
NAURWICIT QIK'RTAMENTAITAALLRIIT IQALLUGSURLUTENG. – NORWEGIANS USED TO COME TO KODIAK ISLAND AND FISH.

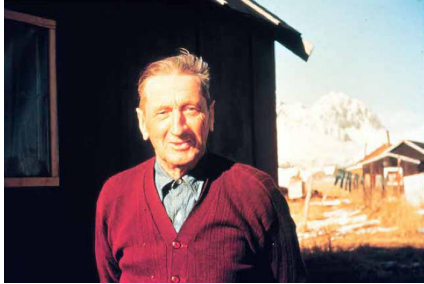


Photo: Norwegian immigrant Durban-Hansen in Old Harbor, 1962. Violet Abel Collection, Gift of the City of Old Harbor, AM507:90.

In the 1870s, Scandinavian men began to settle in the Alutiiq world. Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes came to coastal Alaska to participate in the salmon fishing industry. Their numbers increased in the early twentieth century, drawn by other productive cod, halibut, and herring fisheries. Some were seasonal workers who fished for canneries where they were known for their skill and effort. Others settled the area permanently. In addition to fishing, they worked in trapping, cutting hay, fox farming, mining, and even whaling.

Many of the immigrants were bachelors who met and married Native women. Starting in the 1880s, such marriages were common in the town of Kodiak and eventually spread to Alutiiq villages. For example, Swedish immigrant Herman Von Sheele, who settled in Afognak Village, married Eulavia Gregorioff in 1897. These unions introduced Scandinavian surnames like Christiansen, Ellison, Erickson, Haakanson, Larsen, Nelson, Olson, Opheim, and many others to Alutiiq communities. They also brought new traditions like reading Scandinavian newspapers and taking trips to Europe to visit family.

One of the best-known Norwegian immigrants was an international skier and coach Harald Durban- Hansen. Durban-Hansen immigrated to Alaska in about 1910 and settled in Old Harbor. Here he married Olga Adonga. In Old Harbor, he taught people to downhill ski in the mountains around town. Photo: Norwegian immigrant Durban-Hansen in Old Harbor, 1962. Violet Abel Collection, Gift of the City of Old Harbor, AM507:90.