

Lesson Plan: Alaska Statehood: Profiles of Leadership

Lesson Two

02-01-2006

Enduring Understandings

Refer to Alaska History and Culture Studies online course, "Governing Alaska" and "Modern Alaska".

Alaska State Standards

History: A, B, C
Government and Citizenship: A, C, E
AK History: AH. ICGP 12

Grade Level

This lesson is designed for students in grades 9-10. It is especially appropriate for students in classes such as Alaska History, Alaska Studies, Contemporary Alaska Issues, Government, or English/Language Arts.

Estimated Time:

This lesson may be adjusted for various time frames from 3-4 class days to several weeks.

Rationale

The stories of the individuals involved in the quest for Alaska statehood and in the writing of the Alaska Constitution reveal how citizens from varied backgrounds came together to achieve a common goal. By examining the lives and roles of these individuals, students gain more knowledge about the statehood process, but will also come to know individual players, both living and deceased, in more detail so as to place them in the historical context.

Hopefully, students will come to appreciate the choices and influences of these individuals, and will begin to realize their own potential to influence state and local governments. This lesson provides an opportunity to look at the "Alaska heroes" who provided an example of statesmanship and who, today, can serve as role models and an inspiration in the lives of contemporary Alaskan students.

Materials

Access to computers with Internet access and Microsoft PowerPoint
Outline maps of Alaska (Optional)
Poster making supplies
Costume supplies – to replicate clothing from early 1900s - 1950s
(Optional)
Student Guide
Presentation Format Form
Alaska Statehood Players Chart

Resources

Film: The 49th Star: Creating Alaska
Website: <http://www.alaska.edu/creatingalaska/>, esp. Who's Who in the Fight for Alaska Statehood
Website: <http://www.akhistorycourse.org/>
Individuals: Those statehood leaders still living.
Books:

Bowkett, Gerald E., *Reaching for a Star: The Final Campaign for Alaska Statehood*. Fairbanks, Alaska: Epicenter Press, 1989

Fischer, Victor. *Alaska's Constitutional Convention*. Fairbanks, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 1975.

Gruening, Ernest. *The Battle for Alaska Statehood*. College, Alaska: The University Alaska Press in cooperation with the Alaska Purchase Centennial Commission, 1967.

McBeath, Gerald A. and Thomas A. Morehouse, eds. *Alaska State Government and Politics*. Fairbanks, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 1987

Naske, Claus-M. *An Interpretative History of Alaskan Statehood*. Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1973.

(Note: Second publication 1985 by University Press of America under the

title A History of Alaska Statehood.)

Naske, Claus-M. Bob Bartlett of Alaska: A Life in Politics. Fairbanks, Alaska: University of Alaska Press, 1979.

Directions to the Teacher

Objective

Each student will be exposed, through the film *The 49th Star* and a variety of other sources, to the history of Alaska statehood. After the students have a general understanding of the statehood history, each student will research and examine more closely the life of one individual who played a role in the statehood process. Students will become well informed on the life of one person, and become aware of others by learning from their classmates. All students will gain a sense of the complex interplay between pro-statehood advocates (Alaskans and non-Alaskans), anti-statehood advocates (Alaskans and non-Alaskans), territorial government officials, federal government officials, business leaders, government officials from other states, the news media, and the general Alaska population.

Prior to Lesson

Introduce the film, *The 49th Star*, by providing the historical context. View the film with the students; the viewing of the film may take two class periods. A video guide and glossary for the film may be used to help students with comprehension. Or, ask students to take film notes to record the time period, major issues, major challenges, major players, and major events from the late 1800s-1959. After the film (or after each act) discuss the content with the students. Post a list in the classroom of the major players (adding to it after each act). Ask students to begin thinking of one person who is most intriguing to them.

Lesson

Each student will create a profile of one person involved in Alaska statehood and will present this profile to the class. There are many possibilities for this profile project regarding time, level of detail, presentation format. The teacher should adapt this lesson to the needs/interests of the students and the time available within the curriculum. The objective that each student learn about one person in-depth and understand that person's role in the larger story of Alaska statehood should be the focus that influences all decisions related to this project. Students should be consistently guided to ask the "how" and "why" questions and should be encouraged to identify "causes and effects" which will connect their person to others.

Distribute a list of the major players to each student. This list should include all the names generated from the film, *The 49th Star*, but may also include others from *The 49th Star* website. With the students, categorize the individuals and record on the Alaska Statehood Players Chart:

- Government Officials — Alaskan, Federal, non-Alaskans
- Business Leaders — Alaskan, non-Alaskan
- Constitutional Convention Delegates and Staff
- Other Alaskans

Discuss with students that the achievement of statehood wasn't the work of one person, at one time, in Alaska's history. Rather, it was an effort that started with the introduction of the first Statehood Bill by James Wickersham in 1916, and that was subject to various influences right until 1959.

The effort involved many people in and out of Alaska, both for and against statehood. The interplay of these people and the events around them (caused by them, or reacted to by them) is the force that culminated in statehood.

Ask students to write Essential Questions for their research, using the student guide. Check students' essential questions for completeness.

Develop and give to students a project plan which includes research days, homework guidelines, research & “check in with the teacher” calendar, and presentation schedule. This plan will be specific to each class/school.

Guide students through their research, using whatever research methodology is used by the class/school. Have them conduct research for at least two days before discussing presentation options with them. This will keep them focused on the research and learning about their person rather than on how they will present the profile.

Check in with the students in a class format or individually. Ask what are they learning about their person. Ask students how the role of this person in the statehood effort could best be shared with others.

Review the presentation format options with the students. Refer them to the student guide. Discuss. With the students, consider options for the audience: the class, entire school, parents, & “open house”, younger students. Ask the students to decide how they will present their information, and to complete and submit the presentation form.

Students continue working on the project, following the calendar for research and presentations.

Students present their Alaska Statehood Leadership Profiles. Evaluate the research and presentations using the evaluation guidelines established by the school (grades, standards based assessment, rubrics etc.)

Extension/Enrichment Activities

Students may use these ideas to enhance their profile, or to do an additional profile or project.

Statehood Speeches — The speeches made by pro and anti- statehood advocates are rich in content and in emotion. Find out if your person made any speeches; if so, locate and read them. Find out if any are available in audio format and listen to them. Include excerpts in your profile presentation.

Role Play — Create a team with classmates who are developing profiles of individuals related in some way to your person. Write a dialogue which reveals the individual perspectives on statehood and the roles played by each character. Be historically accurate.

Debate — Align pro and anti-statehood characters into distinct teams. Develop arguments regarding statehood and conduct a debate following accepted techniques of debating. Stay true to your character.

List of Alaska Statehood Players

James Wickersham

Anthony Diamond
Tom Snedden

Ernest Gruening
B. Frank Heintzleman

Bob Bartlett
Ancil Payne

Bill Egan
Michael Stepovich

Tom Stewart
Percy Ipalook

Katherine Alexander (Hurley)
Andrew Nerland

George Lehleitner
Bob Ellis

Walter Hickel
Elmer Rasmuson

Robert Atwood
Harry Truman

Evangeline Atwood
Dwight D. Eisenhower

Src. Fred Seaton
Sen. William Knowland

Rep. Wayne Aspinall
General Nathan Twining

Sen. Spessard Holland
Sec. Oscar Chapman

Sen. Frank Church
Sen. Henry Jackson

Gov. Alfred Driscoll

Gov. Len Jordan

Gov. Earl Warren

All delegates to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, especially:

Ralph Rivers

Marvin "Muktuk" Marston

Frank Peratrovich

Vic Fischer

George Sundborg

John B. Coghill

Bill Egan

Individuals in bold must be selected by someone in the class.