

## Alaskan Statehood

The fight for Alaska statehood began in the early 20th century, after gold rushes in the North brought national attention to Alaska. Since the Alaska purchase in 1867, Alaska had been under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army (1867-1877), the U.S. Treasury Department (1877-1879) and the U.S. Navy (1879-1884), before becoming the District of Alaska in 1884 with a territorial governor appointed by the president of the United States.

In 1906, Alaska was given a non-voting delegate in Washington. In 1912, Congress passed a bill written



by Judge James Wickersham, making Alaska a territory. Although many Alaskans insisted they deserved to be a full-fledged state, it wasn't until the 1940s that the U.S. government began to seriously consider its statehood.

During World War II, the Defense Department constructed military bases and the Alaska Highway. When the Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor and occupied Attu and Kiska islands in 1942, the strategic military people remained in the territory, but adversaries of statehood argued that its population was still too sparse and its location too distant for it to be a state.

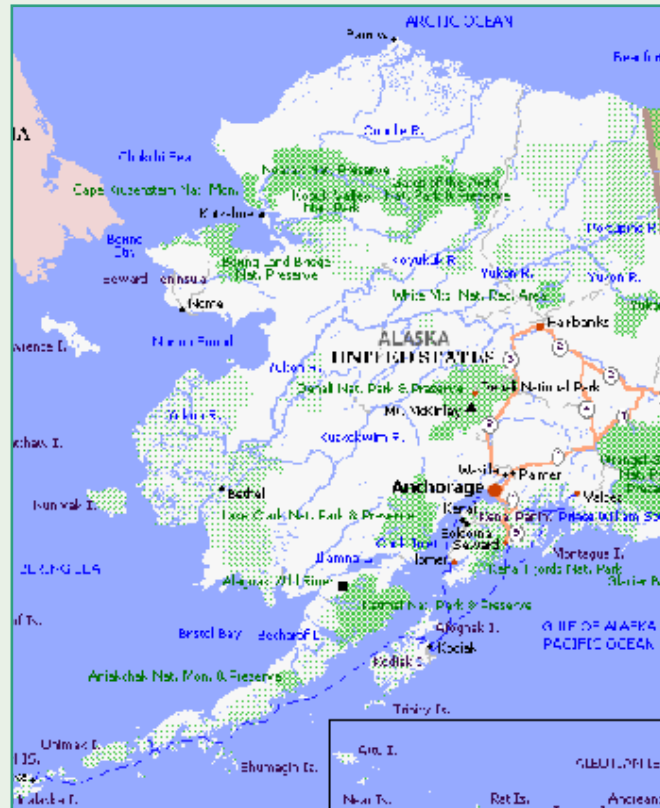
Another argument against statehood was Alaska's lack of a sound economic base. The discovery of oil in 1957 helped the territory leap the final hurdle toward becoming a state. As Alaska's immense wealth of resources was realized, Congress was quickly convinced to disregard past arguments against statehood. On January 3, 1959, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law the 49th state of the union.

## The Unimaginably Big State

Alaska is so huge, so wild, and so sparsely populated, that it's almost incomprehensible.

The total land area is double that of Texas, the next largest state. Less than 5 percent of the state's terrain is covered by glaciers and ice fields. However, even this small percentage gives it a hundred times more glacial area than the rest of North America.

With approximately 600,000 people, Alaska ranks second to last among the 50 states in population. If New York City's borough of Manhattan had the same population density as Alaska, only about 30 people would live there; if all Manhattanites were to divvy up Alaska, they'd have more than 200 acres apiece.



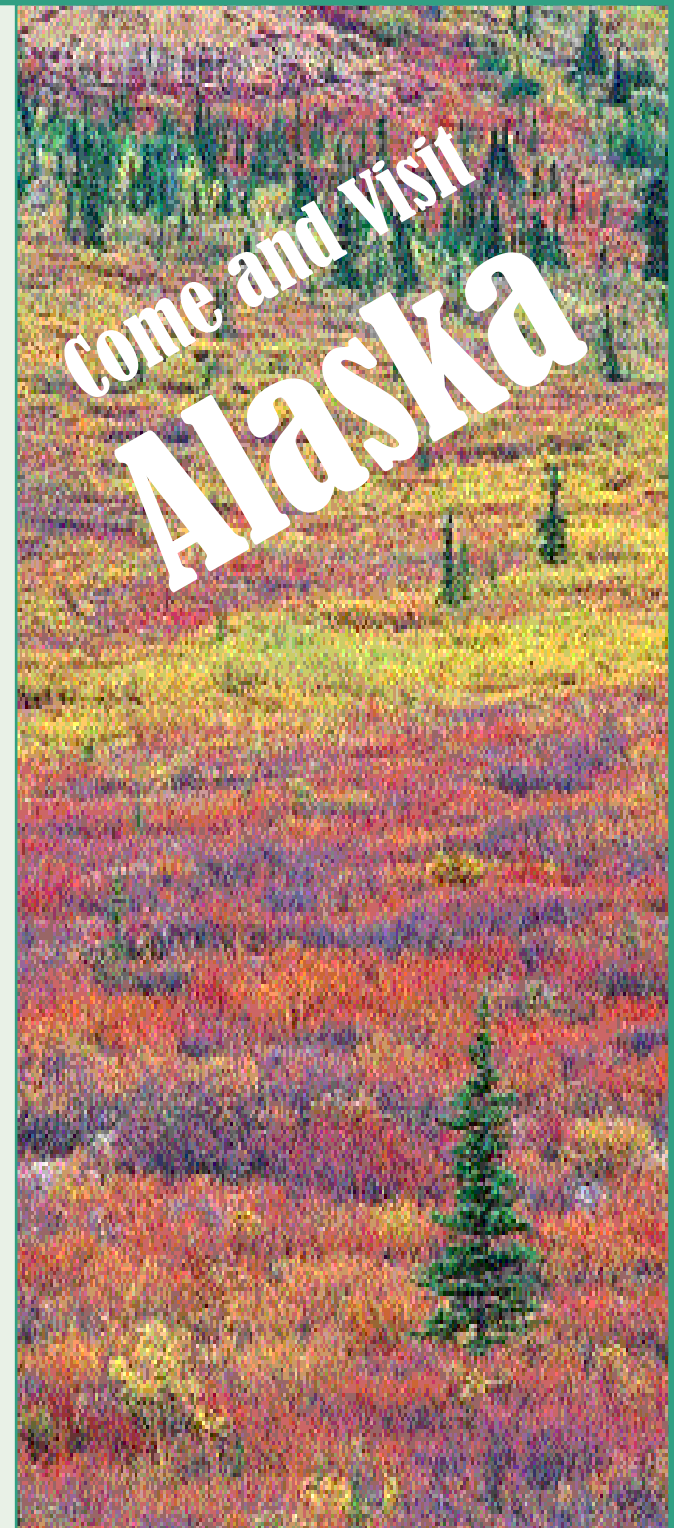
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# Alaska

## Land of Extremes

Alaska encompasses some of the most diverse terrain in the United States. Mount McKinley (20,320 feet) is the highest point in North America. Just off the coast, the Aleutian Trench plunges to 25,000 feet below sea level, making it one of the Pacific's deepest ocean troughs. Alaska's coastline comprises more than 5,500 miles along the Pacific Ocean more than 5,500 miles along the Pacific Ocean and another 1,700 miles on the Arctic Ocean. Southeast Alaska is the state's Panhandle, a coastal region dissected by the Inside Passage. This intricate network of narrow waterways, with rugged, forested mountains rising from the water's edge, extends along the western edge of Canada from south of Ketchikan to Skagway. Central Alaska includes the south-central coast and the interior. The coastal region is a continuation of southeastern Alaska, stretching along the Gulf of Alaska to the Kenai Peninsula.

## Wildlife

Whales, porpoises, otters, sea lions, eagles, puffins and bear in the beautiful surroundings of calving glaciers, fjords, snow fields and rocky coastlines. Enjoy locally caught seafood for dinner. Go ashore for a hike or to explore a stream full of spawning salmon. Kayak in safe and sheltered waters. Get away from the mainstream of visitors in Alaska and experience the uniqueness of Prince William Sound.

## History

From the lush landscape of Kodiak and the Aleutian Islands and to the rocky, furmarole-laden terrain of the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes, Southwest Alaska is unlike any other place on earth. Southwest is known for several things, but largely for its brown bear population. Two of the world's most popular viewing areas are in Southwest Alaska. As a major hub for commercial seafood harvests, and with the busiest commercial fishing ports in the world, Southwest Alaska boasts some of Alaska's best fishing. And history and culture buffs will also be fascinated with the prominent displays from the Russian era, ruins from World War II and the Native people who still reside in Southwest Alaska. A land of almost untouched beauty and timeless heritage, Southwest Alaska is truly where majesty, history and industry meet.

