

Sale of Alaska 1867



MARCH 30, 1867. US BUYS ALASKA

A Treaty of Cession between the Emperor of Russia, Alexander II, and the United States is signed. In the agreement, the US agrees to purchase Russia's claim to Alaska for \$7.2

million. For the next 15 years, very little changes for the Dena'ina since few Americans enter their homeland.

Treasury Draft No. 9759 in the amount of \$7.2 million, for the purchase of Alaska. Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury, Record Group 217, National Archives.

The Russian exchange copy of the Treaty of Cession, March 30, 1867. General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives.

Department of Alaska **1867-1884**



**1868 – 1880S. ALASKA COMMERCIAL COMPANY
TAKES OVER FUR TRADE**

The Alaska Commercial Company establishes trading stations along Cook Inlet, including Tyonek and Knik. This company was formed out of the remains of the Russian America

Company by a group of American and foreign investors. During this time fur prices remain high, and the Dena'ina prosper.

Susitna Station Dena'ina standing outside Alaska Commercial Company store, late 19th century. Photo courtesy of Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game, Alexandra Allowan Collection

Department of Alaska **1867-1884**

1867

1883

1895

YOU
ARE HERE



**1882 – 1883. COMMERCIAL SALMON CANNERIES
ARE ESTABLISHED**

Salmon canneries are established at Kasilof in 1882 and in Bristol Bay in 1883. Soon, unregulated commercial fishing, including the operation of large fish traps that block entire rivers, depletes salmon runs. The Dena'ina call the canneries "big eaters" because of the industrial scale of their consumption and waste. Dena'ina communities struggle for access to their most important source of food; severe hardship and food shortages follow.

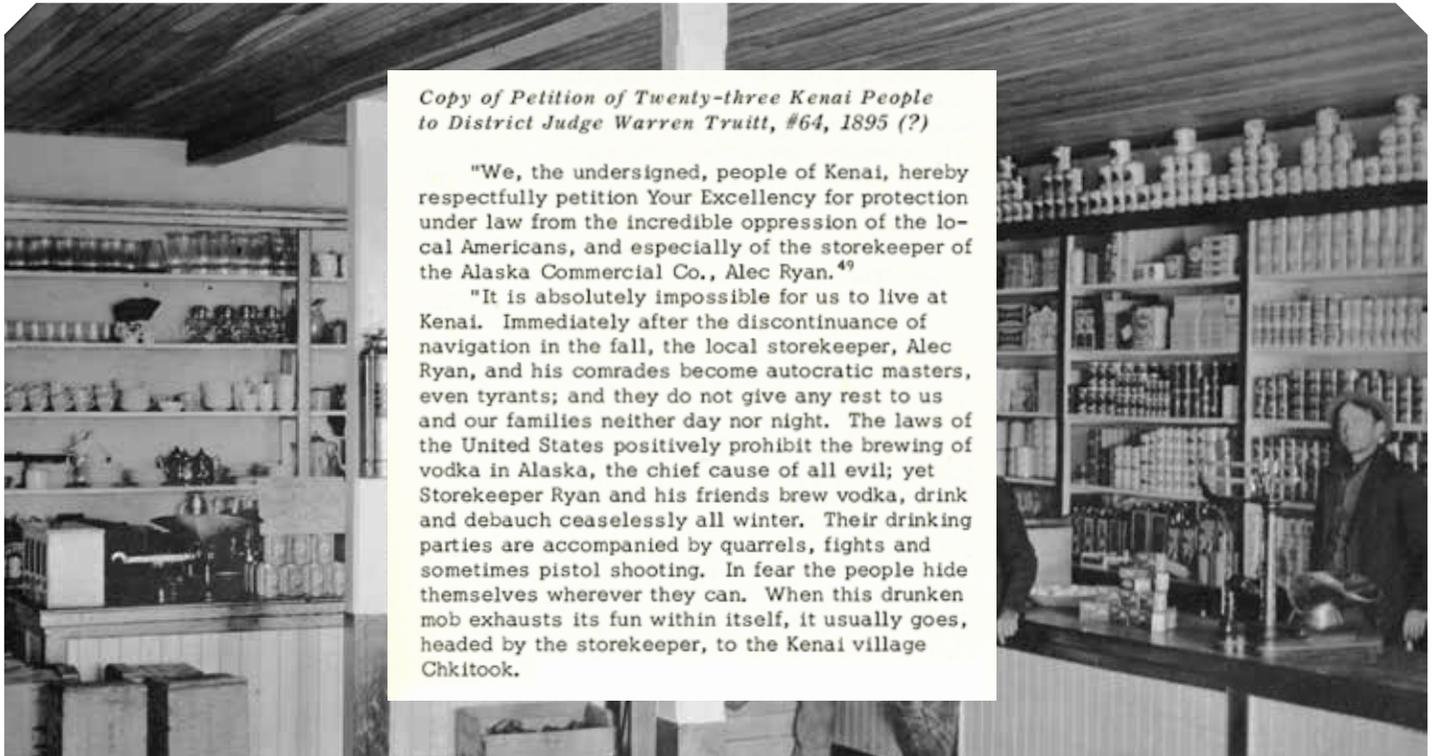
Fishtrap near Kasilof 1890. Photo courtesy of University of Alaska Fairbanks, Wetherbee collection 1959-866-19

Department of Alaska **1867-1884**

1867

1895

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Copy of Petition of Twenty-three Kenai People to District Judge Warren Truitt, #64, 1895 (?)

"We, the undersigned, people of Kenai, hereby respectfully petition Your Excellency for protection under law from the incredible oppression of the local Americans, and especially of the storekeeper of the Alaska Commercial Co., Alec Ryan.⁴⁹

"It is absolutely impossible for us to live at Kenai. Immediately after the discontinuance of navigation in the fall, the local storekeeper, Alec Ryan, and his comrades become autocratic masters, even tyrants; and they do not give any rest to us and our families neither day nor night. The laws of the United States positively prohibit the brewing of vodka in Alaska, the chief cause of all evil; yet Storekeeper Ryan and his friends brew vodka, drink and debauch ceaselessly all winter. Their drinking parties are accompanied by quarrels, fights and sometimes pistol shooting. In fear the people hide themselves wherever they can. When this drunken mob exhausts its fun within itself, it usually goes, headed by the storekeeper, to the Kenai village Chkitook.

1895. KENAITZE PROTEST TREATMENT BY ACC TRADER RYAN

With the arrival of canneries and gold seekers, a permanent Euro-American population is established in Cook Inlet for the first time. Little law and order exists, and the Dena'ina begin to experience abuses by rogue

traders, miners, and cannery bosses. With the help of the priest in Kenai, the Kenaitze petition the US government for assistance. However, no formal action is taken.

Kenai Dena'ina petition. From Joan Townsend, "Journals of 19th Century Russian Priests to the Tanaina: Cook Inlet, Alaska," *Arctic Anthropology* 11(1): 15-16.