

ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

ALASKA IS: HOW WE LIVE WITH EACH OTHER PART 1: JOURNEY



Untitled (Portrait of Bessie Couture, late 19th to early 20th century)

Gelatin print
Bessie Couture Collection, Anchorage Museum, 1987.002.044c

ANCHORAGE
MUSEUM

UNIT AT A GLANCE

Learn more about Alaska and its place before and during the Great Migration.

AK Studies/History: Students will examine three photographs from the Anchorage Museum collection and calculate provisions for three months at sea.

Language Arts: Students will examine three photographs from the Anchorage Museum collection and take photographs, discussing the ethics involved in creating an accompanying narrative.

STANDARDS

Alaska Geography Standards:

- B.1 know that places have distinctive geographic characteristics
- B.3 relate how people create similarities and differences among places
- B.6 make informed decisions about where to live, work, travel, and seek opportunities
- D.1 know that the need for people to exchange goods, services, and ideas creates population centers, cultural interaction, and transportation and communication links
- E.1 understand how resources have been developed and used

Alaska History Standards:

- A.5 understand that history is a narrative told in many voices and expresses various perspectives of historical experience
- A.6 know that cultural elements, including language, literature, the arts, customs, and belief systems, reflect the ideas and attitudes of a specific time and know how the cultural elements influence human interaction
- B. A student should understand historical themes through factual knowledge of time, places, ideas, institutions, cultures, people, and events
- C.1 use appropriate technology to access, retrieve, organize, and present historical information
- C.4 use historical perspective to solve problems, make decisions, and understand other traditions
- D.4 recognize and demonstrate that various issues may require an understanding of different positions, jobs, and personal roles depending on place, time, and context

Alaska English Standards:

Writing Standards

- 1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence
- 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation

Speaking and Listening Standards

- 1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively
- 3. Identify and evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
- 4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range or formal and informal tasks

MATERIALS

AK Studies/History:

Paper
Writing utensils
Calculator
Laptop

[EFIN Monthly Marine Fuel Prices](#)

Language Arts:

Disposable cameras
Writing utensils
Paper

KEY TERMS

<i>journey</i>	the act of traveling from one place to another one
<i>greenhorn</i>	an inexperienced crew member of a whaling vessel
<i>part/piece/lay</i>	the proportional share from a voyage per crew member
<i>boomtown</i>	a town or community experiencing a sudden large influx of population due to massive economic opportunity
<i>homesteader</i>	a person who settles and lives on land provisioned by the government
<i>The Great Migration</i>	The continuous outflux of African-American migration from the southern United States into the western and northern states between 1910 and 1970

CLOSE-LOOKING

TIME FRAME Approximately 40 minutes

MATERIALS *Untitled (Portrait of Bessie Couture, late 19th to early 20th century)*, Bessie Couture Collection, Anchorage Museum; 1987.002.044c
Untitled, Candy Waugaman Collection, Anchorage Museum; B1998.025.192 *Military portraits and photographs, and ephemera (Ed Wesley, Trans Alaska Pipeline, Security)*, Ed Wesley Collection, Anchorage Museum; B2021.004.100

DIRECTIONS 1. Begin by looking closely at provided photographs. Use the questions below to guide discussion.

[30 min.]

CLOSE-LOOKING: Look closely, quietly at the objects for a few minutes.

OBSERVE: Share your observations about each photograph.



Untitled (Portrait of Bessie Couture, late 19th to early 20th century), Bessie Couture Collection, Anchorage Museum; 1987.002.044c

ASK: What do you notice about this image?
Describe the person that you see in this image.
What might the person in the image be thinking?

Why might the person in this photo have had this photo taken?
What does this remind you of?
What more can you find?



Untitled, Candy Waugaman Collection, Anchorage Museum; B1998.025.192

ASK: What do you notice about this image?
How would you describe the people in this image.
What might the people in the image be doing?
When do you think this image was taken?
What does this remind you of?
What more can you find?



Military portraits and photographs, and ephemera (Ed Wesley, Trans Alaska Pipeline, Security), Ed Wesley Collection, Anchorage Museum; B2021.004.100

ASK: What do you notice about this image?
Describe the objects and person that you see in this image.
What might the person in the image be doing?
In what season do you think this image takes place?
What does this remind you of?
What more can you find?

DISCUSS: Use the [20 Questions Deck](#) for more group discussion questions about the photographs.

2. As a class, discuss the term *journey*. Invite students to share their thoughts about what *journey* means to them.

[10 min.]

ALASKA STUDIES/HISTORY: THREE MONTHS AT SEA

TIME FRAME

Approximately 50 minutes

MATERIALS

Paper
Writing utensils
Calculator
Laptop

[EFIN Monthly Marine Fuel Prices](#)

DIRECTIONS

1. Travel comes with many costs. Invite students to imagine they are going on a trip. Discuss what events or necessities will require money on these trips. Write student responses on the board. Prompt students to consider how much a typical trip would cost, factoring in costs of fuel or travel tickets.

[5 min.]

2. Explain to students that calculating expenses for voyages such as those of whaling ships in the 19th century meant being out at sea for months at a time before being able to come back to a port to restock. Invite students to form groups of 4 to 5 and deliberate how to calculate surviving three months out at sea in a modern fishing boat. Assume that the vessel is paid for and has access to communications and capacity to refrigerate, freeze, and cook food.

[5 min.]

3. Pass out laptops and share the [EFIN Monthly Marine Fuel Prices](#) with students. Assign each group one vessel (listed by code of three letters and a number) and a

consecutive three-month period within this year and invite them to calculate fuel costs for that three-month period. As they calculate, engage students to discuss why prices may differ among vessels and times of year. An example is in the image below.

[10 min.]

4. In their individual groups, explain to students that they will calculate costs in addition to fuel by searching the Internet for prices. Remind students that equipment such as weather-specific gear, tools, and medical supplies also factor into their voyage in addition to food and that their supplies should last them three months. Invite students to total up the costs of their voyage and to keep it within their group.

[15 min.]

5. Once finished, invite each group to present their voyage cost estimate as a dollar figure. Ask each group how they arrived at their figures and to discuss their process. Reflect with the class: *what did you find interesting or challenging about trying to figure out the total cost of supplies? Why might these types of calculations be important for those out at sea for long periods of time?*

[15 min.]

2021	9	7	AK	YAK	Yakutat	YAK1	\$2,076.00	\$3.460	1
2021	10	5	AK	ADK	Adak	ADK1	\$245.57	\$3.721	1
2021	10	5	AK	AKU	Akutan	AKU1	\$.00	\$.000	0 call not connecting
2021	10	5	AK	COR	Cordova	COR1	\$219.12	\$3.320	1
2021	10	5	AK	DIL	Dillingham	DIL1	\$294.29	\$4.459	1
2021	10	5	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT2	\$231.00	\$3.500	1
2021	10	5	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT3	\$221.10	\$3.350	1
2021	10	5	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT4	\$221.10	\$3.350	1
2021	10	5	AK	HOM	Homer	HOM3	\$208.56	\$3.160	1
2021	10	5	AK	JNU	Juneau	JNU5	\$207.24	\$3.140	1
2021	10	5	AK	KOD	Kodiak	KOD1	\$207.24	\$3.140	1
2021	10	5	AK	KOD	Kodiak	KOD2	\$206.58	\$3.130	1
2021	10	5	AK	PBG	Petersburg	PBG1	\$203.28	\$3.080	1
2021	10	5	AK	SEW	Seward	SEW2	\$.00	\$.000	0 no answer
2021	10	5	AK	SIT	Sitka	SIT1	\$194.04	\$2.940	1
2021	10	5	AK	SPT	Sand Point	SPT1	\$215.82	\$3.270	1
2021	10	5	AK	WRL	Wrangell	WRL1	\$207.90	\$3.150	1
2021	10	5	AK	YAK	Yakutat	YAK1	\$231.66	\$3.510	1
2021	11	2	AK	ADK	Adak	ADK1	\$2,232.42	\$3.721	1
2021	11	2	AK	AKU	Akutan	AKU1	\$.00	\$.000	0 calling error
2021	11	2	AK	COR	Cordova	COR1	\$2,100.00	\$3.500	1
2021	11	2	AK	DIL	Dillingham	DIL1	\$2,874.40	\$4.791	2
2021	11	2	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT2	\$2,250.00	\$3.750	1
2021	11	2	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT3	\$2,190.00	\$3.650	1
2021	11	2	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT4	\$2,190.00	\$3.650	1
2021	11	2	AK	HOM	Homer	HOM3	\$2,070.00	\$3.450	1
2021	11	2	AK	JNU	Juneau	JNU5	\$1,950.00	\$3.250	1
2021	11	2	AK	KOD	Kodiak	KOD1	\$1,944.00	\$3.240	1
2021	11	2	AK	KOD	Kodiak	KOD2	\$1,926.00	\$3.210	1
2021	11	2	AK	PBG	Petersburg	PBG1	\$1,926.00	\$3.210	1
2021	11	2	AK	SEW	Seward	SEW2	\$1,908.00	\$3.180	1
2021	11	2	AK	SIT	Sitka	SIT1	\$1,842.00	\$3.070	1
2021	11	2	AK	SPT	Sand Point	SPT1	\$1,962.00	\$3.270	1
2021	11	2	AK	WRL	Wrangell	WRL1	\$.00	\$.000	0 no answer
2021	11	2	AK	YAK	Yakutat	YAK1	\$2,635.74	\$4.393	1
2021	12	7	AK	ADK	Adak	ADK1	\$2,232.42	\$3.721	1
2021	12	7	AK	AKU	Akutan	AKU1	\$.00	\$.000	0 no phone service
2021	12	7	AK	COR	Cordova	COR1	\$2,112.00	\$3.520	1
2021	12	7	AK	DIL	Dillingham	DIL1	\$2,675.40	\$4.459	1
2021	12	7	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT2	\$.00	\$.000	0 no Answer
2021	12	7	AK	DUT	Dutch Harbor	DUT3	\$2,190.00	\$3.650	1

[List of monthly fuel prices from EFIN.]

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed based on participation in class discussion and completion of activity.

LEARN MORE

Black Lives in Alaska in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Black crewmembers of whaling vessels arrived in Southeast Alaska in the 1840s and had explored into the Arctic by the end of the decade. Whaling ship logs denoted the skin color and hair texture of their crewmembers showing that in some cases, the majority of crew members were of “dark or brown” skin and “wooly-haired.” The relative freedom and opportunity of whaling and other seaside professions was especially important in the mid-19th century as the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 increased the risk of re-enslavement or enslavement of free Black individuals. Ports in coastal towns such as New Bedford Massachusetts hired many Black crew members including enslaved individuals fleeing from southern states in the United States, Black men from the Portuguese colonies of the Azores and Cape Verde, and free Black men from the northern United States.

In addition to the whaling industry, the Klondike Gold Rush from 1896 to 1899 enticed many to travel to Alaska in search of gold. Black miners and prospectors, some with prior success in the earlier California and Colorado gold rushes, came north to mine and pan for gold. The large influx of people led to some starting businesses, many of which were Black-owned. Black entrepreneurs of this time – such as Bessie Couture, Mary B. Mason, John Taylor, and Lucille Hunter – opened and ran hotels, restaurants, and beauty salons, catering to both white and Black patrons.

Though the boomtowns throughout Southeast Alaska prospered, crimes such as gang assaults and illicit gambling were unfortunately common. In efforts to combat crime, the United States government deployed four companies of the 14th Infantry to maintain peace. By 1899, three of the four companies had left, with soldiers from Company L of the 24th Infantry replacing the last company. The soldiers of Company L of the 24th Infantry, a primarily Black regiment, kept order in Skagway through patrols, providing support in mitigating flood damage, and in managing conflict between white settlers and Lingit people.

READ:

Bolster, W. J. (1998). *Black Jacks: African American seamen in the age of sail*. Harvard University Press.

National Park Service - [The 14th Infantry in Northern Lynn Canal](#)

National Park Service - [Buffalo Soldiers in Skagway](#)

National Park Service - [Company L 24th Infantry](#)

University of Alaska Anchorage/National Park Service - [Black Whalers in the North Pacific and Arctic](#)

University of Alaska Anchorage/National Park Service - [Black History in the Last Frontier](#)

Shellum, B. G. (2021). *Buffalo Soldiers in Alaska: Company L, Twenty-Fourth Infantry*. U of Nebraska Press.

LEARN:

Denali Sunrise Publications- [African Americans in Alaska: Black Lives Matter](#)

LANGUAGE ARTS: ETHICS OF PHOTOGRAPHY

TIME FRAME Approximately 2 class sessions

MATERIALS Disposable cameras
Writing utensils
Paper

DIRECTIONS **1.** Oftentimes, a photojournalist will record an event or a community for a publication without the consent of individuals. Discuss with the class: *what does it mean to document a community? Who should be able to present or write for a community?*
[10 min.]

2. After discussing with students, pass out disposable cameras and invite students to form groups of 3 to 4. Keep track of these groups. Inform students that they will take the cameras home with them for the week and take multiple photos with people from their daily surroundings. For each photo, have students write down as much context for the photo as possible. Let students know that they will have up to a week with their cameras.

[2 min.]

3. Develop photos once students have finished the rolls of film and assemble the photos by group and by camera. Allow students within groups to share their photos with each other and to discuss the context of the photos. Inform students that they should keep their discussions within their groups and not share with other groups. In this time, invite students to take notes from their discussions. At the end of the discussion and sharing, instruct students to return photos into their original envelopes.

[30 min.]

4. In another class session, redistribute each group's photos to another group. Invite students to take one photo and write about what they think is happening in these photos. Once finished, return to the original question and discuss: *what does it mean to document a community? Who should be able to present or write for a community?*

[20 min.]

ASSESSMENT

Students will be assessed based on participation in class discussion and completion of photography.

LEARN MORE

ALASKA AS PART OF THE GREAT MIGRATION

Before 1900, the American South comprised upwards of 90% of the Black population. In the following decades of the 1910s through the 1970s, roughly six million Black Americans migrated out of the southern United States into the northern and western states. Changing circumstances such as economic opportunity spurred on by the World Wars, violent race riots, and increases in systemically racist policies all contributed to the large-scale migration of Black Americans out of the American South.

Though many people do not associate Alaska with the Great Migration, many Black men and women traveled north throughout the 1930s and 1940s for work opportunities relating to the Second World War and the Alaska Railroad. From the 1940s to the 1970s, migration continued with the expansion of communities in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau.

THE ALCAN HIGHWAY

The Alcan Highway is a 1,387-mile highway connecting Delta Junction, Alaska to Dawson Creek, British Columbia. Though the United States had previously forwarded proposals for a road stretching into Alaska, the Second World War would prove to be the impetus for Canada supporting construction of the highway connecting the contiguous United States to Alaska. Of the 11,000 soldiers who constructed the highway, 4,000 came from three African American engineering regiments. Despite receiving equipment of lesser quality, segregation, and terrible weather conditions, the Alcan Highway finished ahead of schedule with the Black 97th Engineer regiment meeting with the white soldiers of the 18th Engineer regiment on October 25, 1942. Most historical sources discussing the highway construction downplayed or outright omitted the contributions of Black soldiers in the construction of the Alcan. In 2017, the Alaska Highway Project chair, Jean Pollard contacted surviving Black soldiers who worked on the highway and shared the soldiers' accounts with state legislators. These findings eventually lead to the establishment of October 25th as "Alaska Highway Day" to honor of the work of African American soldiers in building the Alcan Highway.

LEARN:

Alaska Highway Project - [Education](#)

READ:

Alaska Highway Project - [Alaska Highway Memorial Project](#)

CBC - ['Way past time': Black soldiers who helped build Alaska Highway honoured, 75 years later](#)

Alaska's News Source - [Telling Alaska's Story: Honoring the African American soldiers who helped build the Alaska Highway](#)

AP News - [Alaska salutes black soldiers' work on highway during WWII](#)

Alaska Public Media - [African-American soldiers who helped build Alaska Highway honored](#)

Dryden, M. (2016). *The 95th Colored Engineer Regiment: The African-Americans Who Built the Road to Alaska During WW II*. United States: AuthorHouse

Hartman, I. C., & Reamer, D. (2022). *Black Lives in Alaska: A History of African Americans in the Far Northwest*. University of Washington Press.

Imani, B. (2020). *Making Our Way Home: The Great Migration and the Black American Dream*. United States: Clarkson Potter/Ten Speed.

Virtue, J. (2012). *The Black Soldiers Who Built the Alaska Highway: A History of Four U.S. Army Regiments in the North, 1942-1943*. United States: McFarland, Incorporated, Publishers.