

Alaska: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow History and the Future

Knowledge of the history of events, issues and developments in Alaska helps us to understand the present and imagine the challenges of the future. It's important to understand that virtually every aspect of human knowledge and action has a historical aspect. We know something of what the future will bring because we have learned from watching the past. We have a general notion of how people will behave because we have watched them, acting in the past.

We cannot precisely predict how humans will act, and we cannot precisely predict the future. But we can gain some idea of what is likely to happen by studying what has been. The more we apply that lesson – learning from the past a notion of what is likely in the future – the more canny we will become in understanding how and why things are happening as they are. And by studying how people reacted to the things that happened in their time, we can gain some insight into how they may react today, and tomorrow. This is one of the great values of studying history.