

TEACHER GUIDE

EXTRA TOUGH: LEADERSHIP AND ACTIVISM BY WOMEN OF THE NORTH

OVERVIEW

This resource examines objects and archival images from the Anchorage Museum's collection and the Alaska State Library. Students will examine artworks, archival images, and primary sources to investigate themes of leadership and activism by women of the North. Activities will help students develop their own leadership and activist abilities.

CONTENT AREAS

Arts and artists, English language arts, visual literacy, Alaska Native cultures, Alaska history

RECOMMENDED GRADE LEVELS

Grades 6-12

STUDENTS WILL

- Learn and practice close-looking strategies with art and primary sources
- Engage in discussion and writing about primary sources
- Think critically and support answers with evidence
- Investigate themes of leadership and activism in Alaska
- Communicate personal experiences with leadership and activism

MATERIALS

Booklet (1 per student), writing utensil



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WHAT IS LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT?

This is Dena'ina ełnena. Anchorage is Dena'ina homeland. Land Acknowledgement is a formal statement recognizing the Indigenous people of a place. It is a public gesture of appreciation for the past and present Indigenous stewardship of the lands that we now occupy. Land Acknowledgment opens a space with gratefulness and respect for the contributions, innovations, and contemporary perspective of Indigenous peoples. It is an actionable statement that marks our collective movement towards decolonization and equity.

LEARN MORE: [About Indigenous land and land acknowledgment](#)

Watch: [Anchorage Museum SEED Lab production Ełnena](#)

Investigate: [Interactive map showcasing traditional homelands across North America](#)

Read: [Guide to crafting land acknowledgements from US Department of Arts and Culture](#)





OVERVIEW OF EXTRA TOUGH EXHIBITION

Extra Tough: Women of the North

On view November 2020—Fall 2021

Alaska and the Circumpolar North have been shaped for centuries by Indigenous women’s creativity, labor and love. With colonization and the arrival of Western cultures, the North became seen as a masculine testing ground, a place to be explored, exploited and developed. Artists, mothers, scientists, and makers included in this exhibition confront and dismantle this myth, testifying to the vital role that both Indigenous and newcomer women have held, and continue to hold, in Northern communities.

From ceremony to social critique, the artworks, historical objects and archival images on view capture and communicate their makers’ experiences of landscape and place, gender roles and social norms, work and childrearing. In a North being shaped at unprecedented rates by the forces of climate change and globalization, women’s voices and visions provide rich ground for imagining a future guided by principles of gender equity, sustainability and strength. Extra Tough upholds and celebrates the stories and perspectives of Northern women. It also examines the traditional and non-traditional roles and contributions of women throughout Alaska’s history.





OVERVIEW OF BOOKLET

This resource examines objects and archival images from the Anchorage Museum’s collection and the Alaska State Library.

From booklet: Alaska has been shaped for thousands of years by the labor, love, leadership, and activism of Iñupiat, Yup’ik, Athabascan, Unangan, Alutiiq, Lingít, Tsimshian, and Haida Indigenous women. Alaska Native women pass down traditions, knowledge, and stewardship to younger generations, as a way to preserve and protect their cultures. The important roles of Indigenous women in their communities’ support stewardship of the waters, plants, animals, and lands across Alaska, and have fostered this stewardship for thousands of years.

Pre-colonization Indigenous cultures viewed gender differently and embraced gender identities beyond a male-female binary: men and women were seen as equal complimentary and interdependent members of society. Across most Alaska Native cultures, men primarily hunted large game and created tools, boats, and utensils while women gathered plants and berries, fished, preserved and prepared food, and sewed clothing. However, collective survival required cross-training and proficiency in a variety of tasks. Both men and women learned basic skills of sewing, hunting, building, cooking, gathering, and childrearing.

As colonization and western ideologies impacted Indigenous lifeways, the idea of two genders viewed in many ways as opposites, as well as patriarchal system of social organization that excluded women from power, became entrenched. In efforts to combat and resist stereotypes and ideology perpetuated in western communities about a female’s role in society, many women across cultures advocate for women’s rights on the basis of equity amongst sexes. As the fight for rights continues to respond to changing challenges, marginalized communities continue to be frequently excluded from conversations, policies, and leadership roles. Women and allies continue to redefine what activism and leadership looks like—whether it is within the home, a community, at work, level of government, or grassroots organization.



HOW TO USE THE EXTRA TOUGH BOOKLET AND TEACHER RESOURCE PACKET

Examine: Challenge students to be curious when observing the objects, artworks and information presented throughout the guide. Support students to do their own research and delve deeply. The information is intended not only to educate but to spark interest in students and encourage further examination on these topics. Slow down and look closely, each object has a story to tell.

Investigate: Encourage students to look beyond the artworks that they see and investigate the details they notice in the booklet or in the artworks. As you move through this resource, share the additional knowledge and information presented in this packet to allow students to develop a deeper understanding of female activism and leadership in Alaska, Alaska Native lifestyles, and cultures. Make this journal yours. Use the pages to draw, write, and note in your own way.

Ask questions: Build an inquiry-driven experience for the students. Ask students to share what they observe and/or what they may already know. As you introduce background knowledge and object information, encourage students to ask questions about what more they want to know and what they do not understand. Be curious about the details.

Connect: Encourage students to reflect on their own life and experiences. Invite students to consider their own personal connections to what they have learned. The activities of this guide foster opportunities for such personal reflection. Ask students to share with each other what connections they have found. Share with a friend, a family member, or mentor about your experience.

INQUIRY BASED METHODS AT THE ANCHORAGE MUSEUM

The Anchorage Museum uses an expanded inquiry-based approach based in constructivism (constructivist learning theory). Through facilitated conversations which may begin much like Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), students are encouraged to bring their knowledge to look closely at an object or image. In addition to the VTS methodology, educators at the Anchorage Museum provide context and content. This may include information about an object's artist or maker, examination of materials, processes, or uses of an object as well as relevant cultural or historical information. Examinations of objects create an open-ended dialogue. In dialogue, learner-driven questions and observations, and facilitator provided content drive the process of meaning making between all participants.

CONSTRUCTIVISM

Constructivism is a learning theory referring to the idea that knowledge is individually and socially constructed by the learners themselves. The learner actively constructs meaning using sensory input rather than passively accept knowledge.

VISUAL THINKING STRATEGIES

Visual Thinking Strategies, or VTS, is an approach to teaching from visual materials, typically paintings, drawings and photographs. Developed by museum educators Philip Yenawine and Abigail Hosen, this approach to teaching and learning is a learner-centered methodology that seeks to support close looking and communication skills.

The VTS teaching methodology centers around three questions:

- What's going on in this picture?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can we find?

Educators use these open-ended questions to engage students in examination of images. Content or 'answers' are not provided, rather learners construct meaning individually and together. Educators reflect back what students respond and help facilitate the conversation moving forward.



VTS has been applied across disciplines. Extensive research on the strategy has demonstrated that students participating in multi-visit programs to museums using VTS techniques generated significantly more instances of critical thinking skills, said more, and were more likely to provide evidence for their thinking.

LEARN MORE at vtshome.org

WHAT IS VISUAL LITERACY

We live in an increasingly visual world and fostering skills to decode today's visual world is more critical than ever. By looking closely at visual sources and works of art, students develop visual literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills.

Visual literacy is a set of abilities that enables an individual to effectively find, interpret, evaluate, use, and create images and visual media. Visual literacy skills equip a learner to understand and analyze the contextual, cultural, ethical, aesthetic, intellectual, and technical components involved in the production and use of visual materials. A visually literate individual is both a critical consumer of visual media and a competent contributor to a body of shared knowledge and culture.

—Association of College and Research Libraries



KEY TERMS	
Alaska Native Sisterhood	an organization established in 1914-1915 dedicated to advancing Alaska Native civil and Indigenous rights
Colonization	the process of one culture forcibly assimilating an Indigenous culture; this usually includes imposing language, clothing, social and legal structures, and other lifeways by means of settlement
Patriarchy	a society or government in which men primarily hold power with little participation or no available for women
Protest	expressions of disagreement or disapproval toward an idea or action
Suffrage	the right to vote in public elections
Segregation	separation; the term may also specifically refer to American racial segregation, a form of race-based discrimination legally practiced until 1965

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LEARN MORE: Resources for teaching difficult topics and using primary sources

Read: [*Getting Started with primary sources from the Library of Congress*](#)

Train: [Library of Congress free primary source-based professional development](#)

Read: [National Museum of American History *Engaging Students with Primary Sources*](#)

Read: [University of Alaska Anchorage's *Difficult Dialogues series*](#)

PART I: FEMALE IDENTITY AND LEADERSHIP



ACTIVITY 1: WHAT WOMAN HAS MOST INFLUCEND YOUR LIFE?

This activity introduces the theme *female identity and leadership*. The activity encourages students to think about all the ways a woman can be a leader and introduce the idea that leadership can, but does not always, mean serving in an officially elected position in the community.

Brainstorm: Encourage each student to compile a list of the first women they think of when they hear the question: *what woman has most influenced your life?* Invite each student to add a name to your classroom list. Once students have shared, ask them to think of the women on their list and think of the answer to the second question: how would you describe her leadership? After a few minutes of think time, have them share words to describe the leadership of the women on their list and compile a class word bank of leadership descriptors.

Sketch or write: Invite your students to choose one woman who has most influenced their life from the list the created. Give them a set amount of time to sketch or write a response to the prompt in their booklet.

Share and discuss: Invite students to share their responses in small groups or in front of the entire class. Encourage students to come to a class consensus: *what makes someone a leader? How would you describe the leadership of a good leader?*





ALASKA NATIVE FEMALE IDENTITY AND LEADERSHIP HISTORIES

From booklet: Like many Northwest Coast Indigenous cultures, Lingít, Tsimshian, and Haida cultures are all matrilineal, meaning that kinship, inheritance, and clan identity are passed through female ancestry. Matrilineal kinship is central to Lingít education systems, with sons learning life skills from their mother & Tsimshian and Haida women passing down their mother & maternal's history. This does not mean paternal lineage is not also important. Naming paternal ancestry remains a critical piece of Lingít introduction protocols, which begin any formal discussion. Lingít identity is a balance between maternal and paternal ancestry, a balance between social and spiritual connections, and a balance between past and present, all of which are communicated through a formal introduction. This balance extends to gender, creating social equality between men and women in traditional Lingít society. Lingít women served alongside men in the highest leadership roles, solving internal and external conflicts and sharing stories and speeches at potlatches.

Colonization came with the arrival of Russian occupation and was later furthered under the United States government. Westernized ideals and gender identities were forced upon Alaska Native cultures through assimilation. Western society is a patriarchy, meaning that men control the systems of power and women are often excluded from power. Lingít women were not welcomed as equals by western society, but women remained strong voices of leadership within Alaska Native communities.

Today, colonization and assimilation into western patriarchy have created barriers to Alaska Native women serving in the highest elected leadership in the state of Alaska. Georgianna Lincoln is the only Alaska Native woman ever elected to the state senate, serving as a state Senator from 1993 until 2005. All women remain underrepresented at the highest levels of state government, with only 23 of the 60 state legislator offices held by women in 2019.

However, Alaska Native women have played an active role in cultural preservation and revitalization, environmental protection and advocacy, human rights, and many other facets of Alaskan life. The hard work, activism, and leadership of Alaskan women such as Alice Brown, the first woman to serve on the Alaska Native Federation Board of Directors, has helped shape the state into what it is today. race-based discrimination legally practiced until 1965

LEARN MORE: Women and leadership in Alaska Native cultures

Read: [*Alaska Native Women's History, CIRI*](#)

Read: [*Alaska Native artist weaves heritage into modern fashion, KTOO*](#)

Read: Ackerman, L. A. & Klein, L. F. (2000). *Women and Power in Native North America*. University of Oklahoma Press.





ALICE BROWN BIOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From booklet: Alice Brown (1912–1973) (Kenatize Dena’ina) was born in 1912 in Kenai. A strong advocate for Native rights, Alice was involved in numerous organizations, including serving on the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) board of directors, the board of the Alaskan Native Political Education Committee, and the Rural Affairs Commission.

In 1966, Alice became the first woman to serve on the AFN Board of Directors. The following year she was appointed by Governor Walter J. Hickel to join 36 Alaska Native representatives in the creation of the Land Claims Task Force. The Task Force made land claims recommendations and requested that hearings be held to approve the distribution of land, which created the groundwork for the eventual passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) in 1971. In 2010, Alice was posthumously inducted into the Alaska Women’s Hall of Fame in recognition for her activism and advocacy.

LEARN MORE: Alice Brown, AFN, and the Land Claims Task Force

Listen: [Women’s Hall of Fame induction speech](#)

Read: [CIRI Spotlight on CIRI shareholder Alice Brown](#)

Read: [Alaska Federation of Natives history](#)

Read: [Alaskool Alaska Native Land Claims](#)

Investigate: [UAA Consortium Library Alice Brown papers](#)



MAYUĞIAK OF UNALAKLEET AND FRED MACHETANZ'S *MIOWAK*

LEARN MORE: Fred Machetanz and *Miowak*

Watch: [Learn about *Miowak* by Fred Machentanz \(1908-2002\)](#)

Read: [Fred Machetanz biography](#)

From booklet: Mayuğiak was born in 1891, the eldest daughter of Nashoalook, the last chief and shaman of Unalakleet, and his first wife, Kakarak. At birth, her father gave her the Iñupiaq name Mayuğiak, “a path to the heights.” The parka she wore was embellished with a special design proclaiming to everyone in Unalakleet that she was the oldest daughter of the last chief. While Nashoalook was chief, the Reverend Axel Karlson became the first missionary to arrive at Unalakleet. Nashoalook allowed Karlson into Unalakleet and later saved Karlson’s life.

Throughout her long life, Mayuğiak became an accomplished skin sewer and learned to make Lapp boots, which outfitted many mushers who delivered mail to Unalakleet via dog sled. One of these mushers became Mayuğiak’s third husband, Myles Gonangnan. Gonangnan was part of the serum relay that delivered the lifesaving diphtheria serum to Nome in 1925, taking possession of the serum in Unalakleet and to Shaktoolik. Each member of the serum relay was awarded a gold medallion by President Calvin Coolidge, which Mayuğiak planned to pass down to one of their grandchildren before her death in 1971.

Mayuğiak met Fred Machetanz in 1935, when Machetanz came to live with his uncle Charlie Traeger. Traeger owned the trading post in Unalakleet. Machetanz greatly resembled Mayuğiak’s son Henry Miller, who had recently passed away. Mayuğiak culturally adopted Machetanz, and became the subject of both this painting, done in 1937, and a lithograph of her sewing, both part of the Anchorage Museum collection. Machetanz misspelt her Iñupiaq name as ‘Miowak,,’ which is the title of the artwork found in the Anchorage Museum collection.

According to great-granddaughter Ella Anagick, Mayuğiak enjoyed gospel music and sang in the choir at Unalakleet Covenant Church and loved jewelry and fine china. Mayuğiak was a midwife delivering babies in Unalakleet, served as a deaconess at Unalakleet Covenant Church, and was president of the sewing circle. Mayuğiak directed the Eskimo Mother’s Club sales as auctioneer and was asked by the mayor to open important election meetings with a prayer, a high honor in Iñupiaq villages. Mayuğiak passed away in 1971 at the age of 80.

LEARN MORE: The life of Mayuğiak

Read: [Tundra Times article about Mayuğiak, November 1971](#)

Watch: [Interview with Mayuğiak’s great-granddaughter Ella Anagick](#)



PART II: A SEAT AT THE TABLE



OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY ROLES

This second part of the booklet investigates various ways Alaskan women find a seat at the table as volunteers in the Iditarod, in the professional workforce, and through activist activities.

From booklet: In many communities throughout Alaska and the North, the leadership of women is cultivated and expressed through informal relationships: offering wisdom and counsel, preparing foods, delivering babies, teaching skills to young people, and caring for the elderly. Although often unrecorded in history books, this leadership is critical for community health and survival.

LEARN MORE: About women in the workforce and equity movements

Read: [*Museums as a Pink-Collar Profession: The Consequences and How to Address Them*](#)

Read: [The Gender Pay Gap is Wide in Alaska's Nonprofit Industry, Alaska Public Media October 2020](#)

Examine: [US Bureau of Labor Statistics Women's Earnings in Alaska 2018](#)

Examine: [Alaska Statistics, Institute for Women's Policy Research](#)



IÑUPIAQ WOMEN AND WHALING

From booklet: In this image, Nellie Suvlu of Utqiagvik and her daughter Helen prepare whale meat, using every inch of available surface space in their kitchen. A tray of meat, along with plates, cups, and utensils, is laid out in preparation for those coming to the Suvlu house to celebrate.

A few bowhead whales taken each year can supply thousands of pounds of dense protein to communities along Alaska’s northern coasts. When a whaling captain is successful, he distributes meat to his family and the families of the crew, as well as the broader community. Women related to crew members work around the clock preparing whale and other traditional foods to share.

Recently, several woman harpooners, including Bernadette Adams and Jenilee Donovan of Utqiagvik and Stephanie Aishanna of Kaktovik, have brought home whales. These women are believed to be some of the first in their communities to do so.

“We are just trying to provide for our communities. We don’t think of ourselves as any different other than our gender.” —Stephanie Aishanna, October 9, 2015

LEARN MORE: Alaska Native cultures and whaling

Read: [the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission \(AEWC\)](#)

Read: [the International Whaling Commission \(IWC\)](#)

Examine: [AEWC map Alaska Whaling Villages](#)

Read: [North Slope Borough supporting bowhead whale research](#)

Investigate: [Store Outside your Door: Addressing Food Security for our Future Generations](#)

Read: [Along Alaska’s Arctic coast, female whalers are breaking the ‘ice ceiling’, ADN October 2015](#)

Read: [Teenage whaler Chris Apassingok photo and biography by Ash Adams](#)

Read: [The teenage whaler’s tale, High Country News, July 2017](#)

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES: Investigate whaling in the classroom

- **Bowhead Whale booklet** Dive into the objects and ideas connected to the bowhead whale with 3rd–12th grade students
- **Art: Attungaruk The Third’s Whale** Examine the artwork *Attungaruk the Third’s Whale*, by Simon Koonook with 11th grade students
- **Art: Neqeniighta** Examine the artwork *Neqeniighta* by James Temte, Michelle Xiao, and Jon Burpee with 6th grade students
- **Art: Marie Rexford** Examine the artwork *Marie Rexford* by Brian Adams for Kindergarten or 9th-12th grade students





ACTIVITY 2: WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU ORGANIZE OR LEAD?

This activity encourages students to discuss various types of leadership that may not immediately come to mind. For example, students may not think of the ways they help plan or organize family events or pass out music in choir as leadership, but these activities certainly qualify and teach you to be a better leader. In the same way, many women serve in quiet community leadership roles rather than as elected officials.

Brainstorm: Invite students to write a few ideas on a scrap piece of paper. Instruct students to ball up their ideas and toss them into a single container. Students will choose a paper from the container and read off the ideas of another student. Create a class list of ideas.

Sketch or write: Invite students to respond to the prompt with one or more of their ideas. Ask: *What activities do you organize and/or lead?*

Share and discuss: Invite students to share their responses in small groups or in front of the entire class. Discuss as a class: *where are these activities conducted? Are these examples of leadership? If asked about your own leadership, would you think of these examples as you answered? What important skills of leadership do you develop while serving in these roles?*





WOMEN IN THE IDITAROD

From booklet: The first dog mushing sprint race at the 1947 Fur Rendezvous festival in Anchorage had one female competitor, Natalie Norris. The event grew quickly, and by 1949 the Open World Championship was a mainstay of Fur Rondy. During the late 1980s and early 1990s musher Gareth Wright's daughter, Roxy Wright, won three races, coming out of retirement in 2017 to win her fourth title.

Today the Iditarod is recognized as the world's premier long-distance mushing race. In 1974, just one year after its founding, Mary Shields and Lolly Medley became the first women to participate in the approximately 1,000-mile race. Shields crossed the finish line in Nome 29 minutes ahead of Medley to become the first woman to finish the Iditarod. In 1978, three women participated and throughout the mid 1980s there were an average of five women competitors, comprising approximately 8 percent of the field. In 1985, Libby Riddles became the first woman to win the Iditarod, proving that women could succeed and triumph in long-distance mushing in some of Alaska's harshest conditions.

Women continued to dominate the Iditarod for the rest of the 1980s into 1990, winning 4 out of the 5 following races. Susan Butcher won the race in 1986, '87, '88, and '90. Musher Deedee Jonrowe placed second in 1993, 1996 and 1998. In 2000, Ally Zirkle became the first woman to win the Yukon Quest. She was the Iditarod runner up for three consecutive years from 2012-2014. In 2019, 17 of the 52 mushers were women, which meant that women represented 33 percent of the entire field.

In addition to participation as mushers, women play a significant role in the organization and execution of the Iditarod. At checkpoints where teams stop to rest and recharge, women work long hours in makeshift offices and outside with the mushers and dogs. The woman in the image above is likely a volunteer from her community, tracking and reporting race updates from the comfort of her kitchen. The communications team's reports on the status of mushers and their dog teams are vital for race organizers and safety personnel.

LEARN MORE: Women in the Iditarod

Read: [Libby Riddles Biography](#)

Read: [Deedee Jonrowe](#)

Read: [Aliy Zirkle](#)

Read: [Mary Shields](#)

Read: [Dorothy G. Page *The Mother of the Iditarod*](#)

Listen: [NPR Blair Braverman Iditarod 2019 radio diary](#)

Read: Shields, M. (2008). *Sled Dog Trails*.

PART III: ALASKAN ACTIVISM

The image shows two pages of a booklet. The left page contains three sections, each with a prompt in a box and several lines of writing space below it. The prompts are: "What are the current issues that are important to you?", "What are the reasons that you are passionate about these issues?", and "What does activism mean to you?". The right page features a large, empty rectangular box at the top, with a smaller box above it containing the prompt: "What do you envision yourself advocating for these important issues?".

ACTIVITY 3: WHAT DOES ACTIVISM MEAN?

This activity is broken into several steps for brainstorming, developing thoughts, and formulating a response. The activity helps students identify current issues that resonate and brainstorm ways that students can be an activist leader for the causes they support.

Brainstorm: Invite students to create a list of current issues that are important to them. Give each student sticky notes and invite them to write one issue on each sticky note and place them in the designated area. Once students have had a chance to place their sticky notes, read them out to the class. Discuss any common themes you may notice and group the sticky notes according to these themes.

Digging deeper: Invite students to reflect and respond to the question why are you passionate about these issues or topics? After some time to form their response in the booklet, challenge them to share these responses with small groups or with the whole class.

Define: Challenge students to answer the question: *what does activism mean to you?* Once they have responded in their own booklet, invite them to discuss their thoughts and come to a class consensus.

Putting it all together: Now that students have had a chance to identify some personal causes and passions and defined what it means to be an activist, have students put themselves in the role of activist. Invite them to respond to the prompt how do you envision yourself advocating for these important issues? Give ample time for them to sketch or write their responses.

Share and discuss: Invite students to share their responses. You can place students in small groups that share similar passions and causes to discuss further how they can be activist leaders within the school and community.



ACTIVISM AND THE ALASKA NATIVE SISTERHOOD

From booklet: In 1913, the territorial government of Alaska extended female US citizens the right to vote, a right not gained by women in the contiguous 48 states until the 1920 passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. However, Alaska Native men and women were not considered citizens under United States federal law and therefore could not vote. In 1915, the Territory of Alaska offered Alaska Natives the right to vote, provided they completed a complex process eschewing traditional cultural practices. After the 1924 Indian Citizenship Act granted Alaska Natives citizenship in the United States, the Territory of Alaska passed the 1925 Alaska Voters Literacy Act. This act required voters to be fluent in written and spoken English, excluding many Alaska Native peoples and other non-English speakers from the right to vote. This act stood until the passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965.

Lingít, Tsimshian, and Haida women in southeast Alaska recognized that their voices would be stronger if they presented a unified voice to fight their battles for equal rights and further Alaska Native interests. They organized the Alaska Native Sisterhood in 1914, a sister organization to the Alaska Native Brotherhood that had formed two years earlier. The two organizations were founded by Alaska Native men and women educated in western boarding schools. These men and women sought to use their knowledge of western systems to fight for equity through legal and political channels. Their first goal was to secure US citizenship, and thus the right to vote, for all Alaska Native people.

The Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood are the oldest known Indigenous civil rights organizations in the world. Their activism was a critical part in passage of Alaska's 1945 Anti-Discrimination Act as well as navigating the Lingít and Haida land claims argued with the federal government from 1929 -1968, which set legal precedents that paved the way for the 1971 passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The organizations remain active today, with active camps spanning from Portland, Oregon to Anchorage, Alaska.

READ: [Alaska Native Sisterhood Started in Fall of 1914 from *The Thingit*](#)

LEARN MORE: The Alaska Native Sisterhood and the Alaska Native Brotherhood

Read: [The history of the ANS and ANB](#)

Read: [How the ANB changed history, Alaska Public Media, December 2014](#)

Investigate: [The timeline of the ANS](#)

Watch: [ANS members Selina Everson, Freda Westman and Marie Olson discuss 100 years of ANS](#)

Read: Metcalfe, K. L. (Ed.). (2008). *In Sisterhood: The History of Camp 2 of the Alaska Native Sisterhood*. Hazy Island Books.





APAY'UQ MOORE, *WE CAN DO IT*, 2014

From booklet: Apay'uq Moore is a Yup'ik artist from Bristol Bay, Alaska, who draws inspiration by the leadership of women from the past and present. Through her art and activism, Moore depicts women as powerful symbols. As reflected in the painting, Moore paints Elizabeth Peratrovich—an Alaska Native civil rights leader—to make a clear stand against the proposed Pebble Mine. Through art and conversations, Moore fights to protect salmon and all that salmon brings to her community and region. Salmon offer jobs, subsistence, and sustenance which Moore believes to be just as important as the fight for equal rights.

In this painting, Apay'uq Moore casts Indigenous leader and civil rights hero Elizabeth Peratrovich in the role of “Rosie the Riveter.” The original Rosie the Riveter was popularized during World War II, attracting attention for upending stereotypes about “women’s work” and showing how women were contributing to the war effort.

LEARN MORE: Apay'uq Moore, her artworks, and her inspirations

Read: [Biographical information about Apay'uq Moore](#)

Read: [Apay'uq Moore's online portfolio](#)

Read: [“We Can Do It”: Rosie the Riveter and the Power of Public Art](#)



ACTIVITY 4: DESIGN AN ACTIVIST BUTTON

This activity invites students to think critically about what current issue is important to them. The activity encourages students to identify an issue that resonates with each student and research what symbols and colors might represent that issue, which they will include in their button design.

Research: Invite students to research why visuals such as buttons help to support and further movements. Afterwards, have the students discuss as a class or with another student the use of imagery in movements and the impacts of imagery on movements. For example, think of the way we all recognize the meaning of a pink ribbon representing breast cancer or the use of a raised fist to represent Black Lives Matter.

Brainstorm: Invite students to write down symbols, colors, and quotes that reflect and represent an issue that is important to them. Students will use these symbols, colors, and quotes to inspire their button creations.

Sketch: Invite students to design a button using the template that showcases their support and activism for the cause they chose.

Share and discuss: Invite students to share their designs with the class or another student. Encourage students to reflect and discuss their design choices. Discuss as a class any common design elements seen across buttons. For example, *do you see common colorations utilized for environmental causes? Are there commonalities and differences between the design elements and the causes illustrated?*



ELIZABETH PERATROVICH

From booklet: Elizabeth Peratrovich (1911-1958) was born on July 4th, 1911 in Petersburg, Alaska a member of the Lukaax̂.ádi clan and Lingít nation. She was raised to value her Lingít culture and land, practicing and honoring cultural activities all throughout her life. As the western world colonized Alaska, Alaska Native people were not viewed as equals. Elizabeth faced countless experiences of racism and discrimination during her childhood and adult life, from segregation of housing, education, hospitality, dining, and social services, to the justice system.

By 1941, Elizabeth began a letter campaign urging the passage of an anti-discrimination bill. While her letter campaign failed to initially pass legislation, it led to the continued growth of activism across Alaska. Elizabeth and her husband traveled from community-to-community unifying Alaska Natives in the fight for equality. As activism, voices, and protest grew, Elizabeth Peratrovich, with the support of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood, helped craft the first anti-discrimination laws in the United States. Her personal testimony served as a powerful motivator in passing legislation.

LEARN MORE: Elizabeth Peratrovich and her legacy

Watch: [Celebrating the Elizabeth Peratrovich Legacy by Sealaska Kwaan](#)

Teach: [Elizabeth Peratrovich Teaching Resources, Sealaska](#)

Read: [Alaska Native and civil rights icon Elizabeth Peratrovich to be featured on \\$1 coin, CNN](#)

Read: [A Recollection of Elizabeth Peratrovich, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida](#)

Read: Boochever, A., & Peratrovich Jr, R. (2019). *Fighter in Velvet Gloves: Alaska Civil Rights Hero Elizabeth Peratrovich*. University of Alaska Press.





ACTIVITY 5: CREATE A MOTTO POEM

From booklet: *Do your stuff an' let 'em beller.*

Do your stuff, and let 'em rap.

If you win, they'll holler, "lucky."

If you lose, they'll holler, "Sap."

Let 'em help or let 'em hinder.

You shouldn't worry; do your stuff.

You're the girl you have to live with

Be yourself and treat 'em ruff.

This activity invites students to use Elizabeth Peratrovich's motto poem as inspiration to create their own. The activity encourages students to reflect about their own experiences with activism and investigate what it means to be true to yourself.

Research: Invite students to research the mottos of different people, movements, and organizations. Investigate how activists' poetry serves as an outlet for self-expression. Encourage students to investigate different poets from throughout history and various poetic forms.

Brainstorm: Invite students to compile ideas for their own motto poem. Consider key words, phrases, metaphors, and imagery to help communicate their own personal motto. Students can investigate which poetic form (limerick, haiku, shape poem, etc.) best fits with the theme and style they wish to convey through their motto poem.

Draft: Invite students to write a draft of their motto poem. Consider encouraging multiple drafts as they refine their ideas and imagery further.

Share and discuss: Invite students to share their poems with another student or the entire class. Discuss as a class how students successfully conveyed their ideas through their poems and challenges faced during the drafting process. Encourage students to identify ideas from classmates' motto poems that resonated with them.



OVERVIEW OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1945

From booklet: On February 16th, 1945 Governor Gruening approved and signed the United States first Anti-Discrimination Act. During the time of the bill's passage, Alaska was not recognized as a state- this was passed on January 3rd, 1959— but as a territory of the United States.

Under the Anti-Discrimination Act:

All citizens shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of accommodations, advantages, facilities and privileges of public inns, restaurants, eating houses, hotels, soda fountains, soft drink parlors, taverns, roadhouses, barber shops, beauty parlors, bathroom, resthouses, theaters, skating rinks, cafes, ice cream parlors, transportation companies, and all other conveyances and amusements, subject only to the conditions and limitations established by law and applicable alike to all citizens.

The Act also included the provision that if person shall act in a manner that violates this law will be subject to imprisonment or faced with a fine. While the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Act was historic, it did not eliminate the discrimination experienced by Alaska Native peoples then or today.

LEARN MORE: The Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945

Investigate: [Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 from the Alaska State Archives](#)

Look: [Anti-Discrimination Act, House Bill 14, from Session Laws of Alaska, 1945](#)

Read: [Alaskool Jim Crow in Alaska](#)

Read: [The Alaska Anti-Discrimination Act - 1945](#)

Read: [The Relationship between Indigenous Rights, Citizenship, and Land in Territorial Alaska: How the Past Opened the Door to the Future](#)



ACTIVITY 6: DRAFT AN ACTIVIST LETTER

From booklet: *“Do your laws against larceny and murder prevent those crimes? No laws will eliminate crimes, but at least you as legislators can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination.”* —Elizabeth Peratrovich

This activity encourages students to write a letter or letters to their local representatives about a topic or current issue that is important to them.

Research: Invite students to research a topic or current issue that is important to them. Encourage students to research how activists use letter campaigns to help a movement or cause. Afterwards, students can share their findings in groups or with another student and discuss how the letter(s) was impactful, informative, and what stood out to them .

Brainstorm: Invite students to make a list of current issues that are important to them. Ask them to consider: *Why is this important to you? What do you want to change? How does this impact your local community? What do you want to see change? How does this topic or current issue been addressed in another community? Is there data or anecdotes to support your position or add to your letter?*

Draft: Invite students to draft a letter about a current issue to local representatives. If students choose multiple topics, encourage students to write separate letters for each topic. Students may want to include data and anecdotes to strengthen their position. Consider encouraging multiple drafts of the letter using a peer review process to help strengthen arguments and refine the narrative.

Share and discuss: Invite students to share final letters with the class. Discuss similar themes and current issues addressed in student letters.

Send: Invite students to address and mail letters to local representatives. Addresses for local, state, and federal elected representatives can be found at <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

