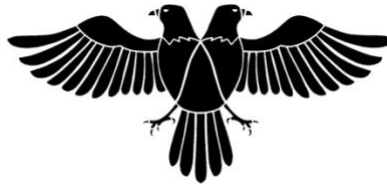


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First Comprehensive Guide to Landmark Native Land Claims Act Released
Alaska Historical Society Caps Two Years of Work with 1,200-Page, 3-Volume Project

The first-ever comprehensive guide to historical sources about the landmark Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), that marked its 50th anniversary last year, is being released this month by the Alaska Historical Society (AHS).

The three-volume, nearly 1,200-page “Guide to Sources for the Study of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act” identifies the vast majority of documents in existence about the historic claims act legislation located in archives, libraries, personal collections and on-line from Alaska to Washington, D.C. It serves as the premier information gateway for researchers, historians and those interested in the fascinating history of how the largest land claims settlement in U.S. history became law.

The legislation, which passed Congress and was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1971, resolved long-standing issues surrounding aboriginal land claims in Alaska and stimulated long-lasting economic development through the allocation of 44 million acres of land and nearly \$1 billion to Alaska Native corporations.

The AHS spent more than two years identifying documents about the act and detailing where they are located and how they can be accessed. The project unearthed numerous fascinating “gems” leading to passage of the act, such as:

- A 20-page report about the first statewide meeting of Alaska Native leaders in Anchorage in 1966 that laid the groundwork for establishment of the Alaska Federation of Natives.
- A 1970 speech by President Nixon on Indian policy in which he called for a new approach to the federal treatment of Native people, a historic change from termination to self-determination.
- A speech by Dr. Henry Forbes, whose financial backing helped establish the *Tundra Times* and who worked with Howard Rock, the newspaper's founder and editor.

“The Alaska Historical Society has produced a valuable resource guide to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act,” said Tlingit elder and land claims activist, Irene Rowan, who also served in Washington, D.C. in the 1970s as special assistant for Alaska programs to the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs in the Department of the Interior. “This tool is important to those wishing to learn who was involved - why, how and who benefitted. The guide will be useful in so many ways for so many people for many years to come. I commend and thank the AHS for taking on this mammoth and important project.”

“ANCSA was a major turning point in the history of Alaska Natives and their relationships to local, state and federal governments,” said Chuck Smythe, Senior Ethnologist with the Sealaska Heritage Institute. “This invaluable sourcebook provides a guide to primary and secondary sources for understanding what led to this act and its aftermath which is still unfolding across the state.”

The project is organized into three separate documents for ease of use. Volume 1 is an inventory of primary sources about the act detailing where specific historic documents are housed and how to view them. Sites include university, state and national archives, presidential libraries, museums, on-line databases and agencies such as the National Park Service.

Volume 2 is an annotated bibliography of published and unpublished sources of information about the act including books, articles, films, websites, major archival collections and even college theses and term papers. For example, it includes the college research paper Iñupiaq leader Willie Hensley wrote in 1966 that brought to light the legal reasons Natives had a claim to land.

Volume 3 is a guide for educators wanting to teach about ANCSA and features curriculum approaches and key questions to pursue with their students.

The guide is a fully searchable and navigable electronic PDF document available online on the AHS website (<https://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/discover-alaska/resources-for-the-study-of-the-1971-alaska-native-claims-settlement-act/>). It is also available on Scholarworks, a digital repository for University of Alaska research at: <https://scholarworks.alaska.edu/handle/11122/12594/browse?type=dateissued>

Key funding for the project came from Alaska Native regional corporations including Doyon, Sealaska, Calista, Bering Straits and Koniag, as well as the Rasmuson Foundation and Atwood Foundation.

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