European Exploration 1778-1790s

1778

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English	Oonalaska	Sandwich Sound	Norton	Greenland	Esquimaux
		[Cook Inlet]	Sound	from Emnik	•
		Dena'ina			
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	en had	ahā show	-	Hina	
/ /	Faradac	Chilki	adawjac	allousek	Mouset
2	alac	Ini ha	aiba	Cirlak	Mordluk
3	Canorgia	Joh ke	Singa sheec	Pingajuak	Ingasut
1	Schin	Cherticls		Sissamat	
5	Chang	Hocheene		Tellimat -	
6	Aloo	Jakulai	In counting me		arbangot
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MAY 26 – JUNE 6, 1778. CAPTAIN JAMES COOK EXPLORES COOK INLET

Cook's is the first European expedition to meet the Dena'ina, engaging in trade near North Foreland and Point Possession. The ten-word vocabulary collected by William Anderson, the surgeon for the Cook party, is the first written record of Dena'ina or any Alaska Athabascan language. Crew members also collect a number of Dena'ina artifacts.

Courtesy of the National Archives of the United Kingdom, PRO ADM55/113.

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1787 – 1791. RUSSIAN TRADING COMPANIES ESTABLISH POSTS IN THE DENA'INA HOMELAND

The Lebedev-Lastochkin Company builds forts at Kasilof (Fort St. George) and Kenai (Fort St. Nicholas), as well as smaller posts at Tyonek and Old Iliamna. The Dena'ina become

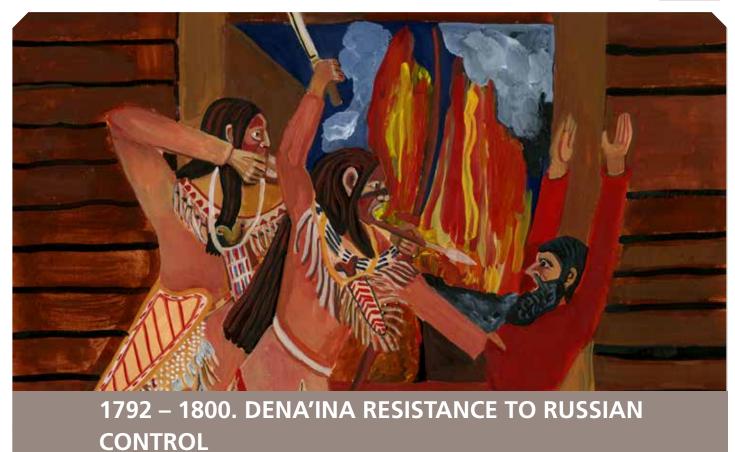
directly involved in the fur trade but are subjected to violence and intimidation at the hands of the Russian traders.

The Russian double eagle was the imperial crest of Russia. Image courtesy of the Alaska State Museum, ASM-III-R-150

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1778 1792 - 1800





Over the summer and fall of 1797, the Dena'ina, experiencing escalating violence and abuse from Russian traders, responded. Dena'ina warriors destroyed trading posts at Tyonek and Old Iliamna, and then mounted a critically damaging assault on the main post, Redoubt St. Nicholas, in Kenai. Many trading

company employees who escaped the attack returned to Russia. Only a few traders and missionaries remained scattered in Dena'ina territory, and the Russian America Company remained in control in name only. The Dena'ina were largely independent until the sale of Alaska to the US in 1867.

Illustration by William Simeone