after getting married. Guinn taught for the Bureau of Indian Affairs before working as a healthcare aid and also advising negotiations with outside agencies. In 1945, she moved to Bethel to care for her ten children and became a pillar of strength for her community. At the time of the convention, she is getting ready to launch her legal career and get involved in the Alaskan government. Guinn has ties to many native communities where she lived, attended school, and visited for her work. She has connections with her colleagues in the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the many people with whom she worked on negotiations. Guinn is dedicated to both native and women's rights, and wants to use this

convention as a way to enshrine those rights going forward. An incredibly strong and powerful woman, she will always make her voice heard and fight for what she believes is equitable.

16. Irene E. Ryan, Anchorage

When Irene E. Ryan visited Alaska, it was love at first 'flight'. Ryan was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1909 but moved to find work in Texas. When she was working in Texas, she heard stories about an aviator in the new U.S. District of Alaska, and inspiration struck. At the age of 22, she moved to Alaska and started taking flying lessons at the Merrill Field of Anchorage. In 1932, she became the first female aviator in the district. After returning to the continental United States to earn a degree from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, she quickly returned to Alaska where she worked as a consultant to various industries, and specifically, natural resource development. She worked with various industry leaders, and continued her career while designing several airports and investing. Ryan has connections across the country, from family in Massachusetts to peers in New Mexico and to many industry leaders in Alaska. She faces this convention with the difficult challenge of balancing her desire to keep Alaska beautiful with her wish to work with her business colleagues. For her, however, balance has never been a problem.

17. Hazel P. Heath, Homer

The second she got her invitation to attend the convention, Hazel P. Heath knew that she was 'berry' ready to make an impact. Born in the small town of Athena, Oregon in 1909, Heath attended a business school in Seattle shortly after her high school graduation. After 1928, she moved with her husband to Alaska in order to pursue a defense job. She quickly came to realize that she loved living in Alaska, and decided to tap into her entrepreneurial spirit. She founded Alaska Wild Berry Products in 1946 and ran a successful business selling preserves made from local berries. Additionally, she founded an art shop and gallery that she owned with her husband, becoming prominent in the arts and crafts scene. Heath has many friends with whom she keeps in touch, including her peers interested in arts and crafts, her business associates, and her former classmates. Her company and gallery are still running successfully as she makes her way to the convention. Heath is a prolific Republican, and plans to make her ideology prevalently known at Alaska's founding. She's worked

for everything that she's earned and has built a company up from the ground; she plans to continue that trend with the state itself.

18. Della Keats, Kotzebue

When Della Keats saw something that she could make better, she always jumped into action. Keats was born into a small Inuit community in the Kotzebue region of Alaska and grew up surrounded by native culture. She was raised in a time of large cultural shifts within her community. She combined the old, traditional ways of doing things with new and foreign ones. Keats was always interested in science and human physiology, and began to practice medicine by the time she reached 25. Keats used her hands to heal and was known for integrating Western medicine into more traditional Alaskan medicine. Keats has kept her ties to her family and friends in the Kotzebue region strong but has continued to meet new people in the field of medicine along the way. Keats has the admiration and trust of her entire community, and has gained respect from Alaskans across the territory. Going into the convention, she wants to preserve native rights and cultures to the greatest possible extent. She represents a community that has not yet been truly represented on the national stage, and is tasked with furthering both native and women's rights.

Glossary

Approval Voting: Approval voting is a system of voting in which citizens cast votes for any number of candidates they want rather than choosing a single candidate. The candidate with the most votes wins. Proponents argue that approval voting rewards candidates with whom a large percentage of the population would be comfortable, rather than candidates who appeal strongly only to minorities of the population.

Business license: A permit issued by a government agency that gives an individual the authority to run a business.

Crimean War: A war fought between Russia and Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire. The war was fought from 1853-1856, and caused the Russian government to lose massive amounts of both money and soldiers.

Down-Ballot: Down-ballot is a phrase that refers to elections for smaller elected offices. The phrase comes from the literal placement of elected offices on a ballot. Usually the larger elections (for instance, President and U.S. Senate) will be placed at the top of the paper ballot, while offices such as State House or Mayor are placed lower.

Executive Order 9066: An executive order issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor (1942) that forced all Americans of Japanese descent to be held in concentration camps.

First Organic Act: Passed in 1884, this act established Alaska as a district of the United States and defined its government structure. This act provided Alaskans with very little autonomy and gave the federal government total authority over the district.

Homestead Act: An act passed by Congress in 1862 that gave 160 acres of federal land to any U.S. citizen. In order to qualify for the land, people had to meet two criteria: living on the land for at least five years and establishing a home and crops.

Indian Citizenship Act of 1924: An act that granted all Native Americans born within the United States their citizenship. This act, however, lacked protections for voting rights.

Jim Crow: An era of segregation following the Civil War, notably in the American south, that was characterized by state and local laws codifying segregation.

Laissez-faire: A hands-off approach to economics categorized by minimal regulations and little government interference.

Literacy tests: Tests given as a prerequisite to vote that evaluated a person's reading and writing skills. They were often made purposefully difficult and were selectively administered to those the state wished to disenfranchise.

Nez Perce War: A war fought in the American West between the U.S. government and several allied Native American tribes. The war lasted from June 1877 through October 1877.

Old World Diseases: Diseases prevalent in Europe before colonization of the Americas. Native Americans had never encountered these diseases before, and therefore had no immunity to them. As a result, native populations were highly susceptible to these illnesses.

Public Land Survey System: A system used in the United States to divide, catalog, and describe property for sale and settling.

Proportional Representation: Proportional representation is a system of voting in which citizens vote for parties, not candidates. The legislative branch is then populated proportionally to that vote. For instance, if party #1 receives 42% of the vote, party #2 receives 23%, and party #3 receives 35%, the legislature would consist of representatives of those three parties in exactly that proportion. Proportional representation is popular in Europe and other parliamentary democracies.

Ranked-Choice Voting: Ranked-choice voting is a system of voting in which citizens rank the candidates on their ballots rather than choosing a single candidate. Proponents of ranked-choice voting argue that it allows citizens to express their conscience without neglecting their party's primary candidate, along with numerous other benefits. Watch this video to see how ranked-choice voting works: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Z2fRPRkWvY

Second Organic Act: Passed in 1912, this act established Alaska as a territory of the United States and redefined its government structure. Though their autonomy was still limited, Alaskans could elect representatives to their state legislature and had the authority to create their own laws.

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