



Alaska's historic and cultural influences are prevalent throughout the state, from Russian Orthodox churches, to remnants of the Klondike gold rush and the traditions of Alaska Native people still practiced today.

20,000 years ago – The first inhabitants of Alaska cross the Bering Land Bridge from Siberia.

1741 – Russian explorers led by Vitus Bering arrive in North America and establish outposts for fur trade.

1784 – Russian whalers and fur traders establish the first non-indigenous settlement in Alaska on Kodiak Island. The Russian influence is still visible in Southwest and Inside Passage communities today.

1867 – U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward offers Russia \$7.2 million, equivalent to two cents per acre, for Alaska. Initially, the purchase is considered "Seward's Folly."

1897 – The beginning of the Klondike gold rush, which sends thousands of gold prospectors north in hopes of striking it rich.

1902 – President Theodore Roosevelt establishes the Tongass National Forest. Located in the Inside Passage, it is the largest national forest in the United States at 17 million acres.

1903 – Alaska Central Railway builds the first railroad in Alaska starting in Seward and extending 50 miles north. Alaska Central Railway will later become the Alaska Railroad.

1906 – District of Alaska is authorized to send a non-voting delegate to Congress and the capital is moved from Sitka to Juneau.

1912 – The District of Alaska is renamed Territory of Alaska. Mount Katmai erupts and forms the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes.

1913 – The first Alaska Territorial Legislature convenes. The first law to pass grants women the right to vote.

1916 – The first bill for Alaska statehood is introduced in Congress.

1922 – Alaska Native voting rights are established.

1923 – The Alaska Railroad is completed, commemorated by a visit by President Warren G. Harding.

1924 – Congress extends citizenship to all Native Americans and Alaska Native peoples in the United States. Tlingit William Paul, Sr., is the first Alaska Native elected to the Alaska Legislature.

1942 – On June 3, 1942, Japan bombs Dutch Harbor and occupies the islands of Attu and Kiska, which are part of the Aleutian Chain, spurring massive a military buildup in this remote part of Alaska and prompting the beginning of construction work on the Alaska Highway. Later, the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area is designated to remember the troops who fought in Alaska during WWII and Native Aleuts who lost their homes.

1942 – The Alaska Highway is completed, and extends from Dawson Creek, British Columbia to Fairbanks.

1953 – An oil well drilled near Eureka on the Glenn Highway marks the beginning of Alaska's modern oil history.

1959 – Alaska becomes the 49th state on January 3, 1959, making it the largest state in the union.

1968 – Oil is discovered at Prudhoe Bay, North America's largest oil field.

1971 – Richard Nixon signs the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, settling land claims with Alaska Native people and establishing Native corporations.

1977 – The trans-Alaska oil pipeline is completed. The pipeline totals 800 miles in length and is visible from space.

1980 – President Carter signs the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act to establish 15 National Park Service areas in Alaska, nearly doubling the amount of national public lands.

2009 – Alaska's 50th anniversary of statehood is recognized with events and celebrations throughout the state.