A DENA’INA CHRONOLOGY

12,000 BP  Glaciers begin to recede from upper Cook Inlet Basin, creating places for people to live

10,000 TO 7,500 BP  Earliest Alaska Native habitation of Cook Inlet Basin

3,600 BP TO 1300 AD  Kachemak traditions present within Cook Inlet Basin

500 TO 1000  Migrations of Dena’ina from areas west of Cook Inlet to Cook Inlet Basin

1000  Development of cold storage pits enables preservation of large supplies of salmon; supports semi-sedentary villages, elaboration of social and political organization

1741  Bering and Chirikov, sailing for Russia, explore portions of Alaska, but do not enter Cook Inlet

1763  The Russian Glotov, on Kodiak Island, learns of the “Tnaiana” from the Koniag (Alutiiq)

1778  James Cook, sailing for Great Britain, explores Cook Inlet; his men meet Dena’ina at West Foreland and Point Possession.

1794  Vancouver, sailing for Great Britain, visits North Foreland (Tyonek) and describes Russian post

1797  Tyonek Dena’ina under Quq’ey destroy Russian post at North Foreland; Russian post at Iliamna also destroyed; Dena’ina attack Russian fort in the Battle of Kenai

1799  Formation of Russian-American Company

1837-1840  Smallpox epidemic kills at least half of the Dena’ina population

1845  Founding of Russian Orthodox mission at Kenai

1867  Sale of Alaska by Russia to the United States

1860s-1880s  Alaska Commercial Company establishes trading stations along Cook Inlet, including Tyonek and Knik. Competitors also arrive.

1882  First commercial salmon cannery at Kaslof, Kenai Peninsula

1883  First commercial salmon cannery in Bristol Bay

1890s AND EARLY 1900s  Growth of town of Knik

1894  Bear and Palmer creeks (Kenai Peninsula) gold “stampedes”

1895  Drop in fur prices leads to collapse of fur trade around Cook Inlet
A Dena’ina Chronology

1897  Knik Arm Dena’ina move Russian Orthodox chapel from Knik to Eklutna
1898  Captain Edward Glenn’s military exploration of upper Cook Inlet; followed by other military and government-sponsored exploration in the early 20th century
1908  School established at Susitna Station by US Bureau of Education
1914  Survey team at Ship Creek; founding of Anchorage; Alaska Railroad construction
1915  “Moquawkie” (Tyonek) Indian Reserve established
1918  Influenza epidemic
1930  Founding of modern Nondalton
1931 AND 1932  Osgood’s fieldwork in Seldovia, Kenai, Eklutna, Susitna, Tyonek, and Iliamna
1934  Susitna Station abandoned; most inhabitants move to Tyonek
1930s  Kustatan abandoned; inhabitants move to Tyonek or Kenai
1937  Publication of Osgood’s The Ethnography of the Tanaina
1939  The last Dena’ina leave Dasq’e at the mouth of Deshka River, last Dena’ina village in the Susitna Basin
1939  Native Village of Tyonek ratifies Indian Reorganization Act Constitution and by-laws
1940s  World War II. Significant military presence in Cook Inlet area. Construction and enhancement of highways and other infrastructure. Non-native population growth accelerates.
1950s  Oil and gas development on Kenai Peninsula and Cook Inlet
1959  Alaska statehood
1961  The Native Village of Eklutna organizes in response to encroachment on traditional lands
1962  Organization of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe
1964  Tyonek wins lawsuit regarding oil and gas exploration on reserve lands
1964  Founding of Cook Inlet Native Association
EARLY 1960s  Nikafor Alexan of Tyonek writes his stories while hospitalized
1971  Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act adopted by Congress
1972  Alaska Native Language Center established by the Alaska Legislature; Dena’ina practical orthography developed
1970s  First Dena’ina language workshops; early work by Dena’ina writers
1980  Tyonek wins subsistence lawsuit and the right to continue its traditional king salmon fishery
1980  Lake Clark National Park and Preserve established by Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA)
1980s  Educational fisheries established by Alaska Department of Fish and Game for Kenaitze, Knik, Eklutna Dena’ina tribes of Cook Inlet
1991  Publication of Peter Kalifornsky’s “A Dena’ina Legacy: X’taghi Sukdu,” wins American Book Award in 1992
1993  Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recognizes Alaska tribes, including seven tribes with primarily Dena’ina membership
2003  The First Dena’ina Language Institute held in Kenai; annual language learning workshops follow
2004  Groundbreaking for Nat’uh (“Our Special Place”), Cook Inlet Tribal Council building in Anchorage
2005  Qenaga.org, the Dena’ina language website, launched
2008  Opening of the Dena’ina Civic and Convention Center, Anchorage
2013  Opening of Dena’ina Huch’ulyeshi exhibit, Anchorage Museum

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Nondalton fish camp, July 2013. Photo by Chris Arend/Anchorage Museum