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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of History in the Graduate School of Duke University

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ABSTRACT


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Abstract

This dissertation compares four programs to create equal employment opportunity on the trans Alaska oil pipeline construction project in order to demonstrate the ruptures and continuities between manpower programs to end poverty and affirmative action to eradicate race and sex discrimination. These four programs posited different subjects and strategies for equal employment opportunity, including a statewide affirmative action plan supporting minority men in the construction industry, federal hiring goals for Alaska Natives, a state “Local Hire” law establishing hiring preference for residents of Alaska, and corporate affirmative action plans for women and minorities. I use archival records and original oral histories with pipeline employees to examine the methods government officials and agencies, corporations, trade unions, social movements, and nongovernmental organizations used to fulfill their visions of equality in employment on the 800-mile long, $8 billion pipeline project. I bridge the gender history of welfare with the history of civil rights in order to show how liberal ideals of economic citizenship in the late 1960s that prioritized creating male workers and breadwinners served as the foundational impetus for equal employment opportunity. I challenge the standard historical narrative of equal employment opportunity in the US, which has attributed affirmative action for women to a logical, if hard won, expansion of positive liberal rights first demanded by the black civil rights struggle, then legislated by the state and implemented by state bureaucrats and corporate personnel. What this narrative does not account for is how the gendered dimensions of liberalism underlying affirmative action for male minorities were able to so abruptly accommodate women as workers and
economic citizens by the mid-1970s. I find that, over the course of construction of the pipeline, women in nontraditional jobs on the “Last Frontier” emerged as symbols of the success of equal employment opportunity and the legitimacy of American exceptionalism.
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Introduction: Manpower Meets Affirmative Action

In the late 1960s, a series of “job development” conferences addressed the problem of how to create equal employment opportunity in Alaska. With the recent discovery of the latest oil field in the nation, the young state seemed on the brink of prosperity. Oil development promised to provide the economic basis Alaska needed to fully realize its new statehood and break out of its dependency on federal government and external capital. The conferences were held throughout the state, bringing together people from politics and the state legislature, state and federal government agencies, Alaska Native organizations, labor unions, private industry, and universities to weigh in on the future of employment and workers in Alaska.

The result was a cacophony of interpretations of what equal employment opportunity meant and who it should benefit. The Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (CHR) stressed civil rights for racial minorities. The commission, charged with enforcing civil rights and pursuing complaints of discrimination, urged the state to follow the lead of federal employers and contractors by implementing affirmative action goals for fully integrating African Americans and Alaska Natives into the workforce. The CHR Director, Willard Bowman, specifically accused labor unions of consistently discriminating against minorities.\(^1\) The CHR’s approach to employment opportunity was the same civil rights paradigm reverberating across the nation in the 1960s: the government and employers should dismantle barriers of structural discrimination so that minorities could receive equal treatment and opportunities in the labor market and the workplace.

Another vision of equal employment opportunity resonated more closely with

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\(^1\) Fairbanks Regional Job Development Conference Report, 21 March 1969, Box 14, Fairbanks Native Association Records, Arctic and Polar Regions Collections and Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 41–43.
federal paternalism towards Native Americans than with civil rights. Alaska Natives² comprised by far the largest minority group in the state, with over 50,000 indigenous people, most of whom lived in rural villages and experienced significantly higher rates of unemployment than white Alaskans. At the job conferences, the primary problems of Alaska Natives were considered to be joblessness, poverty, and marginalization, with racial discrimination as a significantly lesser concern. Alaskan politicians commissioned a proposal from state educators for a job-training center that would serve the chronically unemployed. They proposed an immense facility where trainees could live and learn a

² Usage note: The designation “Alaska Native” refers to Iñupiat, Yupik, Aleut, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and a number of Northern Athabaskan cultures, indigenous to Alaska (though members of these groups are present in U.S. states outside of Alaska and transnationally in Canada, Russia, and elsewhere). These Alaska Native cultures are subdivided into clans, tribes, ethnic groups, regional groups, and linguistic groups. Alaska Native groups are generally affiliated with villages, though group members may live outside of their associated village and non-group members may be residents of that village. The federal government currently uses the collective classification “American Indian or Alaska Native” to refer to all indigenous people of the United States. For instance, “American Indian or Alaska Native” is a racial classification on the 2010 U.S. Census (with the option of writing in a tribe) and is used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. American Indian generally refers to indigenous people of the continental United States, while Alaska Native refers to indigenous people of Alaska. The term “Native American” is often used to encompass both. The differences between the two are historical and cultural, though Athabascan cultures span both interior Alaska and the continental U.S. (and for that reason are sometimes considered American Indians rather than Alaska Natives).

The preferred terminology and categorization of Alaska Natives has always been in flux and is far from universal at the current moment. The dominant terminology and classification during the 20th century for Alaska Natives has been “Eskimo, Aleut, and Indian,” referring to indigenous people of the northern circumpolar regions, the southwestern Aleutian Islands, and other interior and southeastern Native American groups, respectively. The Bureau of Indian Affairs still uses this terminology. The Alaska Federation of Natives, founded in 1966, still uses a logo comprised of three interlocking circles bearing the words “Eskimo, Aleut, Indian,” though the organization tends to use more specific designations in its current writings. Eskimo, Aleut, and Indian are now considered by many to be derogatory, as they lump together very disparate groups, some of which, historically, were in conflict. Eskimo, for instance, can be highly pejorative as it was used sweeping to refer to Alaska Natives as an inferior racial class during the 20th century. Alaska Native communities currently tend to use more specific designations or return to traditional names that fell out of usage with colonization, though these are not always consistent across communities or organizations. The Alaska Native Heritage Center, for instance, identifies eleven distinct cultures of Alaska Natives: Athabaskan, Unangax, Alutiiq (Sugpiag), Yup’ik, Cup’ik, Iupiaq, St. Lawrence Island Yupik, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian. Athabascans (this term in itself has four accepted spellings) call themselves “Dena,” meaning “the people.”

For the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the most specific terminology or identifying information to refer to a group or individual that I have available. More often, however, my sources reflect the predominant, more generalized terms used in the 1960s and 1970s or very little parsing of Alaska Natives. For instance, the Alaska Plan used the categories Eskimo, Aleut, and American Indian, while the Fairbanks Native Community Center used village names in its social services logs. In these cases, I will use the vocabulary of the day or what information is available. “Alaska Native” is itself an important category for the period under study, because it reflects the mobilization of disparate groups into a cohesive political force (the intent behind the Alaska Federation of Natives’ logo). I will also use the shorthand “Native” or “Native people” to refer to Alaska Natives when the context is clear, as is common in literature about Alaska Natives.
multitude of skills that would prepare them for jobs in the soon to be expanding sectors of the Alaskan economy, including the oil industry. But the center was more than a place where Alaska Natives would learn marketable skills; they were to be completely transformed into productive citizens and workers. The proposal asserted, "We do not believe that any manpower training effort involving Alaska's disadvantaged should be administered without fully considering the social, psychological, and economic needs of each trainee." The job-training center represented a belief that equal employment opportunity meant assimilation for Alaska Natives.

Others jettisoned the focus on minority groups altogether to advocate for Alaskan citizens as comprising a disadvantaged constituency in their own right. Boom and bust development in Alaska had historically attracted capital and workers from outside the state, while Alaskans remained without permanent job security. One unionist lamented, “A man who made his home here was lucky to get a job.”

Anticipating the construction of the trans Alaska pipeline, Republican State Representative Howard Pollock insisted, “we must take care of our own first” and ensure “that there will not be people brought in from outside to take jobs that should rightly be Alaskan jobs.” They called for laws and union procedures that gave jobs to Alaskan residents before out of state job seekers to create equal employment opportunity based on local residency. Inequality stemming from racism and colonization within Alaska receded from view when Alaskans closed ranks against “outsiders.”

Still others—Alaskan boosters, contractors, and politicians—were more

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interested in framing employment opportunity in ways that would attract and accommodate oil development. Rather than presenting equal employment opportunity as a responsibility to recruit and hire minority, Alaska Native, or local workers, they cast it as a chance for the oil industry to meet its manpower needs. Senator Ted Stevens saw Alaska and the oil industry as “partners in the development of Alaska.” With the oil industry’s cooperation, the proposed job training center could provide a skilled, local labor force trained specifically to fit the requirements of the pipeline project. They tried to steer equal employment opportunity away from being associated with regulatory demands and towards the lure of an attractive labor market for oil companies.

The variations on equal employment opportunity expressed at the conferences were not so contradictory as to trigger an outright dispute over the meaning of equality in Alaska in the late 1960s. The categories of racial minority, Alaska Native, and Alaskan resident overlapped significantly. Affirmative action, job training centers, preferential hiring measures, and negotiating hiring agreements with oil companies could all facilitate increased employment opportunities. But these ideas and strategies were not only mutually reinforcing. They contained fault lines that became more and more apparent as Alaskans turned these ideas into real employment programs on the trans Alaska pipeline.

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6 Alaska Job Conference Proceedings, 128-29.
The seeds of equal employment opportunity from the job conferences came to fruition in four distinct employment schemes that governed construction of the trans Alaska pipeline from 1974-77. The first was known as the “Alaska Plan”—a local version of the experimental affirmative action plan from Philadelphia. In 1968, the Philadelphia

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Figure 1: Map of Alaska

Plan required all federal contractors on construction projects to set goals for increasing the percentage of minority male workers to reflect the proportion of minorities in the surrounding community. The federal government replicated the Philadelphia Plan across the nation by requiring local city and state plans for affirmative action in the construction industry. The Alaska Plan, receiving federal approval in 1972, proposed increasing minority union membership to 28% percent over five years to match the percentage of racial minorities in the state, the majority of whom were Alaska Native. The second employment program on the pipeline was “Alaska Native Hire.” Alaska Native Hire was a federal requirement written into the oil companies’ right-of-way contract that they train and hire a certain number of Alaska Natives over the course of the project. Federally funded employment services delivered by Alaska Native organizations helped recruit, refer, and place Alaska Natives, ultimately helping the companies meet the hiring goal. The third employment regulation was a state law passed in 1972 called “Local Hire.” The statute required employers under state land leases to give qualified Alaskans who had lived in the state at least one-year first priority in hiring before citizens of other states. The fourth and final program was affirmative action created by an expansion of federal regulation targeted at private projects like the pipeline. This affirmative action plan added to and reinforced the Alaska Plan, requiring specific percentage goals for employing minorities and awarding contracts to minority owned businesses. For the first time in Alaska, it also mandated modest affirmative action goals for women. A corporate affirmative action plan for the pipeline was not approved until 1975, when the first construction season of the three-year project was over. Each of these programs sought to protect and promote distinct, though overlapping, constituencies in the labor market. They operated through a patchwork of laws, agencies, social services, and personnel polices that occupied a spectrum of private
and public actors at the local and national levels.

What these programs shared was an underlying assumption that they were leveling the playing field for men—whether they were racial minorities, local underemployed, or Alaska Natives—to become economic citizens through the opportunity of employment. These programs, including affirmative action that added nominal goals for women, did not foresee or intend for women to demand access to “men’s jobs” on the pipeline in significant numbers. Yet, within a year of pipeline construction and only a few months of adopting an affirmative action plan that included women, women working on the pipeline in traditionally male construction jobs would be the most visible and celebrated group of beneficiaries of equal employment opportunity on the project. The Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the managing contractor for the pipeline, regularly boasted that 10% of its workforce, combined with that of their contractors, consisted of women working in almost all job classifications. In national media, photographs and articles in magazines and newspapers about women operating heavy machinery made women construction workers representatives of nondiscrimination achieved on the pipeline. Women pipeline workers appeared in a film produced by the National Organization for Women, entitled *Feminists in Hard Hats*, in which they credited equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, and the Alaska Plan for enabling them to leave low paying, dissatisfying work behind for high paying, unionized jobs on the pipeline. During the mid-1970s, women workers on the pipeline stood for equality and progress. How did women become the primary exemplars of equal employment opportunity success, when affirmative action and preferential hiring laws had been designed with men in mind? Given the imperative of male economic citizenship underlying racial integration and equal employment opportunity in the late 1960s, the extension of affirmative action to women with such
quick and spectacular results requires deeper investigation.

Figure 2: Still from Bailiwick: Feminists in Hard Hats

This study examines and compares four programs to create fair employment conditions on the trans Alaska pipeline—the Alaska Plan, Alaska Native Hire, Local Hire, and corporate affirmative action—to demonstrate the continuities and ruptures between “manpower programs” to end poverty by creating male worker-breadwinners and equal employment opportunity to eradicate race and sex discrimination. I combine the history of gender and welfare with the history of civil rights and affirmative action in order to draw out how gender shaped the development of equal employment opportunity and its myriad manifestations. I challenge the standard narrative of equal employment opportunity in the U.S., which has attributed affirmative action for women

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8 1975, directed by Frank Herriott, produced by Sue Pittman, film, 28:45 minutes. Originally aired on KUAC. Courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives.
to a logical, if hard won, expansion of the positive liberal rights first demanded by the black civil rights struggle, legislated by the state, and implemented by state bureaucrats and corporate personnel. What this older narrative does not account for is how the gendered dimensions of liberalism underlying affirmative action for male minorities were able to so abruptly to accommodate women as workers and economic citizens to the point of celebrating women in nontraditional jobs as symbols of national progress.

**Breadwinner Liberalism and Civil Rights**

The consensus in current historical work on affirmative action and equal employment opportunity is that from the late 1960s when affirmative action was designed for African American men, to the late 1970s when women started breaking the barriers of sex segregation in employment in significant numbers, the feminist movement had intervened. Activism by feminist organizations, labor union women, professional women, and individual working women in a variety of industries successfully adopted the civil rights apparatus of equal employment opportunity to their own ends of alleviating the myriad restrictions women faced in deeply discriminatory labor markets and workplaces. Following in the footsteps of the civil rights movement against racial discrimination, women were able to effect change in legislation, government agencies, and employer practices.

This explanation—that the rise of the feminist movement drove the expansion of the purview of equal employment opportunity from race to sex—is something of a postscript within the larger literature on the history of civil rights and employment in the 20th century. In tracking the historical antecedents to affirmative action in the United States we are familiar with today, scholars have begun as far back as the New Deal and World War II. Their stories vary slightly in scope, but have an underlying theme in
common: that affirmative action emerged in the late 1960s as the civil rights movement and racial unrest met the peak years of liberalism in the United States. Thomas Sugrue, for instance, finds the origins of affirmative action in what he terms “post-New Deal liberalism.”⁹ This period of liberalism from the New Deal through the 1960s combined a growing moralistic imperative against racial discrimination with the belief that the federal government could and should take up the task of solving social problems. The continued and escalating pressure from the civil rights movement to address persistent racial exclusion in the workplace, particularly in the construction industry, spurred the government to take more aggressive action than just prohibitions against discrimination. The result was affirmative action, which shifted employers’ and government agencies’ focus to creating results and increasing the numbers of minorities in racially exclusive industries.¹⁰ The trajectory Terry Anderson describes is nearly identical: affirmative action had its “genesis” in the New Deal, which introduced the concept of “proportional employment” of minorities, and World War II, which barred racial discrimination in federal agencies and the defense industry. Affirmative action then reached its “zenith” as politicians responded to demands from the civil rights struggle. While Anderson stresses the role of national emergencies of economic depression and world war in creating an imperative for more inclusive employment, he reiterates Sugrue’s assertion that liberals’ coupled beliefs in the injustice of race discrimination and the responsibility of government to reform social relations was a key foundation for affirmative action.¹¹ The common thread in this literature is that liberalism of the 1940s through 1960s is taken as the enabling premise or backdrop on which actors of the civil rights movement

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¹⁰ Sugrue, 31-52.

and political power structure then proceed through stages of antidiscrimination measures leading to the affirmative action we know today.\textsuperscript{12}

A string of recent books have broadened the scope of equal opportunity history from mainly focusing on the interaction of activists, politicians, and policy to include the significant roles of private business and government bureaucrats. David Hamilton Golland argues that after the civil rights movement sparked policy change, it was federal bureaucrats that truly did the work of crafting equal opportunity through affirmative action. The course of the 1960s witnessed a transformation from “color-blind” to “color-conscious” strategies, of which the Philadelphia Plan represented a “watershed” moment.\textsuperscript{13} Frank Dobbin, seeing social movements as only the “first act” in creating equal employment opportunity, argues that it was personnel professionals in private business firms that actually created employment policies to meet the demands of vague legislation against discrimination, policies that were then ratified by the courts as constituting compliance with equal employment opportunity laws.\textsuperscript{14} Jennifer Delton concurs, arguing that many large corporations welcomed the focus on quantifiable results that affirmative action demanded, and therefore were quick to comply.\textsuperscript{15}

This literature, with its emphasis on the “roots,” “origins,” and “invention” of affirmative action, tends to excise women and gender through both its preferred periodization—ending by the early 1970s and the \textit{Griggs} decision—and conceptual

\textsuperscript{12} Paul Moreno’s history of affirmative action extends back to the era of reconstruction, but similarly argues that from World War II through the 1960s the scales eventually tipped from a concept of equality that prohibited different treatment to one that demanded proportional representation. See \textit{From Direct Action to Affirmative Action: Fair Employment Law and Policy in America, 1933-1972} (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997).


framework. It places the civil rights movement, as the primary driver of change in this interpretation, at center stage, while the feminist movement and women’s activism are either omitted altogether or framed as an imitation of African American struggles. Hugh Davis Graham set a precedent that remains intact for much of the historical scholarship on the opening of the post-war workplace, characterizing the women’s movement as perpetually “play(ing) catch up” to civil rights, and its major historical landmarks as “coincidence.” The underlying assumption behind scholars’ choices of periodization and subjects is that the ways women interacted with equal employment opportunity and affirmative action were derivative of a path already forged in the fire of post-New Deal liberalism (to use Sugrue’s term), racial conflict, and state actions. Therefore, expanding these studies in scope or extending their inquiry further into the 1970s and 1980s would not necessarily change our basic understanding of how and why the workplace changed. In many works, women are seen as so irrelevant to the course of equal employment opportunity that “women” do not have so much as an entry in the index. Though the assumption by policy makers in the late 1960s that women would never be interested in construction jobs on the pipeline might strike us as short-sighted, it is no more myopic than writing a history of affirmative action in the construction trades without a single consideration of gender. Though the scholarship on equal employment opportunity has thoroughly documented the role of the civil rights movement in tipping the scales from antidiscrimination measures focused on equal treatment, to proactive policies stressing outcomes, they offer little explanation for the quite dramatic arrival of women on the scene of equal employment opportunity. It offers

16 Dobbin’s analysis is an exception, proceeding through the 1990s and 2000s when gender discrimination took “center stage,” a shift he attributes to both the feminist movement and the advocacy of personnel experts, which were in large part women.


18 Golland.
little beyond a vague premise that the 1960s liberalism that exalted racial equality and held the government responsible for ensuring that equality, was the same logic that ultimately was expanded to include gender equality.

In contrast to the definitions of liberalism circulating in the sub-field of the history of antidiscrimination and work, which focus on beliefs about race, individual rights, and government, work on gender and welfare reveals the gendered premises underlying economic policy in the 20th century. Gender historians have shown that welfare benefits and social insurance are allocated based on gender, including position within a family, military service, and paid employment. For instance, by being fully employed and supporting women and children in the family, men were entitled to unemployment and tax benefits and greater access to credit and job opportunities. Following Alice Kessler-Harris, I use the term “economic citizenship” to describe how the rights, responsibilities, and participation of citizens are tied to paid work and consumption.

Robert O. Self uses the insights of scholarship on welfare, gender, and public policy to look at the gendered premises underlying policy in the 1960s. I borrow Self’s term, “breadwinner liberalism,” to capture the sex and gender dynamics of New Deal and civil rights era liberalism that scholars have failed to account for in their histories of affirmative action. For Self, breadwinner liberalism constitutes attempts by liberals to bolster families economically to approximate more closely the ideal of a middle-class, heterosexual, nuclear family in which a man is employed in the labor market while a

woman fulfills unpaid, reproductive labor at home. Self argues, “From the New Deal to the Great Society, social welfare liberals created a social safety net, supported labor unions, subsidized vast suburban housing tracts, and created government programs to fight poverty either entirely or in large part to strengthen bread winner families or to compensate for their temporary instability.”

Even liberal aspirations for racial equality were hitched to ideologies of gender, family, and sexuality, resulting in an emphasis on black male employment and the presumed pathology of black families. Inherent in this concept of the family—what Self calls “an object of liberal concern” that was more mythology than reality—are assumptions about the particular citizenship rights and responsibilities of men and women. Therefore, to understand how equal employment policies of the Great Society and War on Poverty era went from expanding the citizenship rights of minority men in the late 1960s, to being adopted for expanding the citizenship rights of all women, requires an accounting for the particular disruptions and mutations breadwinner liberalism must have undergone to re-imagine the relationship of gender, family, work, and citizenship.

Feminist scholars have certainly challenged the patent exclusion of women’s history from the history of affirmative action. They have placed women’s workplace activism—including around antidiscrimination laws, affirmative action policies, and equal opportunity programs—as central to both the feminist movement and the history of civil rights in the workplace. This work reasserted the importance of working-class

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21 Self, 7.
22 Self, 3-4.
and labor union women’s organizing to both feminism as a social movement and the opening of the workplace to minorities and women. This expanded narrative and periodization—which accounts for the work and experiences of women through the 1970s, 80s, and 90s, does not dramatically revise the civil rights-driven studies, but rather corroborates them. Nancy MacLean argues that the black freedom struggle set new terms for political discourse, providing women, previously divided by the ERA and the meaning of feminism, a basis for attacking sex discrimination in the workplace.  

Serena Mayeri shows how feminists used a legal strategy that “reasoned from race,” providing women legal precedents for staking their own claim to equality.

I proceed from the starting assumption that the “civil rights liberalism” and “post-New Deal liberalism” that incubated affirmative action was always in fact “breadwinner liberalism,” deeply gendered in ways that impacted the course of equal employment opportunity for men and women in the 1960s and 1970s. Though feminist labor historians have brought women’s activism and experiences into the main story, they have not brought a gender analysis to Sugrue’s and Graham’s foundational narrative that assumes a gender neutral liberalism provided the ideological foundations for racial antidiscrimination, whose logic was subsequently adopted in extending antidiscrimination measures to women. We cannot bracket the stark gender implications of the 1960s liberalism that created affirmative action off from the history of equal employment opportunity. Social histories of women in the workplace that shed light on the transformative activism that helped open the workplace to women provide only part

Harvard University Press, 2006); Katherine Turk, *Equality on Trial: Sex and Gender at Work in the Age of Title VII*, manuscript submitted to University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming.

24 MacLean, *Freedom Is Not Enough*.

of the answer to the driving question animating this dissertation: how and why women emerged as key beneficiaries and symbols of equal employment opportunity by the end of the 1970s, given the nearly exclusive focus on minority men by policy makers in the late 1960s.

Welfare and Manpower Programs

Current literature on equal employment opportunity in the late 1960s and 1970s places affirmative action squarely within the narrative of the civil rights movement. This dissertation argues that welfare and “manpower” programs set the stage for what form equal opportunity would take by the early and mid-1970s. Welfare and manpower programs of Lyndon B. Johnson’s Great Society relied on and fostered a certain gendered ideology of economic citizenship that in turn served as the foundation for affirmative action. The result was that, by the early 1970s, women were increasingly subject to the expectation that paid work was requisite for rights in America, while, at the same time, public policy used government assistance to attempt to engineer the American family to consist of a male breadwinner and female at-home caretaker.

The evolution of the Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program from the 1950s through the 1960s captures how the relationships between women, family, work, and government aid were reconfigured up through the latter years of the Great Society. In the 1950s, welfare reformers sought to expand social welfare to tackle the problem of poverty among women, who were often single mothers. They remade ADC (which had originated as a New Deal measure to help white single mothers fulfill their expected role as caretakers) around three key premises. First, the ADC accepted the fact that most of the poor women the program served were single mothers who had to support their children. The ADC would for the most part work to better serve their needs rather than
try to create two parent households. Second, the ADC promoted an ethos of “rehabilitation” which assumed poverty was the result of personal failings or dysfunction. The ADC’s approach to rehabilitating welfare recipients was to couple financial aid with social work that was individualistic and therapeutic. Third, the ADC’s goal was to foster “independence” and saw paid employment as the most viable avenue to self-sufficiency. Thus, the ADC, rather than trying provide material support so women could be caretakers of their children within the home, steered clients to education, training, and job referral programs. The ADC in the 1950s was an early version of what by the 1990s would be known as “workfare.”

The ADC experienced a backlash that limited the expansion of welfare to women, even as the War on Poverty mobilized in the mid-1960s. Conservatives cast the program as a source of, rather than solution to, social and family instability. Single, non-white mothers were demonized as immoral and lazy. As a result, two important initiatives in the Kennedy administration, the Presidential Commission on the Status of Women and new antipoverty measures that would become the Great Society and War on Poverty, distanced themselves from welfare and the women it has historically served. The War on Poverty and burgeoning women’s movement failed to address poverty and women’s (and mother’s) needs in a shared frame or to incorporate the experience of welfare reformers from the previous decade. During the 1960s, ADC would remain the only welfare program for poor women and single mothers. By the late 1960s, the pressure to eliminate welfare altogether increased and clashed with the new welfare rights movement. By tying benefits to paid work, welfare continued to push poor

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27 Ibid, 132-52.
women and mothers into the labor market.28

Where welfare fell out of fashion in 1960s policy, “manpower” programs became a preferred mode of battling poverty. The term “manpower” encapsulates a relationship between manhood, work, citizenship, and service to the nation. Its roots lie in how the military procured “manpower” for national defense, as in the powers and policies of the Selective Service System to conscript men for military service.29 Civilian “manpower” programs were about achieving full employment, a project elevated to the level of national security during the Cold War. The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, for instance, was a New Frontier project to retrain workers who had been displaced by technological advancements in industry. The program was focused on education to remake workers for a changing economy, not job-creation.30 The War on Poverty created a number of manpower programs composed of training, education, and work experience opportunities. The Job Corps, created in 1964 by the Employment Opportunity Act, is perhaps the most notable example. The Job Corps and other manpower programs saw employment as the route of uplift out of poverty and sought to, like the ADC program, reform or rehabilitate the poor towards wage labor. In the War on Poverty, manpower programs retained their military connotation with the idea that the War on Poverty was going to mobilize the poor and equip them to become economic citizens working for national full employment and affluence.

The Great Society and its anti-poverty policies were explicitly crafted in the paradigm of breadwinner liberalism. Manpower programs were designed to shape poor, unemployed, minority, school dropout, or otherwise “disadvantaged” men for paid

28 Self, 39-41.
employment. To the extent that manpower initiatives served women, it was to steer them towards temporary and sex-segregated employment, and towards marriage and unpaid labor within a family. The Job Corps is a primary example. The program took disadvantaged men away from their homes (considered by policy makers to be the source of delinquency) to centers where they lived and received vocational training to increase their employability. Though Congress amended the Job Corps to include slots for women, women’s centers were separate and unequal. They enforced occupational segregation, took marriage as a measure of success, lacked childcare, and had a minimal impact on women’s job prospects. On the other hand, the Job Corps was cloaked in liberal race-neutrality. The program was supposed to be universal in its aim to turn its subjects into tax-paying citizens and family providers, and the majority of its participants were nonwhite. The War on Poverty subscribed to the theory of “a culture of poverty” that said the best way to eradicate poverty was to reform the family—particularly black families—towards two parent households and male employment.

Manpower programs had three important features: they sought to reform and train the individual to fill the demands of the economy, rather than regulate the economy itself; they aimed to create, against the grain of welfare policy and the steady increase of women in the workforce, a male breadwinner ideal; and they copped to racial neutrality and equality even as the categories of “poor” and “disadvantaged” were racialized and intervention in the black family was an animating concern of the War on Poverty.

It is crucial to acknowledge, as Eileen Boris argues, that manpower programs were in fact a form of welfare. Political discourse in the 1960s opposed welfare, imagined as the passive receiving of benefits, to work, imagined as the means through which citizens earned certain rights. The War on Poverty, with its emphasis on

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manpower, steered clear of being seen as welfare. But manpower programs in fact took
government benefits like financial aid, housing, and education and tied them even more
closely to men’s participation in the labor market. Men (primarily young and of color)
participating in the Job Corps, for example, received allowances they could send back
home to help support their families. When I refer to “manpower programs” in this
dissertation, I am referring to programs for creating higher rates of employment in
which the government allocates resources based on gender and race.

Nondiscrimination, Equal Employment Opportunity, and
Affirmative Action

Nondiscrimination, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action are
terms that are sometime used interchangeably to refer to practices by government and
employers to prevent or overcome discrimination based on race or sex. Yet, the historical
origins, material practices, legal theory, and political valence of each of these terms are
distinct, if overlapping. The terms can be located in a tension and historical shift
between two paradigms of equality from the early 1960s to mid-1970s. Broadly
speaking, the 1960s opened with a nondiscrimination paradigm that advocated for equal
treatment of people across categories of difference, while the 1970s saw the ascendancy
of a paradigm that used disparate treatment to achieve equality in results.

Paul Moreno offers a useful, if somewhat overdrawn, rule of thumb for the
difference between nondiscrimination and affirmative action. Nondiscrimination in the
workplace consists of prohibitions against discrimination based on various categories,
like race or sex. Such a prohibition constitutes a negative right; individuals have the
right to seek employment free from discrimination. In practice, this means that people
should be treated the same regardless of their race or sex. In the period following World
War II, policy makers interpreted nondiscrimination to favor colorblindness, meritocracy, and individual rights. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the primary legislation prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in employment. It covered nearly every facet of employment, including recruitment, hiring, wages, assignment, promotions, benefits, discipline, discharge, layoffs for employers with 25 employees or more, labor organizations, and employment agencies. Affirmative action, on the other hand, went beyond prohibitions to require actions on the part of employers to ensure nondiscrimination. It pushed equal opportunity into the realm of a positive right of groups to be proportionally represented in the workplace. Assuming that equal or color-blind treatment is not adequate to overcome the influence and past effects of discrimination, affirmative action called for race conscious strategies to ensure equal opportunity. The litmus test became not equality in treatment, but equality in outcomes and impacts for protected groups. The term “affirmative action” first appeared in Executive Orders in 1961 and 1965 prohibiting discrimination by government contractors. But it was not until the Philadelphia Plan in 1967 and its copy cat local plans that spread in the late 1960s and early 1970s that federal and local government officials crafted a set of compliance requirements (such as goals and timetables) that we now recognize as affirmative action plans.

My purpose in this dissertation is not to gauge which employment practices are truly fair, or even to delineate between nondiscrimination, equal employment opportunity, and affirmative action. Rather, I am tracking how labor markets are remade.

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through ideologies, corporate policies, NGO services, worker demands, and state interventions. Cutting through the discursive constructions of equal opportunity reveals that there never has been a labor market that is truly equal opportunity, neutral, or free of all constraints and interventions that might determine who gets certain jobs. To study affirmative action is to study a very particular set of interventions to try to make workplaces proportionally match sex and race demographics in the general population—often within a local, geographic area. I do not agree with the rhetoric that posits affirmative action as only an effort to remove barriers to achieve true equality of opportunity; nor do I agree with characterizations of affirmative action as preference or reverse discrimination that give a certain set of people a blanket advantage over others in the labor market. Affirmative action is an effort to reshape the outcomes yielded by labor markets that have been strongly over determined by racism and sexism. By comparing four different employment programs stemming from different definitions of fairness, we see the contours of interventions that often parade and accrue legitimacy as equal, natural, or just.

**Structure**

The first four chapters in this dissertation examine and compare the four programs governing employment on the pipeline. Each program constitutes an encounter between, or some combination of manpower programs (welfare state attempts to usher certain groups of people into paid employment through rehabilitation, recruitment, training, or counseling) and preferential hiring programs or affirmative action (the imperative for employers to prioritize hiring certain groups of people or set goals for the proportion of the workforce those groups represent). Each program encountered obstacles or transformations from breadwinner liberalism to new
definitions of equal employment opportunity that reconfigured race and sex. The final chapter assesses how the publicity surrounding equal employment opportunity employment on the pipeline used the figure of women in nontraditional jobs to represent a host of concerns over the changing role of women in the economy and society.

The comparative format of the chapters masks a number of convergences in the plot of this dissertation. All of these programs, though discussed separately, were in operation simultaneously and were influencing each other. The year 1968 marked the discovery of major oil fields in Alaska. From that point forward, oil companies, Alaskans, politicians, and people all over the nation believed federal approval of the pipeline was right around the corner, to the point that oil companies had hundreds of miles of 48-inch pipe waiting on the ground starting in 1969. Unresolved Alaska Native land claims, however, prevented immediate pipeline approval. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act resolved land ownership in Alaska in 1971, but not before environmentalists mobilized to oppose the pipeline. Armed with the new National Environmental Protection Act, environmental groups halted the pipeline with requirements for environmental impact statements and court cases. Energy crises in 1973 and 1974 tipped the scales towards federal approval, and Nixon signed the Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act in 1974. The Department of the Interior issued a Right-of-Way agreement to the Alyeska Company in 1974 and construction was finally underway in April 1974.

In the meantime, expectations around equal employment opportunity on the pipeline had grown significantly since the job development conferences in 1969. Federally initiated affirmative action for the state’s construction industry established the ideal of proportional representation of minority groups in employment. Alaska Native
political mobilization and autonomy grew quickly in a few short years so that by the start of the pipeline Native organizations were prepared to play a significant role in pipeline employment. State politicians used the delay to pass laws mandating Alaskans be hired before citizens of other states on the pipeline. At the federal level, affirmative action was legally tested and institutionalized and the government was prepared to expand regulatory requirements for equal employment opportunity in 1974. Distinct hopes for equal employment opportunity brewed in the long anticipation for the pipeline boom.

When Alyeska launched construction in spring of 1974, many of these expectations were immediately met with disappointing outcomes. Accusations of employment discrimination—against women, Alaskans, and minorities—festered during the first season of construction. They led to investigations, hearings, and public debates to evaluate Alyeska’s performance and assess the way forward for Local Hire, the Alaska Plan, Native Hire, and affirmative action. By 1975, it was clear that, for a variety of reasons, some of these programs were living up to their ambitions, while others were going to make a minimal impact on the pipeline. Construction was complete in 1977.

Chapter 1 examines the arrival of affirmative action in Alaska prior to the start of pipeline construction. I begin with the showing how the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights enforced civil rights in Alaska by accepting and resolving individual complaints of discrimination based on race, religion, and national origin. At the job development conferences, the CHR advocated affirmative action employment for minorities. By 1970, Alaska, like cities and states across the nation, was charged by the U.S. Department of Labor with coordinating a voluntary plan for racially integrating the construction industry that contractors, unions, government agencies, minority groups
could agree on. The Alaska Plan set ambitious goals for increasing minority union membership, but mapped an implementation plan that fell back on state manpower services rather than institutional changes on the part of unions or employers. While the Alaska Plan failed to materialize in practice or perceive the growing demand from women to enter the construction trades, the CHR came into its own as an enforcement agency and was responsive to calls for women’s rights. By 1973, it appeared that the CHR might provide more expansive definitions and effective incentives for equal employment opportunity on the impending pipeline than the Alaska Plan.

Chapter 2 turns to Alaska Native Hire, which required the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to train and employ 3,500 Alaska Natives. The start of pipeline construction coincided with an influx of federal funding for local manpower programs. This money was dispensed to Alaska Native organizations that increasingly took over direct employment services previously under the jurisdiction of government agencies like the Department of Labor and Bureau of Indian Affairs. This chapter examines the efforts of one nongovernmental Native organization supported by federal grants, the Fairbanks Native Community Center (FNCC), to recruit and refer Alaska Natives to pipeline employment. This manpower program met affirmative action as the FNCC collaborated with Alyeska and it contractors to meet the numerical hiring goals laid out by the federal government. Alaska Native Hire is the employment program in this dissertation that perhaps most accomplished affirmative action in hiring: the company had a goal and time table it was able to achieve by relying on external organizations and funding structures. Alaska Native Hire benefited from a fortuitous confluence of concrete hiring goals, the rapid expansion of jobs, and the manpower programs to marshal Alaska Natives seeking paid work into the pipeline labor force.
Local Hire, the subject of chapter 3, encountered significantly more obstacles than Alaska Native Hire. Unlike Alaska Native Hire, Local Hire was not a federally mandated hiring program, nor did it have federal resources to support it. The law constituted preferential hiring in the true sense of the term in that it required any company that leased land for oil or gas development from the State of Alaska to hire qualified Alaskan residents, to the extent that they were available, before any workers from out of state. The law did not set specific numerical goals or timetables nor did government officials have an accurate estimate of what a reasonable number of Alaskan employees would be within any given job category. Enforcement efforts by the Alaska

Figure 3: Pipeline route and proximity to major cities

State Department of Labor resulted in power struggles pitting the state against labor unions and companies, and relentless legal challenges. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a blanket employment preference for Alaskans was unconstitutional, in violation of the Privileges and Immunities clause preventing states from discriminating against citizens of other states. The decision delineated what definitions of discrimination and which groups of people would be seen as worthy of affirmative action.

Chapter 4 begins with the first construction season in 1974, returning to the Alaska Plan and introducing new affirmative action requirements that governed the pipeline. With pipeline authorization came an expansion of federal regulation that brought affirmative action to private, federally authorized projects. The regulatory expansions required goals in hiring and awarding of contracts for both minorities and women. They reaffirmed the aims of the Alaska Plan, but added additional requirements for women. Alyeska created its affirmative action plan and revised its personnel policies in the midst of growing demands from women for equal employment opportunity and clashing views on Local Hire and affirmative action for minorities. The Alaska Plan continued to lack meaningful funding or institutionalization, and affirmative action plans by Alyeska and its contractors were not ambitious.

Chapter 5 turns to the images and narratives about women workers on the pipeline that proliferated by 1975. Initiated by Alyeska public relations publications and spun to the media through pipeline tours and interviews, women on the pipeline became a national story in magazines, newspapers, and on television. I argue that the image of women construction workers wedded narratives of national and feminist progress and contained tensions over women entering male dominated work sites. While the trans Alaska pipeline did provide an uncommon opportunity for some women to enter nontraditional jobs in construction, Alyeska’s public relations masked
the reality that tradeswomen were the exception in a division of labor determined by sex and race. For feminists, women working on the pipeline represented the attainment of economic citizenship and a place in the post-war “manpower” project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency or Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Federal Laws</th>
<th>Federal Actors</th>
<th>State Laws</th>
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<th>Corporations/Contractors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (CHR)</td>
<td>Advocates for civil rights; investigates and resolves complaints of discrimination</td>
<td>CHR is required to enforce civil rights laws as stringent as federal law, i.e. the Civil Rights Act of 1964</td>
<td>Initially modeled after the US Commission for Civil Rights; works with and follows example of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission after 1965; receives federal funding</td>
<td>Enforces civil rights laws in the Alaska State, including prohibitions against discrimination on basis of race, religion, color, national origin, and (after 1972) sex</td>
<td>Relies on state for funding</td>
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<td>\text{CHR pursues discrimination complaints against unions}</td>
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<td>Alaska Plan</td>
<td>Creates affirmative action goals for proportional representation for racial minorities and women (after 1974) in construction trade unions</td>
<td>Executive Orders 10925 (1961) and 11246 (1965) establish affirmative action for federal contractors; Federal Code added in 1974 to require affirmative action on pipeline</td>
<td>US DOL requires a local affirmative action plan modeled after the Philadelphia Plan; Office of Federal Contract Compliance could enforce Alaska Plan in federal contracts</td>
<td>Alaska Plan Policy Board is created to implement the plan in 1972; relies on state for funding; Alaska Plan office is folded into Pipeline Coordinator's office in 1974</td>
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<td>\text{Unions are voluntary signatories and expected to meet numerical goals}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska Native Hire</td>
<td>Requires Alyeska to train and hire 3,500 Alaska Natives</td>
<td>Created in clause of 1974 right-of-way agreement with the US DOI; Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) (1972) channels federal funding to local manpower programs</td>
<td>US DOL monitors Alaska Native Hire and has power to revoke right-of-way; US DOL approves local plans to use CETA funds; BIA contributes funds and staff to FNCC's programs</td>
<td>AK DOL is gateway for CETA funds; Alaska State Manpower Utilization System (ASMUS) coordinates CETA between government, NGOs and industry</td>
<td>FNCC houses and operates pipeline employment program; Alaska Federation of Natives and Tanana Chiefs Conference also contribute to Alaska Native Hire programs</td>
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<td>\text{Unions accept referrals from NGOs}</td>
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<td>\text{Figure 4: Agencies and programs for equal employment opportunity on the Trans Alaska Pipeline}</td>
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<td>\text{Are voluntary signatories; after 1974 compliance is mandatory by federal law}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agency or Program</td>
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<td>Local Hire</td>
<td>Requires employers with state oil and gas leases to hire qualified Alaskan residents before nonresidents</td>
<td>National Labor Relations Board considers complaints against Local Hire, verifies legitimacy under federal labor law</td>
<td>Alaska Statute &quot;Local Hire Under State Leases&quot; (1972)</td>
<td>Pipeline Coordinator's office is charged with monitoring; AK DOL investigates and enforces Local Hire, issues residency cards and accepts individual complaints; state-run train workers for jobs under Local Hire</td>
<td>Labor movement is divided over issue of Local Hire; unions resist AK DOL's infringement on powers of labor</td>
<td>Maintain Local Hire is unconstitutional; rely on unions to provide local workers; reserve right to outside hiring for certain job categories</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affirmative Action</td>
<td>Requires goals and timetables for employment of minorities and women, and for awarding contracts to minority and women-owned businesses</td>
<td>Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act (1973) requires affirmative action on pipeline; Federal Code (1974) requires affirmative action for federally authorized projects, includes and adds to Alaska Plan</td>
<td>US DOI approves affirmative action plan from corporation, has power to revoke right-of-way</td>
<td>CHR pursues discrimination complaints</td>
<td></td>
<td>Write individual plans with goals and timetables; construction contractors must sign the Alaska Plan</td>
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1. The Alaska Plan: From Antidiscrimination to Affirmative Action

In 1969, the U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL) took the first step in making affirmative action a reality. Based on the preliminary success of the Philadelphia Plan, which required federal contractors to increase the percentage of minority workers they employed in the construction industry incrementally, the US DOL moved to require similar plans in other cities and states. This wave of affirmative action reached Alaska in 1970, where a committee of government officials, contractors, and minority leaders convened to make an "Alaska Plan." In the words of the Seattle Times, the Alaska Plan would "put teeth into President Johnson's 1965 Executive Order."

Robert Willard, a Tlingit Alaska Native from the Southeastern village of Angoon and the director of the Alaska Commission for Human Rights (CHR), was chosen to lead the committee. Willard expressed frustration with the gap between rhetoric and the job prospects of minorities, especially Alaska Natives: "We've had equal-employment clauses written into contracts since time immemorial, but it hasn't done any good." Even when an employer thought his employment practices were fair and racially neutral, Willard claimed, he could be unintentionally aiming recruitment and hiring to whites. Willard's outlook was optimistic. He told the paper, "At the first meeting, we discussed discrimination and injustices of the past. Everyone got it off their chest. At the next meeting we sat down and started talking about what needs to be done."

The Seattle Times' summation of the Alaska Plan as "close to becoming a reality" was premature. The can-do attitude and collaborative effort Willard projected to the

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2 Sturgis.
newspaper would not be borne out over the next two years. The Alaska Plan Committee would struggle to resolve the interests of unions, contractors, government agencies, and multiple minority groups into a plan for progressively integrating construction over seven years. The Plan materialized only under intense federal pressure and never resolved the deep fractures and conflicts spurred by affirmative action in Alaska.

This chapter examines the transition from antidiscrimination to affirmative action from the 1960s to the early 1970s. The Alaska State Commission for Human Rights enforced civil rights laws in Alaska by taking and investigating complaints of discrimination based on race, religion, color, and national origin—but not sex. The Alaska Plan would introduce new ideals, goals, and practices of “affirmative action” to create equality of opportunity for racial minorities—but not women. I argue that while the Alaska Plan produced the most ambitious goals for employment outcomes the state would see during the 1970s, its methods for achieving them effectively left existing employment and hiring hall procedures and practices intact. Instead, the Alaska Plan proposed a new government office to coordinate a series of social services like job referral, counseling, and training that replicated the model of 1960 manpower programs which already existed across various government agencies like the Alaska Department of Labor and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Alaska Plan failed to launch in the early 1970s, but it sowed high expectations for minority employment in Alaska. Meanwhile, the CHR continued to expand its protections to include women and its powers as an enforcement agency were well-established by the eve of pipeline construction. The Alaska Plan, on the other hand, would be barely functional but still set high expectations for employment opportunities for minorities in construction on the pipeline.
Robert Willard told the *Seattle Times* in 1970, "We have an opportunity to make this the land of opportunity. It’s America’s last chance." He was alluding to the popular mythology of Alaska as an exceptional state and a cornerstone of national character. In the 1970s, Alaska was seen as America’s “Last Frontier,” the last open land where the nation could continue mythological feats of expansion and development. But Willard was claiming that this frontier was different. The “land of opportunity” would not be for the conquest and exploitation of an earlier era of the western frontier—it would be an opportunity for equality.

**Inequality in Alaska**

Alaska, in fact, was not a blank slate for civil rights and equal opportunity to come to fruition in the 1970s. The state was mired in historical inequalities that were both unique to the state and consistent with the American past.

Alaska Natives were and still remain the largest group of minorities in Alaska. Alaska Natives outnumbered the white population in Alaska until the 1930s. In 1970, there were 53,200 Alaska Natives living in the state, comprising about 19 percent of the total population. Over the 1960s, the percentage of Alaska Natives that lived in cities doubled to 25 percent. But Native villages also grew in population, and the rate of Alaska Native population growth was twice that of the general U.S. Population. Alaska Natives’ life span was much shorter than that of whites in Alaska, and their death rate

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5 Ibid, 8.
and infant mortality rate was twice as high as white Alaskans. The leading causes of death among Alaska Natives were accidents, influenza, and pneumonia. The 1960 census indicated 89 percent of rural non-whites had less than a ninth grade education, and over 20 percent had no formal education at all. Most Alaska Natives technically lived below the poverty line.

Most Alaska Natives were not employed. Only about one in ten Alaska Natives held a permanent job. About half were children, primary caregivers for children, old, or disabled, and therefore did not have jobs. The remainder were employed seasonally and unemployment levels fluctuated drastically between summer and winter. 75 percent of Alaska Natives living in villages relied on hunting, fishing, and food gathering for a quarter of their food intake. Fifty percent relied on these practices for at least half of their food consumption, and a small percentage subsisted entirely on hunting, fishing, and food gathering. Because most goods and food are produced outside of Alaska, the cost of living is high. In 1963, the cost of living in Anchorage was 23 percent higher than Seattle; for northern villages, it was 74 percent higher.

Employment opportunities in Native villages were very limited. Larger villages like Bethel, Nome, and Barrow had more employment opportunities than smaller, remote villages. Permanent jobs in Alaskan villages might be running small businesses like stores, cafes, and movie theaters, or jobs connected to schools, airports, and mail service. A small number of jobs were available in rural Alaska at weather stations and

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6 Ibid, 19.
8 Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska, 55.
9 Ibid, 58.
10 Ibid, 14.
air force installments.\textsuperscript{12} Alaska Natives sold furs, arts, and crafts. Seasonal employment was often in commercial fishing, canneries, firefighting, and construction.\textsuperscript{13} Alaska Native members of the Alaska Territorial Guard, a reserve force for the U.S. army, received payments from the government.\textsuperscript{14} Alaska Natives needed cash for fuel, food staples, and tools.\textsuperscript{15} In cities, job opportunities for Alaska Natives were mostly unskilled with low pay. Urban Alaska Natives suffered higher unemployment than urban whites in Alaska. Some found employment in government (the largest employer in the state), but were underrepresented. Of 14,000 federal employees, 1,400 Alaska Natives held permanent or temporary positions.\textsuperscript{16}

Alaska Native joblessness was more complicated than there simply not being enough jobs available for people who sought employment. Many Alaska Natives did not want jobs—about a quarter of men and half of women surveyed in villages said they would not accept paid employment. Others would only accept temporary employment, and many were unwilling to work far from home. Alaska Natives faced discrimination and segregation in Alaska. Relocating to a city for employment might not be worth it when Alaska Natives could not command high enough wages to live above poverty levels. Employment competed with the hunting, fishing, and food preparation that sustained Alaska Native life in the villages. Alaska Natives selectively participated in the labor market and cash economy while maintaining traditional ways of living.\textsuperscript{17}

Alaska Natives also relied on unemployment benefits, social security, and welfare payments as a source of cash. In 1967, 2,353 Alaska Natives received welfare

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Ibid, 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Ibid, 13, 55.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Ibid, 50.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid, 13.
  \item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid, 12.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 56-57.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
funding in the form of Aid to Dependent Children and aid to the blind, old, and disabled. Alaska Natives made up a disproportionate number of welfare recipients in the state. The vast majority of those receiving federal assistance did so for less than six months.\(^\text{18}\) Welfare to Alaska Natives constituted $2 million, compared to $43 million in federal spending on education and health by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Division of Indian Health of the Public Health Service.\(^\text{19}\) Federal programs for job training and relocation were poorly funded, at less than 3/4 of a million dollars, and offered very limited numbers of opportunities.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{18}\) Ibid, 14.  
\(^{19}\) Ibid, 30.  
\(^{20}\) Ibid, 31.
Figure 5: Alaska Native villages and their populations

21 Ibid, 40.
By 1970, African Americans constituted a significant and organized minority in Alaska. In Anchorage, 4% of the total population (123,621 residents) was black; in Fairbanks 20% of the total population (14,711) was black. African Americans had come to the Alaska territory in the late 19th century to participate in the Gold Rush and as part of the U.S. Army. From 1890 to 1940, while overall population growth in the territory was slow, the black population of Alaska remained at less than one half of a percent. After 1940, the population of Alaska grew dramatically with development spurred by World War II. An air force base and army base were built outside of Anchorage in 1940. Military construction projects, the integration of the military, and the second Great Migration brought more African Americans to Alaska. Disproportionately black regiments built two strategic defense projects in the 1940s: the ALCAN highway connecting Alaska to the contiguous states through Canada and the Canol oil pipeline to supply the route with fuel. However, the General of Alaska Defense Command was notoriously racist and intentionally channeled black military units to remote, isolated projects to discourage African Americans from settling permanently, taking advantage of high paying unskilled jobs available in Alaska, or mingling with Alaska Natives. During the 1940s, African Americans owned a number of businesses in Anchorage, including restaurants and hotels that served African Americans. Branches of the NAACP and the Alaska State Association of Colored Women’s Clubs were founded in Fairbanks and Anchorage in the 1950s. In 1962, Willard Bowman and Clarence Coleman, President of the Anchorage NAACP, picketed Carr’s Grocery, successfully pressuring the large employer to hire black Alaskans. Alaskan politicians liked to argue that Alaska was unburdened with the racial conflicts and history of other states. In fact, the history of African Americans in Alaska does not contrast greatly with national history. They

22 “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Fairbanks”; “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Anchorage.”
faced similar circumstances of segregation and discrimination and organized community activism in response.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Antidiscrimination and the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights}

The Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (CHR) was the government agency charged with investigating and preventing discrimination in Alaska. Alaska’s first governor, William Egan, created the CHR in 1963. The CHR was modeled after the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (US CCR). Formed in 1957 by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the federal commission was created as a temporary measure to alleviate pressure on the president to take action on civil rights issues.\textsuperscript{24} The US CCR had no enforcement authority and a reputation for serving “symbolic political purposes on the cheap.”\textsuperscript{25} Despite its lack of formal political power, the commission succeeded in becoming a permanent commission that conducted investigations, published reports on its findings, and influenced lawmaking. The commission influenced the policies of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, including making suggestions for the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and monitoring its enforcement thereafter.\textsuperscript{26} President Johnson marginalized the commission—which at times published independent reports that could be politically damning to the administration—by not involving it directly in studying the causes of high profile urban rioting.\textsuperscript{27} Though somewhat sidelined over the 1960s, the US CCR undertook an in-depth investigation on the status of school desegregation,

\begin{flushright}
23 Everett Louis Overstreet, \textit{Black On a Background of White} (Fairbanks: Alaska Black Caucus, 1988).
25 Berry, 108.
26 Berry.
27 Berry, 83-89.
\end{flushright}
expanded its attention to Latinos, and pushed for empowered enforcement agencies for
civil rights. The commission focused its attention primarily on African Americans in the
segregationist south, continuing a trend away from concerns over religious
discrimination to that against “groups whose color makes them more easily identified,”
as one presidential committee report characterized non-Caucasian, visible, racial
minorities.28

African Americans were the focal point of antidiscrimination and civil rights
measures. The commission did not specifically address women and gender; women
were served by the commission only under the aegis of minority race status. The
commission, like other government agencies, overlooked the sex clause of the Civil
Rights Act of 1964 and assumed ending racial discrimination was the true intent of the
act. The commission would not address sex discrimination directly until 1972, under
pressure from women’s rights activists.

Governor Egan intended for the Alaska CHR to be a “flexible means” for
enforcing state statues against discrimination.29 It was an alternative to a harsher
regulatory model that relied on litigation or threats to enforce the law. Rather than
taking offenders to court, the CHR accepted complaints of discrimination from
individual citizens, impartially investigated those complaints, and sought resolutions
out of court between the parties through “conference, conciliation, or persuasion.”30
Failing that, the commission was authorized to hold a public hearing and issue an order
to end or rectify the discriminatory practice should any be found—though the

28 The President’s Committee on Civil Rights, To Secure These Rights, 1947, quoted in Hugh Davis Graham,
“The Great Society’s Civil Rights Legacy,” in The Great Society and the High Tide of Liberalism, eds. Sidney M.
Milkis and Jerome M. Mileur (Amherst, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005), 365-86.
29 William Egan to C.M. Brinkley, letter, 26 February 1965, HB 120 Transmittal Letter, Supplement to House
1963), 3-5.
commission would not exercise this power for nearly the first decade of its existence.\textsuperscript{31} Like the US CCR, the Alaska CHR spent its first few years focused more on investigation, education, and outreach, serving a politically symbolic function. The commissioners attended conferences, made speeches, and authored studies of problems facing minority Alaskans. The public role of the commission was to encourage voluntary compliance with civil rights statutes, and, in the commission’s own words, to create “a climate of understanding and mutual respect.”\textsuperscript{32} During the 1960s, the ASCHR seemed to hold back from taking on the full responsibilities of a regulatory agency, and rather sought to assess the problem of discrimination facing Alaskans and build support for the cause of human rights across the state.

As a product of the civil rights movement, the Alaska CHR reflected national assumptions about what discrimination was, who it affected, and how it could be identified and resolved—a paradigm that did not always fit the state of Alaska. Local civil rights commissions across the nation predominantly addressed discrimination against urban African Americans, as a way to avoid riots and unrest. With one initial office in Anchorage, the CHR was more attuned and accessible to its urban constituents, a problem that affected many aspects of Alaskan governance. Of the total 55,000 Alaska Natives, only about 7\% lived in Anchorage.\textsuperscript{33} The vast majority lived in rural areas, spread over a state the size of Texas, Montana, and California combined. They were bound to be underserved by the Commission. Alaska’s African American population, on the other hand, was concentrated in cities and near Alaska’s military bases. Race discrimination was often measured in terms of the African American experience in U.S.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{33} “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Anchorage.”
cities and the civil rights protest movement, such as segregated housing or employment discrimination. But the problems Alaska Natives faced, stemming from rural poverty and a history of colonization, did not always fit this schema. As a result, for purposes of specific complaints of discrimination, the commission was more likely to serve urban African Americans. In 1972 and ‘73, for instance, African American complaints exceeded Alaska Native complaints even though Alaska Natives made up a much greater proportion of the minority population of Alaska.\textsuperscript{34}

Egan’s selection of African American veteran Willard L. Bowman was indicative of these assumptions about what human rights meant and who it represented. Born in Michigan, Bowman served in the U.S. Navy and was present at the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor. He moved to Anchorage in 1950 to work as a laborer, eventually becoming a labor management consultant. He was active in unions and the Anchorage NAACP. In appointing Bowman to chair the new commission in 1963, Egan was choosing a man with organizing experience in the civil rights and labor movements, with a grasp of challenges workers and African Americans faced in Alaska.\textsuperscript{35} Though Bowman would prove dedicated to helping Alaska Natives, his appointment symbolically reinforced the assumption that black men were the primary constituents served by civil rights laws and regulation.

Following the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Alaska CHR would work in tandem with the new Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce employment antidiscrimination laws. The EEOC was created to investigate complaints of discrimination in the private sector. The EEOC would defer all complaints originating in Alaska to the CHR, so long as the state had laws covering the same kinds of

\textsuperscript{34} Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, \textit{There is a way ... Annual Report}, 1973.
discrimination as federal law and the powers to enforce them. The CHR would then have up to four months to address a complaint before it was turned over to the EEOC. The EEOC, however, ruled that as of 1965, Alaska’s civil rights laws regarding sex were not as strict as federal law—including only one article guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, but not a blanket prohibition on sex discrimination in employment like that of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. In response, the CHR, in its 1965 annual report to the governor, recommended amending the state statues to add “sex” to race, religion, color, and national origin as a protected category in employment anti-discrimination law.\textsuperscript{36} The CHR’s recommendation went unheeded, and the Alaska statutes remained unchanged for several more years with little concern from the EEOC. Given the EEOC’s own hesitancy to enforce the sex clause of Title XII, its backlog of cases, and limited powers, it was unlikely that the federal agency would make taking over sex discrimination complaints from Alaska a priority. In 1969, perhaps under federal pressure or finally taking the CHR’s recommendation into account, the Alaska legislature amended select articles of the Alaska Statutes to outlaw discrimination by employers on the basis of age, physical handicap, or sex.\textsuperscript{37} When it came to enforcing civil rights in Alaska and nationally, race discrimination was at the forefront of government agencies’ concern.

A sample of cases from the CHR’s 1965 annual report points to the commission’s prevailing assumptions about discrimination, the limits it operated within, and the unexpected and conflicting ways civil rights laws operated in practice. In 1965, the commission accepted 34 complaints of discrimination, and resolved 19 cases.\textsuperscript{38} Cases in

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} HCSSB 133 (Judiciary), Chapter 19, \textit{State of Alaska Session Laws}, 1969.
which exclusion based on race was clear with supporting evidence were most easily resolved. For instance, when two witnesses overheard a superintendent of a construction company specifically request that a union not dispatch any “negroes” to the job, the African American worker was reinstated with back pay through the efforts of the commission. Others used civil rights laws in unexpected ways, such as when a white man accused his employer of race discrimination because Alaska Native employees were allowed to take more leave than white workers from the Ballistic Missile Early Warning Site at which they worked. The commission ruled in the complainant’s favor, and the employer adjusted its policies to apply equitably regardless of race. From the beginning, the CHR took on cases of “reverse discrimination,” sometimes finding the complaints were sound. Women used the commission, but only under the aegis of racial discrimination.

The commission addressed individual complaints but shied away from taking on larger systemic problems that might challenge the authority of other sectors of the government. For instance, members of a rural community of Alaska Natives traveled to Anchorage to file a complaint about a shooting, which they regarded as part of a larger pattern of violence by whites against Alaska Natives that did not receive adequate investigation by authorities. The CHR dismissed the case after receiving assurance from state police that the case was under investigation.39 The annual report also extensively described the problem of segregated schools for Alaska Natives and the failure of either the federal or state government to educate Alaska Native children. But the CHR did little more than “point out the gravity of the situation” so as not lay blame with other government agencies.40 A systemic problem of this nature could not be addressed

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid, ii-v.
through complaints of discrete instances of discrimination, nor did the agency have the power or influence to induce widespread policy or institutional change. Alaska Natives, particularly outside of Alaska’s cities, often faced oppression that was too complex or deep rooted for the commission to take up in individual complaints, though it made concerted effort to study the problems of rural and Native Alaskans.

By the late 1960s, the CHR was established and on a course of steady expansion. In its first few years of operation, all complaints were resolved informally or dismissed, and none went to the public hearing stage. Over the years, the statutes were amended to clarify the commission’s procedures and jurisdiction, incrementally expanding its legal powers. In 1968 it opened a second office in Fairbanks.41 The CHR was regularly funded by the EEOC, which awarded the agency over $20,000 per year from 1969 through 1972 to investigate the Alaskan employers with the lowest rates of minority employment.42 In 1970 Willard Bowman resigned to run for public office and win a seat in the Alaska House of Representatives, where he would continue to be a staunch advocate for the commission, civil rights, and local hire.43 Governor Keith Miller appointed Robert Willard—the same man already appointed to coordinate the Alaska Plan, to replace Bowman. Willard worked for the Alaska State Police and was active in Alaska Native organizations before joining the commission as a Project Director. As the new Executive Director, he was the highest-ranking Alaska Native in Miller’s administration.44 In 1972, the CHR added two more commissioners, held its first public hearing, and was allowed

42 “25 Years of ASCHR Facts”; Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, There is a way ... Annual Report.
to hire an attorney, thus stepping more fully into the role of regulation, beyond voluntary conciliation.45

**Affirmative Action in the late 1960s and early 1970s**

Title VII on “Equal Employment Opportunity” of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination in nearly every facet of employment, including recruitment, hiring, wages, assignment, promotions, benefits, discipline, discharge, and layoffs. Title VII covered employers with 25 employees or more; labor organizations; and employment agencies, including the U.S. Employment Service and state and local employment services receiving federal aid. The United State government was exempt from Title VII, though the Act reaffirmed that it was the policy of the U.S. to ensure equal employment opportunities for federal employees. Many other institutions were exempt: state and local governments; Indian tribes and reservations; private membership clubs; religious associations; and educational institutions. Title VII prohibited discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. It was the only title of the Civil Rights Act to include sex.46

Title VII prohibited discrimination, but also preferential treatment to rectify the effects of past discrimination. The text of Title VII stipulated that “nothing contained in this title shall be interpreted to require any employer, employment agency, labor organization, or joint labor-management committee subject to this title to grant preferential treatment to any individual or any group because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin” in order to correct imbalances between the number of members

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of a group within a workplace, labor organization, or employment agency and the number of members of that group in the surrounding community. This clause would become the basis of challenges to affirmative action in the late 1960s and beyond. The Civil Rights Act contained no references to affirmative action to ensure equal employment opportunity; it was firmly couched in the language of nondiscrimination. Title VII created the EEOC to enforce equal employment opportunity.

Affirmative action in the United States was born of a series of Executive Orders that bolstered civil rights legislation in the 1960s. John F. Kennedy first used the phrase “affirmative action” in Executive Order 10925 to order government employers and contractors to treat applicants and employees “without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin.” Lyndon B. Johnson, seeking to reinforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and diffuse increasing tensions around racial inequality, expanded the scope of affirmative action to apply to a wider number of government contractors and subcontractors with Executive Order 11246 in 1965. Johnson amended that order in 1967 to include sex as a protected category, just as Title VII did. The Executive Orders contained little in way of guidance as to what actions employers would have to take to be considered an affirmative stand to prevent discrimination, nor did they lead to immediate changes in the workplace. Affirmative action had not yet been defined in policy or practice; the orders were little more than a presidential push for employers to begin focusing on getting results in hiring African Americans.

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The construction industry in Philadelphia became a testing ground for turning the vagaries of the Executive Orders into a concrete program for affirmative action. The construction industry was a prime target for affirmative action, as there were many construction projects funded by federal contracts and the construction trades and labor unions were glaring in their racial exclusivity. Philadelphia was a location ripe for intervention because the city had a 30% black population and enjoyed large federal construction projects. Yet, white construction workers were often employed in minority neighborhoods, painfully illustrating that minorities were not benefiting from the economic boon that came with the construction of hospitals, universities, and a new U.S. Mint. It appeared that citizen tax dollars were being used to perpetuate racially exclusive unions and contractors on federal projects.  

Beginning in 1967, a collaboration of local and federal efforts brought affirmative action to the city and established a paradigm for the entire nation. Philadelphia worked with the local Federal Executive Board (FEB) to find a way to address this inequality and, just as importantly in the eyes of the city, prevent urban riots and unrest. Together, they developed an “Operational Plan for Philadelphia” (OPP), which required recipients of federal contracts to create affirmative action plans for hiring minorities. The plan addressed local conditions in Philadelphia, but it required federal support and coordination, as federal agencies created significant construction job opportunities in the city and had the regulatory authority to truly implement affirmative action. By

Press, 2004), 108.
53 Ibid, 115.
54 Federal Executive Board offices were created across the nation in the early 1960s in order to coordinate among the many federal agencies and employees that worked outside of Washington D.C. The Office of Federal Contract Compliance was responsible for enforcing nondiscrimination in government contracts.
requiring contractors to create specific percentage goals and timelines for hiring minorities, enforced by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance (OFCC) and the threat of canceling contracts, the plan aimed to close the gap between the proportion of minorities in the construction industry and their proportion in the city’s overall population.\textsuperscript{56} After its official launch in November 1967, federal officials eagerly applied the OPP, even expanding on it at times. The city of Philadelphia adopted the plan in its own contracting practices; the FEB sent the plan to other cities, suggesting they implement similar plans.\textsuperscript{57} By the start of 1969, federal regulators believed the plan to be “on the verge of success” and that it was the way forward for affirmative action across the nation.\textsuperscript{58} The OPP had decisively steered the course of nondiscrimination to focus on creating equality in results that could be statistically apparent.

As Nixon took office in 1969, the OPP faced a number of challenges from federal bureaucrats, powerful contractors, rank and file unionists, and even minority organizations. The comptroller general argued the plan could be used to discriminate against whites, and therefore violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act.\textsuperscript{59} Contractors claimed new requirements for affirmative action plans created an unfair bidding process, and sought a clearer policy. Civil rights activists favored affirmative action, but were critical of “quotas,” which had historically been used discriminatorily to limit minority integration.\textsuperscript{60} Some liberals who supported civil rights were reluctant to give up on “color blind” treatment as the way to eliminate discrimination.\textsuperscript{61} Meanwhile, black

\textsuperscript{56} Anderson, 105.
\textsuperscript{57} Golland, 110.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid, 114. Golland argues that the enthusiasm for the plan came not from Lyndon Johnson or his administration, but from personnel in federal agencies.
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid, 129.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, 115-17.
activists demanded more integration by protesting at construction sites, leading to counter protests and conflicts with white construction workers and police.\textsuperscript{62}

The new Secretary and Assistant Secretary of Labor debuted a revised plan—the final Philadelphia Plan—in June 1969. It required contractors to set “goals, targets, and timetables” for integration, rather than presumably more rigid “quotas.”\textsuperscript{63} Nixon chose to support the Philadelphia Plan for a number of politically strategic reasons. He used affirmative action as a wedge issue to split the coalition between civil rights and labor and as a way to weaken union’s control over increasing wage levels.\textsuperscript{64} Nixon saw endorsing the plan as a political tool to deflect criticism that his administration was not enforcing civil rights laws, particularly in employment and school desegregation.\textsuperscript{65} Nixon successfully pressured Congress to defeat a bill that would have killed the Philadelphia Plan, thus giving the affirmative action program official congressional approval for the first time (and Nixon his only civil rights victory).\textsuperscript{66} The courts began ruling favorably on the Plan, approving the use of “goals and timetables” as de facto quotas to achieve proportional representation and defining employment discrimination as in the results, rather than the intent, of an employer’s practices.\textsuperscript{67} The US DOL and OFCC were dedicated to expanding the Philadelphia Plan.

In 1970 the US DOL began dispersing the Philadelphia Plan to other cites and states by requiring them to create similar strategies for affirmative action. Local governments had two options: local contractors, minority groups, and unions could reach a voluntary agreement about how to increase minority participation in the skilled

\textsuperscript{62} Golland, 133-34.
\textsuperscript{63} Anderson, 117.
\textsuperscript{64} Golland, 134-36.
\textsuperscript{65} Anderson, 119-20.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, 124.
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, 126-29; Golland, 157-59.
construction trades, to be approved by the DOL; or, face an imposed affirmative action plan from the federal government, based on the Philadelphia Plan. This two-pronged system balanced the White House’s demand to impose the Philadelphia Plan as the standard for affirmative action and the vocal opposition by unions and contractors to a mandatory plan. It provided room for interested parties to reach a compromise, and the motivation to take on the task of integrating unions and worksites.\footnote{Golland, 151-53.} Over roughly the next two years, the Department of Labor approved three dozen voluntary plans, known as “hometown solutions,” and imposed five mandatory Plans in Philadelphia, St. Louis, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Washington D.C.\footnote{Anderson, 125.}

The Philadelphia Plan—the first serious attempt to put the Executive Orders into action and the prototype for affirmative action plans in other cities over the next few years—reflected the prevailing concern for black civil rights and the premises of the Great Society. Much like the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the widespread belief among politicians and officials was that antidiscrimination measures were first and foremost to create racial equality for African Americans. Over the late 1960s, the EEOC would struggle with women’s complaints of discrimination. There was not yet a consistent definition of sex discrimination or of sex equality that could serve as a foundation for affirmative action policies for women. Debates over whether protective labor laws for women constituted sex discrimination or not, and whether equality meant being treated the same as men were the starting point for defining sex equality in the mid-1960s. Before affirmative action could be extended to women, two conceptual leaps had to be made. First, the EEOC would have to conclude that sex discrimination was analogous to race discrimination, defined as unequal treatment based on sex or race. Second, it would
have to shift focus from disparate treatment to disparate impacts—i.e. statistically lower rates of minorities or women in a workplace—as constituting discrimination. This “conceptual mastery” over sex discrimination would not be complete until the early 1970s. Therefore, sex was not part of early incubation of affirmative action in “hometown plans” in from 1968 to 1971.

The horizon of possibility for affirmative action for women was still severely constrained by naturalized beliefs about women’s work versus men’s work during the creation of the Philadelphia Plan. The architects of affirmative action, furthermore, were motivated by the specter of racial rebellion in the urban North. Affirmative action took the premises of the Great Society and War on Poverty—that employment opportunity and the establishing of male heads of household was the way to bring the marginalized into the standing of proper citizens—and kicked them into high gear. Where the more passive routes of state welfare and laws against discrimination had failed to make a material impact for African Americans, affirmative action could ensure black men a footing in the working class. The Philadelphia Plan enshrined a particular orientation towards race, urban places, breadwinner liberalism, “men’s work,” and the working class in affirmative action in the late 1960s.

**Creating the Alaska Plan**

The Alaska Plan was Alaska’s version of the Philadelphia Plan for integrating the construction trades. The Plan represented a huge step from antidiscrimination laws and regulation to active measures for creating equal results in construction. Whereas the Alaska Commission for Human Rights enforced civil rights laws by investigating and

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70 Katherine Turk, *Equality on Trial: Sex and Gender at Work in the Age of Title VII*, manuscript submitted to University of Pennsylvania Press, forthcoming, 63.
resolving complaints of discrimination, the Alaska Plan would create specific goals for creating integrated unions and workplaces.

Robert Willard was appointed to coordinate a hometown affirmative action plan for Alaska (only a few months later, he would also be tapped as Executive Director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights). Walter Hickel, who had resigned as Governor of Alaska to accept Nixon’s nomination of Secretary of the Interior, appointed Willard in October 1969. Willard’s duty was to bring together the factions of labor, contractors and their associations, and various minority groups in the state to create an affirmative action “Alaska Plan” they would all willingly endorse.  

The “Alaska Plan Committee” convened to begin drafting a plan. The Committee did not meet until a year after Willard’s appointment, in September 1970. This delay was perhaps because the Philadelphia Plan’s fate in Congress and the courts was not secure until mid-1970, when a court ruled that the Plan did not constitute “quotas and deadlines” nor did it violate the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Seventeen participants convened in Anchorage, including representatives from labor, government, business, and minority communities. People from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Alaska Department of Highways, Federal Highway Administration’s Office of Civil Rights, Alaska Department of Labor (AK DOL), the Anchorage NAACP, the local Construction Trades Council, Teamsters, and the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) attended, among others. The committee was composed predominately of government employees, with fewer minority, union, or contractor representatives. A smaller, more manageable “working committee” would meet more regularly to do the actual work of writing the plan. Patricia Mayo was a federal employee who specialized in equal opportunity issues.

72 Golland, 157-58.
In 1969, she was an Equal Opportunity Officer for the Federal Aviation Administration and, when the Alaska Plan Committee began, she worked for the Department of the Interior (DOI).\(^7\) She served as a federal adviser and active member on the committee, as she had insight into the federal requirements and open communication with federal agencies. The committee decided that government agencies not be given voting power, so that votes would only reflect the opinions of contractors, unions, and minority communities. Willard optimistically predicted that the Committee would have a plan to submit within 90 days.\(^7\)

The committee had sample hometown plans at their disposal, such as the Denver Plan and Chicago Plan, to serve as models.\(^5\) The US DOL gave the committee a 37-page template plan that was fully composed; the local coalition could simply fill in the blanks with their own numerical goals.\(^6\) The prescription was to set goals for incremental increases in minority representation in employment and unions until the proportion of minorities in the construction industry matched the proportion of minorities in the local population. Alaska was not alone in creating a statewide as opposed to citywide plan. States like Rhode Island, Utah, and Arizona opted for affirmative action at the state level because their populations were small or rural and dispersed. Other states did so strategically, in order to diffuse the influence of large, urban minority populations on

\(^7\) Fairbanks Regional Job Development Conference Report, 21 March 1969, Box 14, Fairbanks Native Association Records, Arctic and Polar Regions Collections and Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.
\(^7\) Alaska Plan Committee Meeting Minutes, 22 October 1970, folder 1, box 5, series II.A, RuralCAP Records, Archives, Consortium Library, University of Alaska, Anchorage.
affirmative action goals. A statewide California Plan would require lower numerical goals than a localized city plan for Los Angeles, for example.\footnote{Robert Willard to Alaska Plan Committee, “Minutes of September 24 meeting,” memorandum, 6 October 1970, Alaska Plan 1970-71 folder, box 1, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, Support Services Division, Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.}

The first step in composing an Alaska Plan was to gather demographic and labor market facts on which to base goals and time tables. This was not a simple task, given that the state of Alaska had huge regional and seasonal disparities in demographics and economic conditions. Preliminary statistics available from the 1970 U.S. Census were not specific by region, nor did they describe the labor market. The Alaska Plan Committee held a series of hearings in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks to determine the demographics of Alaska and the state of minority employment. How many minorities lived in the state? How many of each minority group? Where did they live? What level of unemployment did they experience in comparison to whites? In the construction industry in particular? In the summer versus the winter? Experts from universities, government agencies, and nonprofits testified to the committee, with a patchwork of answers that would serves as the basis of the Alaska Plan. The BIA and regional Alaska Native organizations offered estimates of Native populations in various regions. The Anchorage NAACP estimated how many African Americans lived in Anchorage. The AK DOL offered statistics for unemployment by season and the construction industry. The information gathered at the hearings was not standardized and involved a lot of guesswork.\footnote{“Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Fairbanks”; “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Anchorage”; “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Juneau.”}

The Alaska Plan Committee was in a stalemate as the January 1971 deadline to submit a plan to the US DOL came and went. Willard blamed the impasse on the federal government, which had just implemented new affirmative action requirements to
require the Alaska State Highway department to employ 61 minority on-the-job trainees on federal highway contracts in Alaska during 1971 and ’72. Unions and contractors were hoping that the impending Alaska Plan meant that they did not have to comply with Federal Highway Administration’s order. Willard sought assurances that the Alaska Plan would encompass any other equal opportunity programs, and that contractors and unions would not face multiple, cumulative quotas from different levels of government. Willard accused the federal government of being a “stumbling block” to the Alaska Plan’s progress because it had not given “written confirmation that its agencies (would) adhere to provisions set forth in the Plan.” The controversy was only a stalling tactic, however, to mask the deeper conflict within the committee itself over numerical affirmative action goals.

The real cause of the Alaska Plan stalemate was the inability to agree on the specific number of minorities that would enter the craft unions in the first year of the plan and how many would enter each following year. In addition, organized labor vehemently opposed any set numerical goals, the basic principle of the plan. The model plan from the federal government said there was no one correct formula for determining these numbers, to the point that a number could be negotiated rather than derived by formula. The formula used in the model plan took into account the rate at which people were leaving the construction industry each year, as well as the rate of growth of the industry each year, presumably making it possible to predict how many positions might

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81 Ibid.
become available for minorities. The committee felt that the statistics were not reliable enough to use as the basis for a formula. The hearings had failed to determine how many minorities already worked in construction. Without reliable statistics or formulas, the committee was essentially adrift, left to manufacture a number out of thin air.

What goal would be both earnest and attainable, able to satisfy all interests at the table? The Alaska Commissioner of Labor estimated that the construction industry employed 10,380 people in 1969, a number that might grow to 15,000 by 1975. Unemployment in the construction industry hovered around 35% in the winter. There were approximately 55,000 Alaska Natives in the state, 20-60% of whom were jobless, depending on the season and village in question. There were an estimated 8,000 African Americans in Fairbanks and Anchorage. The committee first considered a schedule of 50 minorities added to unions for five consecutive years, for a total increase of 250 people. African Americans on the committee challenged this schedule as not having any sound rationale. The committee settled on a new plan for 100 minorities in the first year, and simply left the subsequent years blank until a formula could be agreed upon. Pressure from the minority caucus of the committee, particularly Alaska Natives, increased this number to 200 minorities, with several contractor and union representatives dissenting. This schedule was adopted for the first official draft of the Alaska Plan in February 1971. At that point, the chairman of the Alaska State Federation of Labor, Dwayne Carlson, entirely with drew his support over the issue of set

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84 “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Fairbanks”; “Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Anchorage”; "Excerpts from Alaska Plan Hearings, Juneau."
numerical goals. He refused to recommend the plan to unions or to participate in any further meetings with the commission.  

Patricia Mayo took the drafted plan—essentially unfinished—to a meeting with the US DOL in Anchorage. She returned to the Alaska Plan Committee with a list of very prescriptive, required amendments from the feds. They left little room for interpretation or negotiation. The overall goal of the plan would have to be to bring minority membership in unions into proportion with the percentage of minority people in the state population, determined to be 28%. This would be achieved incrementally over seven years. Each union, taking into consideration the degree of its minority underrepresentation, would have to make a specific goal for increasing minority membership. Furthermore, the federal requirements stated, if the pipeline began, the parties to the plan must make a commitment to expedite the goals. There was no longer room for a push-pull between unions, contractors, and minorities—the federal government had essentially prescribed a formula for setting those numbers and timetables. The committee met that month and agreed to adopt each of the federal requirements almost verbatim.  

That summer, Willard, Mayo, and a few other members of the committee set out on a summer statewide tour to generate support and solicit feedback for the plan. The committee still lacked statistics on current levels of minority representation in each union to serve as a base line for moving towards the 28% goal. Willard went ahead and publicly released the plan with the 200 person first year goal. On the tour, the Alaska Plan Committee would host another round of public hearings where unions could
testify to how many minorities they currently had, and the general public could respond to the first draft of the plan. The committee traveled to eleven cities all over the state, including the major cities like Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau, and the largest towns in other boroughs. Willard proudly touted it as a 10,000-mile tour, even though it did not reach many remote areas and entirely bypassed the Aleutian Islands.

The Alaska Plan faced steep criticism from rural communities. While most people were in agreement with the spirit of the plan, many saw location as a more significant hindrance to equal employment opportunity than race discrimination. Conditions in rural Alaska, and in different regions of Alaska did not match those in Anchorage, Fairbanks, or an aggregate assessment of the state. First, 28% did not reflect the demographics of many Alaskan villages and boroughs, which were as much as 90% Alaska Native. One attendee at Nome argued, “The 200 first year goal would not even dent the unemployment problem of the Nome region.” As a result, the solution of regionally specific plans, tailored to the demographics of each region, was proposed at many of the hearings. Second, rural Alaskans saw union policies as the biggest barrier to employment. It was difficult for rural workers to maintain union membership when they worked jobs that might last only a few weeks, and then be unemployed for months. Also, contractors hired workers from Fairbanks and Anchorage hiring halls, rather than hiring from the nearest town. Rural residents also raised the need for training programs,

as many workers’ skills became outdated when they spent long periods unemployed and the pipeline was sure to require new technical skills. Finally, rural residents reacted to the Alaska Plan with a “local hire” philosophy that echoed that of the larger statewide “Alaska Hire” debate, but operated on an even more restricted scale. They resented workers from other parts of the state “making their money and leaving.” The comments the Alaska Plan Committee gathered on the tour reflected concern about the particular conditions and structural barriers rural Alaskans faced that led to racial disparities in the construction industry, which was more often articulated as a politics of place rather than a politics of racial equality.

After the completion of the tour, Willard finalized the Alaska Plan with specific numerical goals. Willard calculated how many minorities needed to be added each year until 1978, to each union in order for minority representation to reach 28%. The Plan would add 3,853 minority union members to the total membership of unions covered by the Plan: 12,084 people in 1970, 14.5% of which were minorities. His calculations were based on the prediction that union membership would expand by 4% every year. This meant that the entire Alaska Plan was premised on the idea that affirmative action could be achieved through growing union membership. For example, the asbestos workers had 102 members in 1970; only one member was a minority, making their rate of minority membership less than 1%. If 5 or 6 minorities joined the union every year until 1978, 28% percent of the membership, or 39 of 139 members, would be minorities within 7 years without displacing any existing non-minority members. Presumably, if job opportunities expanded at the same rate and union procedures were nondiscriminatory, this plan would translate into a fair proportion of minorities in the workforce. Other

93 “Alaska Plan Approved by Native Group Here.”
94 Ibid.
unions already had minority rates that exceeded the goal; for instance 65% of bricklayers were non-white and therefore would not be bound to goals and timetables, though they would still be expected to sign the Alaska Plan.95

With the controversial integration schedule in hand, and having already received a deadline extension from the federal government, Willard faced an uphill battle convincing contractors, unions, and minority groups to sign the plan by September 1, 1971. To gain signatories, Willard continued to emphasize the threat of an imminent federal intervention and cast himself as defending the state’s autonomy. A mandatory plan would be administered by the federal government, as opposed to the Alaska Plan, which would create a committee of Alaskans to oversee implementation.96 Willard claimed the US DOL had already started writing a mandatory plan that would apply to those who chose not to sign the Alaska Plan.97 At every opportunity, Willard explained that this voluntary “hometown plan” was the best alternative to a mandatory plan imposed by the federal government. If a federal plan were imposed, there would have been no input from Alaskans and it would be governed from Washington D.C. rather than by a local committee of interested parties. He cast the drafted Alaska Plan as the only option: “A plan, either voluntary or federally-imposed is inevitable. Either we agree to the Alaska Plan as presented or the government will clamp one on us.”98

Willard also needed to cast the plan as the outcome of collective effort and a mutual agreement, in spite of the deep fractures in the committee. He appealed to labor

unionism through a metaphor equating Alaskans with a union, “We seek to ‘run’ our own shop.” Making the federal government a common enemy helped create the image of cohesion. Thus Willard distanced himself and the plan from the taint of regulation, bureaucracy, and federal initiative; instead he tried to make the plan look like an act of independence, collaboration, and expression of a unified Alaska.

Summer turned into fall and the Alaska Plan was imperiled by the lack of consensus. Voluntary plans across the country were failing to meet their goals and the Office of Federal Contract Compliance already had replaced at least two voluntary plans with mandatory ones. Some civil rights advocates were calling on the federal government to abandon the “hometown solution” concept in favor of federal action. Willard warned the plan was “going down to the wire--or going down the drain.”

In a major breakthrough, the Alaska State Federation of Labor reluctantly agreed to sign the plan, feeling that there was no other choice. Dwayne Carlson wrote in a letter to all building and construction local unions encouraging them to ratify the plan, “I personally feel very strongly that the percentage approach is wrong and unfair to the industry, and would never have agreed to it in a voluntary plan. However, we have had that option taken from us and I feel I must recommend that we accept the Alaska Plan.” Carlson’s grudging endorsement was a step forward, but the rank and file of dozens of local unions still had to vote to sign the plan.

101 Golland, 155.
By the September 1 deadline, only a few unions had agreed to the plan. The struggle continued for six more months. The Operating Engineers—a powerful union that would be impacted by the plan—and the Alaska Federation of Natives signed on in October. By February, the committee had made little headway, but sent the plan to the US DOL in Washington D.C. for approval anyway. Fifteen out of 44 groups refused to sign. The Associated General Contractors had yet to sign, and only about half of the minority organizations had signed. There were divides within interest groups. For instance, the Fairbanks NAACP signed the plan, but the Anchorage NAACP refused, criticizing it for not being strong enough, not guaranteeing minorities pipeline jobs, and for being an insincere effort on the part of contractors and unions. In response, Willard said the NAACP would not receive a place on the Alaska Plan Policy Board and that the organization was failing its membership. Native organizations were similarly split. Filipinos in Anchorage, but not Juneau, signed. Most unions signed, except for the carpenters and roofers. There is no evidence that Associated General Contractors agreed to the plan at the time it was sent to Washington; some specialty contractors’ associations signed, while others declined. Mayo and Willard invited any organization to submit their signature at any time, thus leaving open the possibility that as the plan crept closer to federal approval and implementation the remaining groups would come on board. Even if the US DOL did find the plan acceptable, the agreement would hardly paper over the major fractures over affirmative action in Alaska.

107 “Equal Employment Plan Goes to D.C.”
The Department of Labor approved the final draft of the Alaska Plan in March 1971. At the implementation of the Plan, Willard Bowman praised the committee for its work and cooperation. He called Alaska a “land of opportunity” where “the era of true equal opportunity is about to begin.” At the end of the year, Governor Egan, through administrative order, effectively extended the Alaska Plan to include all state construction contracts, requiring all contractors to take affirmative action to meet the minority goals set forth in the Alaska Plan. The Alaska Plan was ready to be implemented for the 1972 construction season.

The Alaska Plan Policy Board, a new body created by the plan, was charged with overseeing implementation. Per the Alaska Plan, the Board consisted of two contractors, two union representatives, four coalition members (the “minority coalition” included anyone representing a minority community or organization), and a ninth member proposed by the committee at large and voted on by the rest of the board. When making decisions, one contractor, one union member, and two coalition members would have to be included in a majority vote to constitute a quorum. The Executive Director was chosen by a nomination and majority vote by the Alaska Plan committee.

William F. Owen of British Petroleum was selected as Executive Director. Robert Willard stood as the Chairman and Patricia Mayo continued to serve as “federal adviser” to the Board. The spirit of the Board was to bring organized labor, industry and contractors, and minority communities together in order to “share in the authority and responsibility” of equal employment opportunity.\textsuperscript{112}

The Alaska Plan envisioned the Board administering an office that would essentially function like a government agency manpower program, similar to the Bureau of Indian Affairs or Department of Labor. Like a manpower program, the Alaska Plan office would recruit, refer, and counsel minorities into opportunities for training and employment. The Alaska Plan would recruit minorities by advertising that unions and contractors were now committed to affirmative action, and by contacting schools and guidance counselors to let interested students know about opportunities in construction.\textsuperscript{113} The office would maintain out-of-work lists of job seekers.\textsuperscript{114} The Alaska Plan office would offer counseling so people would understand how wages, union membership, training programs, and apprenticeship worked, and be able to determine what career path they were interested in pursuing.\textsuperscript{115} Next, the Board would form a panel to evaluate applicants and assign them a classification based on their level of experience in a given trade. Based on that classification, the applicant would be counseled to join the appropriate union or skill-training program.\textsuperscript{116} This plan of action did not restructure the practices of unions or contractors; rather it was a program of social services meant to direct minorities to employment opportunities.

\textsuperscript{112} Ibid, 1.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid, 4.
\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, 9-10.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 11.
Women Organize in Alaska

By the time the Alaska Plan was on the verge of implementation, a feminist movement was flourishing in Alaska and making inroads in state legislation and government agencies, including the Commission for Human Rights and the Alaska Plan. In spring of 1970, Alaskan women successfully campaigned to legalize abortion in the state. The first meeting of Anchorage Women’s Liberation (AWL) attracted around 150 women to Log Cabin Church to discuss their experiences of oppression in the family, labor market, workplaces, schools, and churches. Pat Mayo, the Bureau of Land Management employee who served as federal adviser to the Alaska Plan, was a founding member of AWL and headed up the organization’s “Job Committee.” The committee’s objectives were to make women aware of their rights under the law, aid women who experienced employment discrimination, and lobby to change state laws that discriminated against women. AWL and its members organized around issues very similar to those galvanizing feminists across the nation. They fought sex segregation in newspaper want ads and led protests against local newspapers and the Catholic Church for discriminating against women. Founding member Amy Bollenbach served as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1972 in Miami. There, she joined with other feminist delegates, including Gloria Steinem and Betty Friedan, to fight for abortion reform and a woman vice presidential candidate.

Anchorage Women’s Liberation found allies in the state legislature (including Representative Willard Bowman, the African American legislator and former director of the Commission for Human Rights) and success in expanding discrimination protections

120 Bollenbach.
to women in the Alaska Statutes during the early 1970s. Alaska ratified the Equal Rights Amendment as soon as Congress passed it in 1972. The Alaska Legislature incorporated sex into every aspect of civil rights antidiscrimination laws in 1972. The amendments prohibited sex discrimination not only in employment, but also in housing, financial services, and government services. This meant the CHR’s mission was drastically expanded to include pursuing complaints of sex discrimination as well as racial discrimination. The agency established a “women’s rights division” and nominated its first chairwoman to begin January 1, 1973.

Pat Mayo’s involvement in feminist activism did not seem to influence the course of the Alaska Plan, which remained exclusively trained on the issue of proportional representation of minorities. However, as the Alaska Plan Policy Board was assembled, another feminist activist and AWL member, Cara Peters, gained a foothold on the Board. Peters had created a local sensation three years prior, when she was only twenty years old, by challenging sexism in the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The BLM refused to hire her as a firefighter, claiming that it was impossible to provide separate facilities for men and women in a mixed firefighting crew. Peters discussed the matter directly with the director of the BLM, who said if she could get together a crew of 12 women (a regular firefighting crew consisted of 25 people), he would hire them. Peters assembled 24 women who debuted as the first all-women firefighting crew in Alaska. Their separate “facilities” consisted of placing their bedding a distance from the male firefighters and going to the bathroom in the bushes, just like the men. Peters also led a campaign against sex-segregated want ads, bringing a complaint forward to the CHR

122 Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, There is a way ... Annual Report, 1973.
in 1973 against local Anchorage and Fairbanks newspapers. She was given a spot on the Alaska Plan Policy Board representing Women’s Liberation. Women’s Liberation was not considered part of the minority “coalition” of Alaska Natives, African Americans and other racial minorities, so Peters did not have a vote. Even though the Alaska Plan only created goals for racial minorities, women were making an effort to influence the Plan.

The Alaska Plan and Commission for Human Rights Falter

The Alaska Plan, aside from failing to overcome the discord of contractors, unions, and minorities, was simply not an affirmative action plan in practice. The goals and timetables for integrating minorities—the hallmark of affirmative action—were a veneer over a manpower program. First, the Plan relied solely on economic expansion, the annual 4% increase in union membership over seven years, to meet its goals. Even if the pipeline construction boom created a bubble of growth that allowed a certain number of minorities into the industry, it would not necessarily make an imprint on race or sex as structural barriers in the labor market, only mitigate their effects. Second, the Plan did not target unions or contractors to make specific changes or take responsibility for making the goals and timetables a reality. It would be up to the Alaska Plan office, through efforts of recruitment and properly disciplining racial minorities (who, in the Plan were equated with the poor or unemployed) to become workers. The Plan proceeded with a blind eye to the possibility that discrimination might occur at the point of employment or within the practices of unions or contractors. The Alaska Plan made no intrusion on union or contractor policies, procedures, or collective bargaining.

124 Peters, “Sex is Groovy, But Not in Want Ads!”
agreements; it only vaguely stipulated that signatories would carry out their existing practices in a way that promoted equal opportunity, presumably with the aid of the Alaska Plan office. The Alaska Plan was less an affirmative action plan to rectify the effects of discrimination and more of a redundant social welfare program with a liberal faith that growing prosperity would fix unemployment.

The Alaska Plan’s scope was ambitious, applying to all federal, state, and privately financed construction work in the state. But it was purely voluntary. A union or contractor could choose to become a signatory, or not, which signaled the intent to comply with the plan. Governor Egan’s order to enforce the plan on state projects gave it a measure of authority. If contractors did not sign and comply with the plan, or meet the incremental integration goals, the state could terminate their contracts. The order, however, only targeted contractors for the state, not the federal government or private business, and had no provisions to assess or implement affirmative action in unions a stipulated in the Alaska Plan.126 The threat of a federally imposed plan should the Alaska Plan fail to be effective remained the most powerful incentive for results.

While the Plan itself had weaknesses, perhaps the most significant barrier to its implementation was a lack of financial backing. The Plan was not connected to any state legislation that would give it a permanent source of funding. Rather, it was up to the Policy Board to apply for grants form federal, state, local, and private sources.127 There was likely an implicit agreement between the US DOL and the Alaska Plan committee that funding would come from the federal government. It was, after all, a plan devised


to appease the federal demand for affirmative action in local areas of the construction industry. But just as the Plan was approved, and a Policy Board was formed that could begin pursuing financing, there was a change happening in Washington D.C. In anticipation of the 1972 election and in a bid for support from organized labor, Nixon distanced himself from affirmative action and the Philadelphia Plan by opposing “quotas.” After winning the election, he appointed a new Secretary of Labor, Peter Brennan, who was hostile to affirmative action and “quickly declared the Philadelphia Plan a failure.” The Nixon administration wanted to scrap the “hometown” plans. In its place, Brennan endorsed voluntary, local plans that were not affirmative action plans for integration, but effectively segregated training programs for minorities.

Incidentally, the Alaska Plan already had a heavy focus on recruitment, reform, and training of workers, rather than enforcement of hiring goals on the part of employers. In January 1973, the Department of Labor declined the Alaska Plan Policy Board’s proposal for $125,000 in funds. Willard defended the Plan, saying that it was in effect and working, but just needed federal support. The very federal pressure that had spurred the plan evaporated on the eve of its implementation, leaving the Board with no backing to accomplish its mission.

Just as the Commission seemed to be charging ahead to enforce women’s rights, it, too, faced major setbacks. In 1973, at the start of Nixon’s second term, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission did not renew the CHR’s grant for the first time in four years, citing the agency’s failure to file reports. The state legislature followed

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128 Golland, 156.
130 Golland, 154-57.
132 Ibid.
suit, cutting the budget by several thousand dollars.\footnote{Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, \textit{There is a way ... Annual Report}, 1973, 7.} In April, Robert Willard was forced to resign, in the words of a board Chairwoman, over “differences of opinion and areas of concern over mismanagement of the commission.”\footnote{Tom Snapp, "Human Rights Commission Forces Director to Resign," \textit{All-Alaska Weekly}, 13 April 1973.} Willard, absorbed in writing and campaigning for the Alaska Plan, may have let the agency fall dormant over the past year. Or, there may have been divisions over the direction of the agency, which was angling to take a more regulatory role and to create expanded definitions of civil rights.

Willard, a longtime advocate for Alaska Natives, may have had been concerned that the new focus on sex discrimination was hijacking an agency meant to serve minorities. Shortly before the resignation, he issued a press release entitled “Complaints By Whites on the Rise.” It relayed (and implicitly denounced) the fact that since the new sex discrimination laws were added, in the early months of 1973, 20 of 24 complaints were submitted by whites, and none by Alaska Natives.\footnote{State of Alaska Commission for Human Rights, press release, 16 March 1973, folder ACHR NEWS Release Jan 1972 to 75, box 3079, Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.} The United States Civil Rights Commission also recurrently debated whether there was a conflict between enforcing race and sex discrimination. In 1973, a Vice Chair suggested, “government enforcing agencies might emphasize sex discrimination to the exclusion of proper consideration of racial discrimination.”\footnote{Commission for Civil Rights minutes, 1973, quoted in Berry, 139.} Whatever the cause of the ousting, the upheaval resulted in a 100\% percent turnover in staff and the Fairbanks and Anchorage offices being kept afloat by volunteers.\footnote{Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, \textit{There is a way ... Annual Report}, 1973, 7.} Cases were backlogged for two years, in part because the added focus on sex discrimination doubled the agency’s caseload.\footnote{Ibid, 16.}
The CHR rebounded in spite of the funding, leadership, and staff issues. That summer, Bill Vaudrin stepped in as executive director and the agency searched for ways to increase its ability to protect human rights for Alaskans. They focused on updating their procedures and filing systems and training new staff.\textsuperscript{139} They created training programs and workshops for civil rights workers in Alaska—a resource that previously could only be accessed out of state—and strengthened ties with federal agents. The EEOC had classified Alaska as a “foreign duty” region, which meant EEOC representatives had never come to the state.\textsuperscript{140} Because the amount of cases the agency could investigate and resolve was directly linked to how many investigators they could hire, increasing the staff under budget constraints (which only allotted for two investigators, and limited traveling) was a priority.\textsuperscript{141} They did this by using volunteers from the Volunteers in Service to America Program (VISTA) created as part of Lyndon Johnson’s anti-poverty campaign (sometimes referred to as the domestic Peace Corps). Sixteen volunteers allowed the CHR to pursue more cases and increase coverage in rural Alaska.\textsuperscript{142} The commission subsequently received new funding from the EEOC to hire a pipeline compliance director and a full time attorney. In 1973, the commission closed many cases—over seventy, compared to only three in 1972—and took on many new complaints—over 250, compared to thirty the prior year.\textsuperscript{143} By the end of 1973, the commission was poised to take on the pipeline with expanded civil rights definitions (to include sex), more focus on pursuing complaints and targeting employers, and a few years under its belt of clarifying its procedures and realm of legal authority.

\textsuperscript{139} Ibid, 10.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid, 11.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, 12, 20.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid, 12.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid, 22, 25.
Conclusion

In Alaska in the early 1970s, the Commission for Human Rights was coming into its own as an enforcement agency—with stronger legal powers, expanded civil rights laws undergirding its mandate, and a track record for pursuing complaints of discrimination. The federal EEOC, which served as an example agency for the Alaska CHR, was also developing systematic methods for addressing employment discrimination on the large scale at which it was receiving complaints. The EEOC created parallel and measurable definitions of race and sex discrimination, and gained more legal authority and powers from Congress. Since 1964, these agencies had grown into much more effective enforcers of the Civil Right Act. Affirmative action, on the other hand, was still in the process of being institutionalized. The Philadelphia Plan was a very targeted, experimental effort, directed at a single industry (construction), category of employers (federal contractors), and type of inequality (race discrimination against African Americans). Affirmative action was a groundbreaking effort in that it, for the first time, focused on the results of nondiscrimination in the form of numerical goals and timetables, but it was only vaguely defined in terms of what practical changes by employers might yield the desired results. These ambitions and shortcomings were evident in the Alaska Plan. It presumed that proportional representation would signal the absence of discrimination and the achievement of equal opportunity. It harbored the assumption that these measures were irrelevant to women; racial exclusivity was called into question while the sex segregated job market remained naturalized. The vanishing of federal financial support notwithstanding, the Alaska Plan defined affirmative action in a way that fell back on preexisting infrastructure for managing the labor market and alleviating unemployment, and poverty. The Alaska Plan’s proposal for how to meet goals and time tables did not call not for changes in the industry or unions and shied
away from spotlighting discriminatory practices, but used the manpower program paradigm of rehabilitation and counseling to recruit and retrain the unemployed to fit into a changing economy. The Alaska Plan lacked both a strategy for affirmative action that actually dismantled institutionalized racism and the consensus and political power to make it happen.

Though the Alaska Plan went dormant in 1972 while the CHR was able to continue pursuing enforcement, the rights consciousness the two reflected and gave form to only grew leading up to groundbreaking on the trans Alaska pipeline in 1974. The Alaska Plan, in conjunction with other employment opportunity programs explored in the chapters below, set the expectation that minorities, women, Alaskan citizens, and Alaskan Natives would not only receive equitable treatment they would receive a share of Alaska’s economic development, in the form of a job. Affirmative action solidified the idea that these groups had a positive right to be proportionally represented in the workforce and the conviction among individuals that they had a right to pipeline jobs (sometimes at the expense another’s perceived right). Affirmative action was not simply an enforcement measure for civil rights prohibitions on discrimination. In the early 1970s, affirmative action and antidiscrimination converged around the concept of proportional representation. As proportional representation became the goal of affirmative action, it also became the measure of equal opportunity. The EEOC turned to statistics to demonstrate employers’ compliance or violation of the law. That is, a lower rate of minority of female employees compared to the surrounding population was sufficient evidence that an employer discriminated. Equal treatment and equality in results were of a piece.
2. Alaska Native Hire: Federal Funds at the Fairbanks Native Community Center

The July 1976 feature story for the Alyeska Report, a large, glossy newsletter the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company produced to publicize progress on the trans Alaska pipeline, announced that 4,882 Alaska Natives had been employed in the first two years of pipeline construction.1 The company took credit for giving nearly $8 million in funding for educational, recruitment, and on-the-job training programs for Alaska Natives. Like everything else about the pipeline, Alyeska claimed its “Native Hire” program was groundbreaking: “The most extensive training program in U.S. history to insure participation of Native workers.” It claimed the pipeline provided opportunities for Alaska Natives to leave their subsistence lifestyle and the poverty and unemployment of village life behind for a brighter future. William Aloysius from the village of Holy Cross was an example of this upward and urban-oriented mobility. He was quoted in the paper, saying, “I’m glad to have a job. I want the things money can buy; I want to make it and save it—maybe I’ll buy a house in Anchorage.” He had never worked in construction but through on-the-job training with the Operating Engineers Local 302, he planned to stay in construction and reach journeyman status. Of leaving home, he said, “I don’t miss the hunting and fishing; I’ve done that all my life.”

The entire story echoed this particular progress narrative. The front cover, with primitive, earth-toned illustrations of Alaska Natives wearing traditional clothing and hunting tools, tagged with anthropological labels for the reader’s edification, opened to reveal photographs of Alaska Native workers smiling as they operated machinery and worked with modern pipeline technology.3 While Alyeska was certainly posing for

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2 Ibid, 3.
3 Ibid, 1-5.
public relations effect and perhaps inflating its financial contributions, the training and hiring programs had in fact exceeded expectations. Over one thousand more Alaska Natives were employed than Alyeska, in concert with the Department of the Interior, had set out to hire. This chapter is about the nexus of corporate, government, and nongovernmental organization efforts that made Native Hire a reality where other preferential hiring plans failed. It is also about the particularity of employment on the pipeline as a means for improving Alaska Natives’ lives in the context of radicalizing Alaska Native politics, the settlement of land claims, and growing self-determination.

**Political Mobilization of Alaska Natives**

Alaska’s indigenous populations had not been unified historically due to the cultural, language, and geographic differences between the land’s many Native societies, which today include 225 federally recognized tribes. During Alaska’s years as a territory in the late 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, Alaska Natives suffered under colonial pressures of forced religious, cultural, and language assimilation, boarding schools, dispossession of traditional lands, hunting and fishing rights, disease, and racism. Jim Crow style-segregation applied to all schools in the territory as well as many public places that carried signs reading “Whites Only” or “Eskimos Only” (to refer to all Alaska Natives). By the 1950s, Alaska Native populations and ways of life were severely threatened and Native communities retained little self-determination or political rights. During this decade, Alaska Natives suffered a tuberculosis rate ten times

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the national average, and had a life expectancy of only 35 years, compared to white Alaskans’ life expectancy of 70 years of age.\(^5\)

Alaska Natives made efforts to organize politically and some successful moves for recognition and civil rights during the first half of the 20th century. The Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB) formed in 1912 and would remain the only Native political organization in the state until the 1960s. It was led by predominately Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people educated in Presbyterian missions in Southeast Alaska. They knew English and made the ANB a Western-style organization, electing a President and Treasurer and adopting Rules of Order. They pursued political and legal avenues for equal treatment of Alaska Natives, securing Native voting rights in 1922 and antidiscrimination legislation in 1944. The ANB and its sister organization, the Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS), were effective in forming a voting bloc to elect Natives and representatives sympathetic to Native concerns to the state legislature.\(^6\) The ANB/ANS was limited, however, by its inability to overcome the perception that it represented particular southeast Native groups and politics and appeal to Natives throughout the state.\(^7\)

The Alaska Statehood Act of 1959 dramatically increased the stakes for Alaska Native autonomy and created a new impetus for a statewide solidarity movement that could mount serious political opposition to government and businesses in the state. The Act acknowledged that Natives—who, unlike Native Americans in the lower-48, had never been removed to reservations—had rights to aboriginal lands they traditionally lived on and used, but provided no mechanisms for actually protecting or designating


\(^7\) Williams, 204-06.
such lands. The United States would hold the land in trust until Congress settled the
native land rights issue. But the Act simultaneously allowed the new state to claim 103
million square acres of “vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved” land as Alaska state
land (the remaining 270 million acres would be federally controlled, public lands).\(^8\) This
created a conflict between the state’s desire to move forward and Natives’ right to hold
the state at bay until Congress clarified which lands belonged to Native communities.
The state of Alaska began picking and choosing lands, submitting claims to the Bureau
of Land Management (BLM), without regard for the prior claims Alaska Natives might
have held.\(^9\) The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), in turn, helped Alaska Natives file
challenges to the state selections and their own claims to hundreds of millions of acres.
The BLM surreptitiously decided not to make any decisions on contested lands and
maintained the status quo for most of the 1960s.

Alaska began enforcing bans on hunting and fishing when it transitioned from a
territory to a state. The Statehood Act criminalized the subsistence practices Natives had
used for generations and further endangered Natives’ lifestyle. Then, two major federal
projects directly threatened Alaska Natives’ survival. In the first, the Army Corps of
Engineers in 1954 proposed damming the Yukon River to create a hydroelectric power
plant and recreation area. The Rampart Dam would have flooded several Native villages
as well as land for hunting, fishing, and trapping.\(^10\) Another proposal, fully recounted in
Dan O’Neill’s The Firecracker Boys, was by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1958 to
detonate atomic bombs underground in order to build a harbor. Coined “Project
Chariot,” the scheme’s test site was within forty miles of three Inupiat Villages that

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\(^8\) Ibid, 207.
\(^10\) Roxanne Willis, *Alaska’s Place in the West: From the Last Frontier to the Last Great Wilderness* (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2010); Peter A. Coates, *The Trans-Alaska Pipeline Controversy: Technology, Conservation, and the Frontier* (University of Alaska Press, 1993).
depended on the land and sea for their livelihoods. In these proposals, eager developers saw Alaska Natives as obstacles to Alaska’s development and disregarded Native interests and ways of life.

These increased pressures over entitlement to the land and control of its uses spurred ever-increasing levels of resistance, political mobilization, and unification of Alaska Natives across the state. Nine new regional Native organizations formed between 1960 and 1965. For instance, an Iñupiat organization, Iñupiat Paitot (People’s Heritage) formed in the region around Project Chariot with explicit focus on nuclear testing issues, and the Tanana Chiefs Conference grew out of an Athabascan organization, Dena Nena Henash (Our Land Speaks), attracting 300 villages to its first meeting in 1962. The Tundra Times was founded as the first statewide Native newspaper in 1962 to address Alaska Natives collectively and offer an alternative to mainstream, pro-development newspapers. Native leaders traveled around the state organizing 22 villages to petition the Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall to withdraw lands surrounding Native villages from any possibility of state land selection.

12 Williams, “A Brief History of Native Solidarity,” 208-12.
13 Ibid, 213.
14 Daley and James.
15 Mitchell, 90.
Figure 6: Alaska Native organizations and their areas of membership, circa 1968

The need for a statewide, umbrella organization to unify the groups against a common threat became more and more apparent over the 1960s. Many distrusted the ANB—seeing it as primarily representative of Southeast Alaska Natives. Three hundred people and some of the state’s most active Native leaders met in anchorage in October 1966 and elected a board of directors for a new statewide organization that would become the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN). In 1967, the AFN elected Emil Notti as president and created a constitution. Its immediate goal was getting a land freeze from the Secretary of the Interior to stop all state land selections (set into motion by the Statehood Act) until Native claims could be established; its ultimate goal was the resolution of Native land claims by Congress. The Native solidarity movement had come into its own—reaching across great distances—in response to the drive for development created by the Statehood Act. Just as oil companies were eyeing the Prudhoe Bay tundra for signs of oil, the AFN had become a source of power courted by government and business.\textsuperscript{17}

\textbf{Creation of the Fairbanks Native Community Center}

The Fairbanks Native Association was a key player in the political mobilization of Alaska Natives. Founded in 1963 as a small social organization that met in members’ homes, it grew over the 1960s to be a vital political forum, provider of services, and communication and commerce hub for Natives living in and outside of Fairbanks.\textsuperscript{18} Founding members Nick Grey, Ralph Perdue, Bill Carlo, and Poldine Carlo began gathering Natives in Fairbanks around primarily social activities like potlatches and dog

\textsuperscript{17} Williams, “A Brief History of Native Solidarity,” 214-16.
races. It evolved into a gathering for addressing political issues particularly over land use and claims.

The FNA was unique from the regional and village organizations that emerged during the 1960s in that it was very diverse and not identified with a single tribe, village, or culture. Alaska Natives from all over the state who had either relocated to Fairbanks permanently or came to town temporarily became members of the FNA or participated in its activities while maintaining ties to their home village communities. The FNA itself became a draw for rural Natives who wanted to discuss the politics of land, sell goods, or attend social events. Potlatches became an annual event that required days of cooking and preparation and eventually welcomed Native and non-Natives alike. State politicians used the FNA to organize meetings with the Native community as development initiatives like Project Chariot, the Rampart Dam, and the trans Alaska pipeline butted up against the land claims of Alaska Natives. The FNA, even though it was not a statewide organization, became a center for Native politics and services—perhaps to as great a degree as the ANB—due to its central location and its ability to transcend geographic and cultural divisions between Alaska Natives.

Securing gathering space was always a crucial component to the FNA’s ability to grow its mission and membership. Starting from members’ kitchens, the FNA established an office, then several rooms in a different building, and by the mid-1960s grew to occupy a former apartment building. As former executive director Georgianna Lincoln recalled, “We just didn’t have a place to congregate and we moved from place to place …. People were seeing the need more and more for a place to call our own.”

19 Spud Williams interview.
20 Georgianna Lincoln interviewed by Walter Newman and Bill Schneider, telephone, Fairbanks Native
“Welcome Center” with social services, counseling, an arts and crafts shop, a recreation room with a pool table, and a piano. The Welcome Center became a busy community center where Alaska Natives might get information to help them adjust to the city, socialize, have a meal, play cards, sell arts and crafts, or sew. Lincoln sold arts and crafts on Saturdays made by Alaska Natives from outlying villages, keeping 10% for the FNA and sending the rest of the proceeds to the individual. The Center would also use its van to pick up moose killed on the road. The body would be hung on the back patio, facing the Chena River, for people to come take bones, organs, and meat. The FNA Welcome Center was an all-purpose space by and for Alaska Natives in the city. A former employee recalled, “We even had a family living there once.” Like other Indian community centers nation-wide, the FNA’s center was largely run by women.

The FNA’s Welcome Center was not unlike community centers run by independent American Indian organizations in dozens of cities in the 1960s. By the end of the 1960s, about 40 such centers existed, growing new pan-tribal identities out of migration to urban areas in the post-war years. These centers were usually the only places outside of reservations that addressed the social service needs of Native Americans. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare began surveying these centers to determine how the federal government could better address the needs of urban Indians. From that grew a pilot program to fund four existing centers. By the mid-

22 Georgianna Lincoln interview.
23 Smetzer, “A Brief History of the Fairbanks Native Community Center.”
1970s, the concern for urban Indians had grown into a broader movement of federal funding directed towards off-reservation Indians, and urban Indians made connections and organized themselves on the national level. In 1977, 60 Indian Centers were funded in order to promote economic and social self-sufficiency of urban Indians. Federal funding shaped Indian Centers from what were often social organizations into permanent, complex social service agencies.

The FNA’s center was an early beneficiary of this trend, as one of the four original centers to be federally funded. In 1967, the Community Action Program (CAP), with funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), approached the Fairbanks Native Association about establishing a community center for Alaska Natives—which became the Welcome Center. The initiative behind the FNA came from Alaska Natives, but the ability to sustain a permanent space came from the federal government, which in turn shaped how that space came to be used. The Welcome Center housed in the converted apartment building was funded by the Community Action Program, through the Office of Economic Opportunity from 1967-69. When CAPS dissolved in 1969 and the FNA lacked the funds to renew its lease, the organization again found a lifeline in the OEO, which supplied $35,000 to help the center move to a new location and reopen. This time, the center launched as the Fairbanks Native Community Center (FNCC). The FNCC took on a life somewhat differentiated from the FNA, as an “action and service arm” of the original organization.

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27 Smetzer, "A Brief History of the Fairbanks Native Community Center.”
funding, the Welcome Center evolved into the FNCC and went from strictly volunteer
efforts to an operation with permanent space and a small, paid, full-time staff.

The new FNCC needed another source of funds if it was going to sustain its staff,
offices, and growth. The first director of the FNCC, Ruby Tansy John, served on the Task
Force on Racially-Isolated Urban Indians, which was sponsored by the federal
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. John urged the FNCC to apply for
Model Urban Indian Center (MUIC) funding, which was a three year pilot project and
an “experimental program in Indian self-determination.”

MUIC was funded by four federal agencies: the US DOL, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the
Department of Housing, and the Office of Economic Opportunity. The FNCC relocated
once again, beginning the MUIC grant in May of 1971 with Georgianna Lincoln as the
new executive director. By 1972, the center had a staff of over a dozen people,
including an employment specialist and job developer. Lincoln recalled, “Once we got
... the Model Urban Indian Center grant, it seemed that it opened up doors for us to
know what was available. We just didn’t know all those years prior to 1963 what was
available to us. I think primarily we just let the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Indian
Health Service ... decide on our behalf, and slowly, very, very slowly, we ended up
taking control of programs that affected the Native people.”

The beginning of federal funding for the FNCC in the late 1960s put the center on a path to taking on the role of
directly providing social services previously under the jurisdiction of government
agencies. This empowered the center to play a central role in Native self-determination,
but also constrained the center within the federal government’s goals for urban Indians

29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Smetzer, “A Brief History of the Fairbanks native Community Center.”
32 “History of the Fairbanks Native Association.”
33 Georgianna Lincoln interview.
and bureaucratic procedures. The case of the FNCC is another instance of James LaGrand’s observation, “The War on Poverty caused social and political restructuring among Indians.”

Indian organizations, which may have originally had religious, community, or political focus, became part of the social welfare system, dependent on federal funds and organization.

**Stevens Village Injunction against the Pipeline**

The Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS), assuming that Native land claims were only a minor obstacle in securing a Right-of-Way lease, began courting Alaska Native leaders for their support in 1969. The consortium began by offering the Alaska Federation of Natives a $60,000 contract to recruit unemployed Alaskans for oil jobs to influence the AFN’s support of the pipeline. An attorney representing TAPS, Thomas DiZerega, then proceeded to meet with representatives of Alaska Native villages and regional organizations to seek endorsement of the pipeline route. DiZerega reached a verbal understanding with the Chugach Native Association that TAPS would reserve pipeline related jobs for Alaska Natives in exchange for the Association waiving its land claims and approving the pipeline route. Next, the Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and five of its member villages signed a waiver to claims of aboriginal title to lands inside the proposed right of way and adopted a resolution supporting the Secretary of the Interior in “grant(ing) a right of way for said pipeline as soon as possible.”

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35 The Trans Alaska Pipeline System, or TAPS, was the original consortium of oil companies that coordinated proposing the pipeline. TAPS became the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company in 1972.
36 Mitchell, 318.
37 Ibid, 319-20.
exchange, TAPS would give Alaska Natives job preference and give a Native-owned corporation the opportunity to negotiate for pipeline contracts on a preferential basis.39

These agreements were shaky. Aside from the quite low restitution TAPS was offering Native groups, the agreements were legally null. Only Congress could set the terms and extinguish Native land claims. In all likelihood, both TAPS and Alaska Native leaders were aware of this fact.40 TAPS was trying to circumvent the prickly land claims situation without triggering any reaction that would bring the issue to a breaking point in which Alaska Natives would protest or the federal government would want to formally address land claims. TAPS avoided officially acknowledging the validity of Native land claims by keeping the agreements verbal and not offering money directly in exchange for rights to build. TAPS regarded wooing Alaska Natives as a political courtesy, not a legal fact. Alaska Natives, though certainly divided in their response to oil development, in large part were in favor of the pipeline and the benefits it could bring to Native communities. Many Natives saw land claims as a long-term effort that required a careful balancing act of struggling against the state’s land grabbing without being perceived as an impediment to progress. In the late 1960s, it was increasingly likely that Alaska oil would provide the funding to compensate Alaska Natives for relinquishing lands in a land claims settlement. As an attorney for the AFN recalled, Natives were wary of being accused “of trying to hold the pipeline hostage,” which could fuel “a backlash against the Native position” on land claims.41 TAPS and Native leaders both believed, and hoped, that the pipeline would ultimately proceed without

40. Ibid.
41. Ibid, 323.
bringing Native land claims to a head, and the slow march toward Congressional action would continue independently.

The agreements with TAPS were also fragile in their claim to represent Alaska Native interests. There was no singular Alaska Native take on the pipeline, within the state or even individual organizations and villages. This had been the case with other development projects as well. Even Project Chariot, which provoked a powerful opposition movement from Alaska Natives a decade earlier that marked a galvanizing moment for Native activism, had split Native organizations—some of which thought the Atomic Energy Commission’s plan might be a good idea. Politicians and developers often looked to the Alaska Native Brotherhood or the Fairbanks Native Association for eminent “Native leaders” to negotiate with, in the hopes that the needs of an entire state of disparate groups could be dispensed with in a single meeting. Even with resolutions and signatures in hand, it was unlikely that TAPS could quell the concerns of Alaska Natives so easily.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference soon found out TAPS had no intention of keeping up its end of the bargain. TCC set up the DNH Development Corporation (which shared the apartment building-turned-offices with TCC and FNCC) to take advantage of the preferential contracts TAPS had promised. But DNH was essentially shut out of the bidding process as the TAPS began soliciting proposals (prematurely, as the Right-of-Way lease was not yet a reality). Tim Wallis, the head of the corporation, attempted to get information from TAPS or diZerega to no avail. Wallis turned to the Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) for help.

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42 Spud Williams interview.
43 Ibid.
44 Mitchell, 320.
The ALSC was a local branch of the Legal Services Project, a Great Society initiative funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Unlike the older legal aid movement, which focused on individual assistance and avoided test cases around civil rights or civil liberties, Legal Services was designed with social change in mind. It was imagined as a collection of local programs that would serve the poor, educate communities, take on innovative litigation, and reform the law in order to aid the largest number of disadvantaged people. The Fairbanks office, like the FNA’s early Welcome Center, was organized by the Community Action Program. It was supervised by a young attorney, David Wolf, who was a veteran of the civil rights movement and moved to Alaska specifically because he and his wife, a political scientist, were interested in Alaska Native claims issues. Wolf advised Wallis that the Alaska Native villages should rescind the waivers they signed with TAPS. They coordinated with Ruby Tansey, an employee of the Fairbanks Native Association who traveled to the five villages covered in the TCC agreement. She not only discussed revoking the land waivers with villagers, but gained their support for the ALSC to take legal action on their behalf to protect indigenous land rights. Though Wolf would later claim his intent was only to get TAPS to uphold its original verbal agreement, it is certainly plausible that the ALSC saw an opportunity to break new ground on land claims in Alaska, an issue consistent with the Legal Services’ progressive mission.

The villages moved forward with two lawsuits against TAPS in early 1970, in Juneau and Anchorage, seeking $40 million in total damages. With the Secretary of the Interior promising to grant TAPS a right-of-way within weeks, the villages sought

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46 Mitchell, 320-21.
assurances that their case would be resolved first. The ALSC used its connections with prestigious law schools and firms in major cities to find a large firm in Washington D.C., Arnold and Porter, to take the case pro bono. The Arnold and Porter attorneys met with the Department of the Interior to request that Secretary Walter Hickel not issue a right-of-way permit to TAPS until an agreement was reached between Alaska Native villages and TAPS over how to compensate the villages for access to the pipeline route. Hickel balked. In response, Arnold and Porter filed suit against Hickel in U.S. District Court, seeking a preliminary injunction until the suit for damages was resolved or TAPS and the villages reached a resolution.\(^{48}\)

Arnold and Porter, perhaps to David Wolf’s disappointment, pursued a legal strategy that managed to circumvent the fact that Native land claims were unresolved. Instead of pointing out that Congress had yet to decide who owned which lands and how Alaska Natives would be compensated for relinquishing title, the firm presented the issue as a simple breach of contract. Dan Rezneck, the lead attorney for the Arnold and Porter team, presented the case as TAPS refusing to honor its verbal agreement with the villages, or one party failing to honor its contract with another. He emphasized that Alaska Natives never intended to block pipeline construction; they just wanted a fair deal for their consent to pass through the land. Faced with a conservative judge, they avoided tactics that might be construed as having a leftist bent. Wolf told newspapers, “We are talking about property, not conservation. This is similar to common practice everywhere. If the state or some government unit takes your land for public purposes you expect to be reimbursed for that land.”\(^{49}\)

\(^{48}\) Ibid, 323-24. 
\(^{49}\) Spencer.
The villagers’ case was buoyed by the judge’s ignorance of the particulars of Alaska Native land claims status. The judge, George Hart, agreed to hear only the case of Stevens Village, which, because it had adopted a constitution and by-laws approved by the Department of the Interior in 1939, had the power to deal directly with the federal government in the exchange of lands.\textsuperscript{50} Hart assumed that the lands in question constituted a reservation that the village actually owned. This erroneous assumption—the 150 miles were actually federally owned lands to which Alaska Natives had a still unresolved aboriginal title—made the case seem to be a clear cut issue of TAPS and the village reaching an agreement for compensation for the pipeline cutting across land owned by Natives.\textsuperscript{51} Hart held little sympathy for Native American issues, but it seemed only fair that a village be compensated by oil companies seeking to build a multibillion-dollar pipeline through their lands. Hart granted a temporary injunction against Hickel on April 1, 1970.

Anti-Native sentiment grew as the injunction was publicized and Alaska Natives became a scapegoat for holding up the pipeline, just as the Alaska Federation of Natives had feared. Alaska Natives were accused of standing in between TAPS and a pipeline permit (though in reality TAPS’ inability to pass environmental scrutiny had surpassed the Stevens Village suit as the primary impediment). Non-Natives in Alaska promoted a paternalistic attitude that claimed to know what was best for the indigenous people of the state, who supposedly could not see the obvious benefits of the pipeline. The \textit{Fairbanks Daily News-Miner}, for instance, lectured that revenue from development would “finance many social, educational, and welfare projects for the betterment of our

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{51} Mitchell, 325-26.
people.” The paper saw Alaska Natives as wards of the state that would be supported by oil revenues.\footnote{“Let’s Get to Bottom of Road Delay Before Determining Blame,” \textit{Fairbanks Daily News-Miner}, undated clipping, Box 1, Series 2, Larry Carpenter Papers, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.}

The rhetoric surrounding the Stevens Village suit also tried to assert a collective “Alaskan” identity and interest. The News-Miner editorial, minimizing the increasingly evident political power of Natives to have their demands met by the state, argued all Alaskans had a stake in getting the pipeline started quickly. Politicians and commenters invoked an Alaskan exceptionalism that could subsume conflict. The News-Miner continued, “It would be tragic if the racial disturbances now so prevalent in the smaller states should be triggered in our great land.”\footnote{“Let’s Get to Bottom of Road Delay Before Determining Blame.”} Alaska State Senator Joe Joesphton also appealed to state unity, “At this time, in other states, Americans are moving apart from one another….We must not have such a division in Alaska.”\footnote{“Deplorable Stevens Village Confusion,” \textit{Tundra Times}, 29 April 1970, Box 1, Series 2, Larry Carpenter Papers, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.} An underlying idea that would permeate political discourse over the upcoming years of pipeline construction was that “Alaskan,” more so than “American,” constituted a group belonging that could subsume conflict and difference, particularly due to race or colonialism.

Out of this anger and paternalism towards Alaska Native’s challenge to TAPS and the Secretary of the Interior emerged a controversy over who represented Alaska Natives, what their true needs and desires were, and how they were communicated to political centers in Alaska and Washington D.C. The Alaska State Legislature, through the impetus of Representative Barry Jackson, Chairman of the Judiciary Committee and attorney for the DNH Development Corporation, formed a subcommittee to investigate whether ALSC had acted unethically and misrepresented the interests of Alaska Natives when it pursued the suits. The charge reflected disputes that marked the Legal Services...
Program nationwide. The Program, with its emphasis on community participation and overtly political issues, had to stave off criticism from the legal establishment for “stirring up litigation” and potentially transgressing the ethical codes of the profession.\(^{55}\)

Some legislators charged that ALSC pursued the case under “the guise of helping the poor” while “stampeed[ing the villages] into something not in their best interest.”\(^{56}\) As evidence, Republican Representative Don Young, a champion of the pipeline, brought an affidavit to the legislature, signed by the president and four members of the Stevens Village council. It read, “We the people of Stevens Village, would like the pipeline to go through so we can have jobs on the project too.”\(^{57}\) Young claimed that the village wanted the injunction dropped. U.S. Justice Department did not take rumors about the affidavit very seriously, promising not to act unless contacted directly by Stevens Village (which it was not).\(^{58}\)

ALSC shot back with their own written statement from Stevens Village. A village meeting of 18 voters had unanimously passed a resolution to let the suit stand. ALSC pointed out that the lawsuit was itself an effort to secure jobs for Alaska Natives, not an attempt to prevent pipeline construction. The judiciary committee found that it was state officials—namely the state attorney general’s office—who had made an ethical breach, by using “direct, obvious pressure” on the villagers to sign the affidavit.\(^{59}\) In exchange for dropping the suit, Stevens Village was promised infrastructure improvements, like an airport, freezer, and generator.\(^{60}\) Alaska Natives were vulnerable to exploitation when

55 Pious, 372.
56 “Injunction Against TAPS: Unit to Probe Ethics,” undated clipping, Box 1, Series 2, Larry Carpenter Papers, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.
59 “Deplorable Stevens Village Confusion.”
60 “Flap Over Native Suit Against TAPS.”
short term needs and long-term political goals were pitted against each other. Alaska politicians presumed they could bring Alaska Natives back into the fold of a collective, state interest in promoting development; federally funded activist-lawyers from “outside” championed the distinct interests of Alaska Native communities. Both miscalculated how possible it was to solicit a single, uniform Alaska Native position.

**Native Hire on the Pipeline**

The earliest draft of the Right-of-Way agreement from the Department of the Interior, submitted to Congress in September 1969, included a stipulation that the TAPS consortium would go out of its way to employ Alaska Natives. TAPS was required to reach an agreement with the Secretary of the Interior “regarding recruitment, testing, training, placement, employment and job counseling of Alaska Natives.” TAPS would be responsible for setting up training programs, including education and on-the-job training, and the “do everything within its power to secure the employment of those Alaska Natives” that completed training. TAPS would be required to report to the DOI about these programs and their results and any time an Alaska Native was discharged from employment.61 The proposed stipulations also included boilerplate provisions about complying with the 1965 Executive Order on equal employment opportunity and affirmative action to ensure nondiscrimination, but the “Native Training” stipulation was a stand-alone provision of assistance to Alaska Natives rather than a nondiscrimination measure.62

The “Native Hire” program touted in the *Alyeska Report* preceded the injunction spurred by Stevens Village. Such a program had already been a condition for the oil

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companies set by the federal government. TAPS representatives, testifying at
Congressional hearings about the proposed pipeline in September 1969, used their
contract with the Alaska Federation of Natives to recruit Natives and its “pledges” of
contracts and jobs to Native regional organizations as evidence of their intent to comply
with federal wishes. R.G. Dulaney, Chairman of the Management Committee for TAPS
told Congress, “The pipeline will provide jobs for many of the unemployed of Alaska,
and TAPS will do its part to see that these jobs will be available to all Alaskans, native
and nonnative alike.”

To understand why jobs for Alaska Natives was a matter of point for the federal
government, aside from the growing political power of pan-Alaska Native organizing
and litigation that culminated in the early 1970s, one must go back to the mid-1960s.
American Indians occupied a significant part of Johnson’s War on Poverty. Indians
attended a conference in Washington D.C. in 1964 about Indians and poverty and
requested inclusion in the Office of Economic Opportunity programs under
development at that moment. Key government agencies in administering the War on
Poverty, like the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and the Office of
Economic Opportunity, created “Indian Desks” within their agencies to tailor their
service to the particular needs of Indians. Reservations received $22 million in federal
funds through the OEO. In 1968, LBJ created the National Council on Indian
Opportunity to foster Indian self-determination and open up communication between
Indian communities and government. The National Council on Indian Opportunity
formed a committee on urban Indians that traveled to cities with large Indian

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63 Hearings before the Committee on Interior and insular Affairs, United States Senate, Ninety-First
Congress, First Session on the Status of the Proposed Trans-Alaska Pipeline, 09 September 1969
64 LaGrand, 194.
65 Ibid.
populations holding public forums in 1968 and ’69. These discussions led to the creation of the Model Urban Indian Center program that would fund the FNCC for three years.66

Alaska Natives were not overlooked by these federal efforts in the 1960s. The United States Federal Field Committee studied the problems of Alaska Natives—their economic and social conditions, land claims and uses—and economic development in Alaska beginning in 1966, making regular reports and recommendations to the president. One report focused exclusively on how Alaska Natives, as “Alaska’s largest and most disadvantaged minority,” could benefit from focused affirmative action efforts in federal employment.67 The committee recommended coordinating across the BIA and existing Great Society manpower programs to bring training and employment to Natives. The War on Poverty turned to “manpower mobilization” to lift the disadvantaged out of poverty; the same approach held true in Alaska in the mid to late 1960s.

“Native Hire” on the pipeline was a continuation of this federal approach to addressing Alaska Native poverty with training and jobs. The federal government was expanding its regulatory authority so that the trans Alaska pipeline would be regulated as if it were a federal contract, even though it was privately financed, built, and operated. The Secretary of the Interior’s demand for what was essentially a social welfare manpower program for Alaska Natives was unusual in that it called on private enterprise to partially implement and fund it. But this was in keeping with how the DOI was approaching other facets of labor and environmental regulation on the project, relying on the justification of a keen national interest in the project, the land, and the resources they would make available. When the Right-of-Way agreement was finally

67 Arnold and Wunnicke, i.
issued from the DOI in 1974, the Native Training stipulation remained identical from the first draft in 1969.68

In 1974, just prior to the start of construction, Alyeska contracted the Alaska DOL to institute "recruitment, testing, training and placement programs." Alyeska paid the state $150,000 to run these programs and help Alyeska comply with “Native Hire” of the Right-of-Way agreement.69 Alyeska committed to hiring 1,000 Alaska Natives within the first year of construction and 3,500 total over the course of the project.70 These goals and plans were more concrete and implemented earlier than affirmative action for minorities and women. Alyeska planned to rely on existing skill training centers, unions, and contractors to train and refer Alaska Native workers. A long standing federal investment in employment opportunities for Alaska Natives, rooted in the War on Poverty, drove Alyeska to have a clear commitment to Native hiring and a manpower mobilization infrastructure on which to depend for making it a reality.

**The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and Self-Determination**

Settling Alaska Native land claims basically boiled down to a compromise over land and compensation for relinquishing claims to land. The questions were: How much land should Alaska Natives get? Which land and how would it be chosen? Land with known oil reserves? Land adjacent to existing Native villages? Surface rights or subsurface rights or full title to the land? If Alaska Natives were going to give up their

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land claims how would they be compensated? How much money were the claims worth? Where would the money come from—the federal government? State revenue? Royalties from oil development? How would the land and money from a settlement be administered—divided among villages? Managed by a statewide corporation? Doled out to individual Alaska Natives?21

The federal government, the state of Alaska, oil companies, labor unions, the military, environmentalists, and Alaska Natives all had some stake in how these questions were answered and how quickly they could be resolved in a bill. Over two years and scores of proposed settlements and bill drafts would pass between the first indication Congress was serious about finally addressing Alaska Native Land Claims and the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) in December 1971. The Alaska Federation of Natives took the role of representing the Native position and proposing settlement terms on behalf of natives across the state. This masked a very delicate power balance within the AFN, however. The Arctic Slope Native Organization, for instance, was often at odds with the AFN leadership because North Slope Natives prioritized ownership of their oil-rich land over cash settlements and frequently took a more radical stance on land claims.

The concept of Alaska Native corporations came from the AFN as a way for Alaska Natives to manage and develop land and revenue on the same basis as other powerful actors in the state. The land claims process reached a critical turning point in 1971, when oil companies began to realize that without a land settlement, there would be no pipeline. The industry had tried to distance itself from the land claims issue, but it became increasingly evident that they could never secure a Right-of-Way if it was

unclear who owned which lands in Alaska. Motivated to get a settlement as fast as possible, the oil industry formed an unlikely and powerful lobbying alliance with Alaska Natives. The lobby grew to include labor unions and racial minority organizations. This provided the pressure necessary to finally produce a compromise bill that made it through Congress.\textsuperscript{72}

ANSCA gave Alaska Natives 44 million acres of land. Natives had first pick of the lands they wanted, but only within a limited area that largely protected the selections the state had already pitched to the Department of the Interior. Natives ended up with no land with known oil reserves. The Act established 12 regional corporations, which were awarded the subsurface rights to the 44 million acres, and 200 village corporations, which would have surface rights to the land. This was a compromise between a statewide corporation to manage the settlement—which the state feared would grow too powerful, and dividing the settlement up between individual villages, which the AFN felt would severely dissipate the benefits of the settlement. In addition, Alaska Native regional corporations would receive about $500 million from the federal government and another $500 million drawn from state oil revenues. Alaska Natives were divided on how they felt about the settlement—some felt it was fair and generous, others, like the Arctic Slope Natives, felt it sacrificed too much.\textsuperscript{73}

President Nixon’s announcement that he would officially support Indian self-determination as government policy was a decisive factor in ANSCA. In July of 1970 before Congress, Nixon disavowed both termination and federal paternalism, urging new measures in which American Indians would voluntarily assume control of services currently provided by government agencies, particularly the BIA, with the support of

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid, 163-74.
\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, 196-214.
federal funds. The executive branch, including Vice President Agnew in his capacity as head of the National Council on Indian Opportunity, took interest in Alaska Native claims as an example of the turn towards self-determination. The White House’s involvement helped gain Republican support where it might have otherwise fallen short.

Alaska Natives also approached land claims from a politics of self-determination. Many did not want land claims to amount to state paternalism and continued dependency, but for a settlement to open up new avenues for wielding permanent economic and political power in Alaska. As one Native leader expressed in debates within the AFN, “This is a land settlement, not a federal welfare program or another piece of anti-poverty legislation.” In this regard—Native intolerance towards the welfare approach and Nixon’s official endorsement of self-determination—ANSCA was an experiment in Indian policy. The scale of the settlement was huge, in spite of some Natives’ disappointment and Native corporations were a new way of keeping resources and power in the hands of Natives.

“Native Hire” was at the cross roads of the Great Society and self-determination. It originated in the Department of the Interior essentially as an anti-poverty manpower program. But it would come to fruition after ANSCA and as the relationship between Indians and the federal government was being restructured to foster self-determination. Native Hire would bear hallmarks of the economic opportunity and breadwinner liberalism, the funding and bureaucratic groundwork of transferring social services to Native communities, and the energy and philosophy of self-determination.

75 Berry, 152-4.
76 Ibid, 138.
The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1973 was a response to and continuation of the proliferation of manpower programs in the 1960s. Manpower programs of the New Frontier and Great Society were designed to address unemployment and poverty created by structural problems in the economy. Policy makers recognized that unemployment was not just an artifact of economic cycles, but that the movement of jobs to a different region or even out of the country and the growth and decline of economic sectors could leave Americans out of work. Upon signing the Manpower Development and Training Act (MDTA) of 1962, which created training programs, President Kennedy claimed the Act would make “possible the training of the hundreds of thousands of workers who are denied employment because they do not possess the skills required by our constantly changing economy.” The Department of Labor administered manpower programs based on four statutes: the MDTA, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, the Emergency Employment Act of 1971, and the Social Security Act. They combined job training, education, job creation, and public assistance under the assumption that full employment was possible as the nation enjoyed economic prosperity. The programs were a kind of bridge to link the unemployed to opportunities that would to lead them to jobs and a secure footing in the new economic order Kennedy alluded to in his speech. Manpower development

79 Mirengoff and Rindler, 20.
reflected not only the Great Society optimism that affluence was within reach for all workers, but that it was the proper and morally imperative role of the federal government to take the lead in adjusting the labor market to create that result.

Political realignment of the late 1960s and early 1970s brought the scope of federal government into question. Richard Nixon criticized the Great Society for expanding the size and role of the government beyond its proper and effective bounds. Since 1960, the number of federal grant programs had increased from 132 to 379 by 1968; federal aid had increased from $7 to $24 billion by 1970. State financial dependence on federal programs increased by 35%.\textsuperscript{81} Nixon proposed a series of reforms coined the New Federalism that would streamline what Republicans saw as the bloat, inefficiency, and intrusion of federal policy. His promise to “diffuse the power throughout this country” appealed to the working class and southerners.\textsuperscript{82} The New Federalism would coordinate and consolidate existing programs and intergovernmental systems; shift power and responsibility over services to local governments; and use block grants and revenue sharing to reduce the prescriptions and conditions that came with federal money to local governments.\textsuperscript{83} Though the federal government would continue to grow during the 1970s, the political tide had turned to embrace the idea of local community and suspicions of central government. As one scholar argues, “After 1968 presidents seldom affirmed in Lyndon Johnson’s confident tones the centrality of federal

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 8.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, 3.
government in American life.” The manpower efforts of the Great Society endured, but under new rhetoric, guises, and funding structures.

CETA was the new architecture for manpower programs in the 1970s. As a multibillion-dollar umbrella for job training and creation programs (some new and some old), CETA was driven by two New Federalist principles: decentralization and decategorization. Decentralization referred to moving the administration of manpower services to the local level; local governments would now be responsible for designing and providing services that were once housed in federal programs and agencies. Decategorization referred to delinking federal funding from particular, predesignated purposes. A “block grant,” for instance, was given to a local government which then had the power to distribute the money as it saw fit. Revenue sharing would channel some federal revenue to the states for their local needs. These strategies would supposedly cut down on the complexity and redundancy of programs that had proliferated in the 1960s.

CETA was couched in a rhetoric of innovation and democracy. CETA would foster innovation because local actors could evaluate the problems in their communities and then develop solutions tailored to that context rather than being subject to federal formulas for resource allocation. CETA allowed for increased local input and participation by the people affected by the programs and more accountability from those in charge, who would be local officials rather than federal bureaucrats.

The $3.7 billion dollars appropriated for CETA in 1975 (the first full year of its operation) were categorized according to six different Titles of the Act. Title I represented the most significant portion of the funds, nearly half, for local governments to administer manpower programs. The other half of the CETA pot was earmarked for

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85 Mirengoff and Rindler, 1-8.
specific purposes (in spite of the “decategorization” ethos of the Act): continuing the Job Corps, creating employment in the public sector, and programs targeting youth. Over a third of the funds were for public sector employment. This reflected a trend in the 1970s—a decade of economic contraction—to emphasize job creation as opposed to job training, which was emphasized in the 1960s and then criticized when trainees were unable to find jobs in their vocation. Eighty nine percent of CETA funds were decentralized, meaning they went to local governments. The remaining 11% funded federally administered programs, including the Job Corps and a collection of programs serving specific populations, including Native Americans.

Decentralized CETA funds—the 89% put to use at the discretion of local governments—were dispensed to “Prime Sponsors.” A Prime Sponsor according to CETA protocol had to be a government unit—a city, county, or state—representing 100,000 people or more, or a consortium of governments representing 100,000 or more people. In Alaska, for instance, this meant Anchorage could qualify as a Prime Sponsor, while the rest of the sparsely populated state would have to fall under the state government or cluster together boroughs in order to reach the minimum population requirement (ultimately, the state government of Alaska opted to serve as the Prime Sponsor for the entire state). Prime Sponsors submitted plans for providing manpower services to underemployed, unemployed, and disadvantaged people to the U.S. Department of Labor.86 The US DOL used an allocation formula to award funding that took into account the previous year’s funding level and unemployment and income levels of the city, county, or state. No program could receive less than 90% or more than 150% of the prior year’s funds. The formula buffered existing programs from sudden changes, ensuring a level of funding stability and a gradual approach to redistributing

86 Ibid, 2-3.
Sponsors were also required to assemble a state manpower services council of interested parties to help determine how CETA funds would be used and coordinate between agencies. The money could then be further dispensed to government agencies and nongovernmental organizations to administer the programs.\textsuperscript{89} While CETA shook up the federal-local relationship in which manpower services were delivered in the 1970s, the federal government retained significant authority and powers of intervention over the programs.

How did CETA change the landscape of manpower services as it got off the ground in 1975 and 76? First, local governments were quickly overwhelmed by the sudden increase in their responsibly as “Prime Sponsors” of manpower programs. Over 1,900 providers of manpower services received funding from Prime Sponsors in 1975, an increase of 500 service providers since the implementation of CETA.\textsuperscript{90} As the federal government was decentralizing, states and local governments had to increase their capacities and find a way to centralize on the local level. They were inexperienced at administering such a large number of complex programs.\textsuperscript{91} Second, the relationships (including balances of power) between government agencies and federal and local levels of government were abruptly changed. One observer found, CETA “scrambled existing inter-organizational relationships at all levels.”\textsuperscript{92} Third, local programs gravitated toward continuity by relying on preexisting programs and structures rather than innovating new solutions from scratch. Organizations simply did not have the time or

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 25-29.
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, 11.
\textsuperscript{91} Ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{92} Ibid, 17.
resources to drastically change the way manpower services were provided, even though CETA intended to give incentives for innovation, competition (provide services at the lowest possible cost), and consolidation.\textsuperscript{93} Fourth, the allocation formula began to migrate funding from cities and the southern states to counties, rural areas, and the western states.\textsuperscript{94} Fifth and finally, the implementation of CETA coincided with the dawn of the recession. CETA favored addressing the immediate problems created by the economic downturn rather than the long-term structural economic problems that had driven manpower programs during the 1960s. An amendment, Title VI, quickly appropriated $2.5 billion for one year, earmarked only for creating public service employment.\textsuperscript{95}

Temporary relief through job creation in the public sector changed who was aided by manpower programs. The newly unemployed turned to manpower services, meaning demand increased even as job opportunities declined.\textsuperscript{96} The “hard core unemployed” now had to compete with job seekers with more experience and skills.\textsuperscript{97} CETA also widened the terms of eligibility for manpower programs. In previous years, clients were more disadvantaged with little or no experience or training, but CETA clients came from higher up the socioeconomic ladder. Compounding this trend, many Prime Sponsors culled clients who were most likely to succeed, who were considered job ready, rather than needing significant support or training to make it into job opportunities.\textsuperscript{98} Many of these shifts would be evident in how Alaska used CETA money during the pipeline years.

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid, 18.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid, 34-38.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{96} Ibid, 13.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid, 14.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid, 11.
The breadwinner liberalism underlying manpower programs of the 1960s was still evident in CETA during the 1970s. Even though faith in central government as the paternal force of uplift was attenuated by the anti-federalism and Indian self-determination politics and policies of the 1970s, many of the assumptions about the economy, and gender in the economic order, remained the same. CETA, both a legacy and reaction to the Great Society, had faith in the idea of full employment for men and nuclear families as the building block of stable society. Though CETA gravitated towards cyclical, rather than structural, economic inequalities, and tipped the scales toward job creation over education and training, the idea that government, with calculated interventions in the labor market could even out inequality and dull the impact of unemployment remained the same. It saw manpower services as a conduit or bridge from unemployment or poverty to paid work and economic participation. The services were a temporary aid to achieving this transition. The target populations of youth, veterans, American Indians, and the “disadvantaged” simply needed to be identified and then provided with an opportunity that could offer them a place in society. CETA did not rethink the place of women in the economy, or the relationship between federal welfare and affirmative action to bring proportional representation of minorities into certain industries. CETA did not create jobs to this end, though it certainly saw minority men as groups that needed the paternalistic assistance of the state to become breadwinner-citizens.

Women were visible under CETA as “female heads of households,” but the fact that their recognition was contingent upon providing for their families only reaffirms how steeped in breadwinner liberalism the Act was. Even at a moment of successful second wave feminist influence on policy—Congress passed the Equal Rights
Amendment in 1972—manpower policy remained strictly that: assistance that saw men’s paid employment the route to prosperity for the nation and its citizens.

**CETA Money Arrives in Alaska**

The same year pipeline construction began, CETA funding brought a new wave of support for the existing employment programs of the Fairbanks Native Community Center. The FNCC’s Model Urban Indian Center Grant was scheduled to run out just when CETA kicked in.99 CETA money came from two particular categories of the CETA coffers, and flowed through different two ports of entry into Alaska. The first was from Title I—the uncategorized, general use funds to be administered by local governments, through the Alaska State Department of Labor as the designated Prime Sponsor for manpower services across the state. As required by the Act, the Alaska DOL created a council to coordinate across agencies and organizations.

The Alaska State Manpower Utilization System (ASMUS) brought together the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Alaska Federation of Natives, and Alaska DOL—all of which had preexisting efforts in place for recruiting, referring, and training Alaskans for employment. The Alyeska Company participated in ASMUS meetings, informing the council of the shifting manpower needs on the pipeline. Alyeska also accommodated ASMUS workers in visits to pipeline camps and worksites. ASMUS set up an office in Anchorage and stationed its Fairbanks employees inside the Fairbanks Native Community Center. The Employment Offices at FNCC operated under the direction of ASMUS.100

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99 The same funding pattern affected the Los Angeles Indian Center, see Nicholas Rosenthal, *Reimagining Indian Country*, 151.
The second category of CETA funding that reached Alaska was from Title III—a slice of the pie that remained centralized with the federal government, earmarked specifically for special groups like veterans, Native Americans, and migrant farm workers, and came through the Tanana Chiefs Conference as a Prime Sponsor of services for regional Alaska Native villages. The TCC assembled its own “CETA Manpower Planning Council” to determine how the funds would be used. Lucy Carlo, Executive Director of the FNA, sat on the council (even though she also asked it for funding on behalf of the FNA).\textsuperscript{101} The TCC’s CETA Council allotted a significant portion for the funds for select Alaska Natives to attend a training seminar in village management (including finance, business, land management, and corporate law) then be sent back to their villages to work for village corporations in salaried positions in which they would continue to receive on the job training. The CETA pot also funded employees at the FNCC and fielded applications from the Alaska Plan and Alaska Legal Services.\textsuperscript{102}

In practice, these two funding streams overlapped in their contact with service providers and the populations they reached. The FNCC’s employment programs were in fact supported by both during the pipeline years.

The FNCC’s relationship to CETA shows just how convoluted the relationships among government agencies and nongovernmental organizations became. The federal hand off of manpower programs and funding created an abrupt, if unsure, expansion at the local level. The FNCC started off in 1974 piggy-backing on the TCC’s contract, which


\textsuperscript{102} Anderson to Village Corporation Chairmain.
came directly from the Division of Indian Manpower Programs in the US DOL. Under the Prime Sponsorship of the TCC, FNCC received $30,000 to create two paid positions in the center’s employment program. But by 1975, the FNCC was also on the receiving end of another branch of CETA funds. The Alaska DOL dispensed CETA funding to the Alaska Federation of Natives, who in turn subcontracted a portion of funds to the Fairbanks Native Association and its community center. Perhaps wanting to eliminate the middleman, the subcontract was terminated prematurely. The Alaska DOL revised its contracts, directly funding the FNCC to provide employment services in Fairbanks while maintaining its relationship with AFN, which would serve Anchorage. The FNCC’s contract with the DOL was $120,000 every quarter for 1975. In spite of the New Federalist rhetoric of consolidation, for the FNCC, CETA hugely upgraded the complexity of the center’s funding structure and reporting requirements by creating two chains of command.

**Employment Services at the FNCC**

The pipeline boom and the federal funding boom collided in 1974 to make the FNCC a humming center for connecting Alaska Natives to pipeline employment. Per the Center’s CETA contract with the Alaska DOL, the FNCC conducted outreach, intake, assessment, orientation, counseling, referrals, and job placement for job seekers. The


104 Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc. to Department of Labor.


CETA contract charged the FNCC with “enabl(ing) participants to become economically self-sufficient” and gain “upward mobility” by meeting their “fullest capabilities” in employment opportunities. The Center was continually in touch with area employers to maintain up to date lists of available jobs. FNCC doled out small grants for, or directly provided, transportation, clothes, tools, lodging, food, and physical exams to applicants making their way to a job interview or a position. These services were supplemented by funding from another CETA contract with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and grants from the BIA.

As the Director of ASMUS in the Alaska DOL saw it, the purpose of the program was to “provide mobility money for job ready, CETA eligible individuals in relation to pipeline impact jobs.” The Alaska DOL was passing down federal funding to the FNCC, a nongovernmental organization, to serve as a vital conduit between job seekers and the rapid expansion of economic opportunity brought on by oil development. The process was fundamentally one of mobility: moving people who were otherwise “job ready” from outlying areas into Fairbanks (often including air travel) where they could go to hiring halls or be dispatched to worksites. Part of the program was accurately assessing the likelihood of a particular client being able to obtain employment quickly (the contract limited room and board funding to 14 days), so that the FNA would only be sending job seekers to dispatch, not paying their return transport home after an unsuccessful job search. The FNA was to target those most in need, people with

107 Ibid.
110 Ibid.
limited English, low income, or living in areas of unemployment, including veterans and youth and those who had exhausted other resources for trying to obtain employment.

The Fairbanks Native Community Center had two offices for employment services. The first was the “Local Employment” office, located on the downstairs floor of the center for those who were looking for employment in or around Fairbanks. The Local Employment office, without a fully enclosed space, had to endure the noise and disruption of being located directly adjacent to the youth center’s pool table and a constant stream of walk-in traffic.\textsuperscript{111} The office had high turnover and a hard time keeping up a robust list of available jobs.\textsuperscript{112} The director complained that it was difficult to accomplish anything more than conduct intake for walk-in clients, many of whom simply had to be told there were no new jobs available.\textsuperscript{113} The Local Employment office struggled with finding local job opportunities in Fairbanks. One employee reported to the Program Director, “We need more jobs to offer clients.”\textsuperscript{114}

The “Pipeline Employment” office, on the other hand, enjoyed a less distracting location upstairs. This office was dedicated solely to pipeline jobs. William “Spud” Williams was known as the “Pipeline Coordinator,” or head of the Pipeline Employment office, but he was rarely found in the office and was notorious for never filing the paperwork for CETA.\textsuperscript{115} Williams was often out driving people around, taking clients to appointments and job calls around town and generally filling the gap in transportation


\textsuperscript{115} Jerry Ford to Emma Widmark, 24 July 1974.
that proved such a barrier to getting clients employed. Rose Bowie supervised the employees in the office and kept up the bureaucratic reporting requirements.\textsuperscript{116} The two programs overlapped significantly, and met on a daily basis.\textsuperscript{117} As the pipeline was underway, local employment opportunities were almost completely overshadowed by pipeline opportunities. Bowie observed, “Most of the people that come into the center seeking employment are interested in the short term big money, rather than the long term continuous employment to be had locally.”\textsuperscript{118}

When a client came to an employment office of the FNCC, the FNCC first had to determine the person’s eligibility for assistance according to CETA guidelines from the Alaska DOL and eligibility requirements for BIA funding. The employment specialist kept in communication with and up to date knowledge of all the potential training programs and employers, as well as all requirements from unions, the Alaska Plan, and the Alaska DOL’s Wage and Hour Division.\textsuperscript{119} The employment offices would reach out to potential employers such as Bechtel and the University of Alaska to explain their services and explore job openings and potential opportunities for Alaska Natives. The job developer attended ASMUS meetings to get information about training programs and negotiate training spots for truck drivers, swamppers, and oilers with the Teamsters union.\textsuperscript{120} Pipeline contractors were a primary source of opportunities, and the FNCC maintained good communication and working relationships with Alyeska and Bechtel.

\textsuperscript{118} Irene Catalone to Georgianna Lincoln, “October Local Employment Monthly Report.”
\textsuperscript{120} Jerry Ford to Emma Widmark, "Monthly Report June 1974.”
and their major subcontractors like Greene & Associated.\textsuperscript{121} The CETA contracts had extensive reporting requirements. Upon submitting cost reports, invoices, logs of clients served, and client information forms, the FNA would be reimbursed each month for its costs of running the program.\textsuperscript{122}

Housing and transportation were the two biggest obstacles to the employment programs.\textsuperscript{123} Once in Fairbanks, an applicant had to be able to survive and have a place to stay—an increasingly difficult and expensive prospect as the pipeline boom strained infrastructure and drove up prices—until they could secure a paycheck.\textsuperscript{124} They also needed transportation to get to union halls (often on a daily basis), to orientation centers, contractors’ offices, or the job itself.\textsuperscript{125} And with few places to stay and the constant mobility of clients, the center had a hard time contacting clients.\textsuperscript{126}

The two employment offices got increasingly busy in the second half of 1974—the first months of pipeline construction—with people looking for pipeline work. In September, the employment programs made 319 total referrals, got 172 people hired, and sent 27 people to training programs. In the process, the FNCC worked with four unions, four media outlets, twelve private companies (many of them related to pipeline construction), two regional Native corporations, and one government agency. From April through July of 1975, the employment program served 1,103 clients, 25\% of whom were female.\textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{121} Rose Bowie to Irene Catalone, “Monthly Report for August 18 to 30.”
\textsuperscript{122} Contract between Alaska Department of Labor and Fairbanks Native Association.
\textsuperscript{123} Rose Bowie to Irene Catalone, “Monthly report for September 1 thru 30th.”
\textsuperscript{124} Contract between Alaska Department of Labor and Fairbanks Native Association.
\textsuperscript{125} Rose Bowie to Irene Catalone, “Monthly Report for August 18 to 30.”
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} Rose Bowie to Irene Catalone, “Monthly report for September 1 thru 30th.”
Conclusion

For Alyeska to tout the success of its Native Hire program, a balanced formula of federal funding, state administration, non-governmental organization staff and energy, and an economic boom had to fall into place. Native Hire, and its prompting by the Department of the Interior, had its roots in the War on Poverty and manpower programs as the preferred route of uplift for Alaska Natives. The rise of Indian self-determination did not over turn federal welfare programs, but rather reconfigured them to put social services into the hands of Native Alaskans and under the roof of the FNCC. But the ideology and infrastructure of manpower programs persisted as the point of departure for employment services provided by Native organizations. The influx of federal funding, partially unleashed from federal agencies and their vexed histories of termination and paternalism, enabled the Fairbanks Native Association to expand and rise to the demand of the pipeline boom. Not only did thousands of Alaska Natives become trained and employed as a result, but Alyeska had the social services of the FNCC, among other state agencies and Native NGOs, at its disposal to meet the federal requirement that Alyeska productively alleviate unemployment and poverty among indigenous Alaskans. The pipeline in turn created tens of thousands of jobs in Alaska, creating a unique bubble of rapid economic growth that could absorb large numbers of unemployed being funneled through training programs and referral services and perhaps allowing faith in breadwinner liberalism to be sustained well into the economic depression of the 1970s. Had any element of this formula been missing, it is unlikely Native Hire would have been a successful channel from the most rural and marginalized communities to high paying (if temporary) employment. The other preferential hiring plans examined in this dissertation, including Local Hire and affirmative action, would not have the benefit of an ideal balance of power, will, funding, and timing.
3. Local Hire: Defining Economic Citizenship

When the Alaska State Legislature began considering an “Alaska Hire” policy to ensure that Alaskans would be given preference in job hiring over out of state workers seeking employment on the trans Alaska pipeline, the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights director, Robert Willard, was a staunch supporter of the idea. In letters to Alaska State Representatives and Congressmen, he pressured politicians to make Alaska Hire a top priority in the coming 1972 legislative session. He then issued a press release announcing the CHR’s support for a local hire law, assuring that, "I, for one, will do all I can to get our Congressional delegation to move on this." Arguing for the need for a hiring preference for Alaskans, Willard explained that allowing industries to “import” a third of the state’s workforce was unacceptable when Alaska’s overall unemployment rate was three times the national average and, in rural areas, ten times the national average. He proposed that Alaska Hire "could well be the most beneficial program to hit Alaska."¹

Only a few months later, Willard sharply retracted his support for Local Hire when he found the drafted bill to be “discriminatory against Alaska Natives.”² The bill stipulated that “qualified” Alaskans would be guaranteed the local hiring priority. Willard explained, in another press release, this time criticizing the bill, that it was unlikely that many Alaska Natives had the training or work experience necessary to make it into the category of “qualified” workers. Willard called for removal of the modifier “qualified” from the bill and the addition of provisions to create training programs to prepare Alaskans to meet the labor needs of oil development.³ Willard

ultimately lost that battle, but conceded his and the CHR’s support anyway. Even with a narrowed scope of coverage, he saw Local Hire as an imperative for ensuring Alaskans gained employment from the pipeline.4

When Willard extended, retracted, and then recommitted his support for Alaska Hire, he was taking part in a struggle over who would be served by the law. This chapter tells the larger story of how Alaska Hire—as one effort to structure the labor market through preferential hiring—emerged at the intersection of breadwinner liberalism of the Great Society and the positive rights strategy of affirmative action. I argue that Alaska Hire was an attempt, not unlike others across the country, to transition from a working class identity rooted in a labor movement that asserted the individual rights of men to employment, to a protected class receiving disparate impact policies in the paradigm of affirmative action. This attempt ultimately failed in the U.S. Supreme Court, but not before creating power clashes between the state and labor and siphoning from other preferential hiring schemes—namely affirmative action for minorities, Alaska Natives, and women.

**Creating Local Hire**

Alaska was not alone in pursuing legislation that made residency a factor in regulating the labor market in the civil rights era. The concept of local hiring was already well established in other places across the country. Restricting hiring within certain geographic parameters for a given project was a strategy that urban planners and federal agencies used to address problems of unemployment, poverty, racial conflict, and racial discrimination in employment. Large development projects, federally or publicly funded, were often a target of such policies. A spate

of court cases from 1969 through the early 1970s had upheld laws restricting public hiring to local residents. Firemen and policemen in Ohio and Detroit were subject to such laws, as were all public employees in Salt Lake City, Detroit, and Newark. In Alaska, the issue took on a slightly different cast, as the state was less concerned about race relations in its urban centers (though that was a concern), than about chronic poverty and unemployment, predominately in rural areas, only worsened by development booms that brought outside industry, capital, and workers to the state to profit from Alaska’s natural resources, but left little permanent infrastructure or economic advancement to support the state and its permanent citizens. In the early 1970s, Alaska already had a local hiring law, Title 36 in the Alaska Statutes. It required 95% of hiring in public works be Alaskan residents. The trans Alaska pipeline project, as an entirely privately funded project, would not be subject to the existing statute. Lawmakers turned to new strategies for expanding local hire to cover the pipeline.

Local hire laws and contracts intersected with urban planning and affirmative action. Early affirmative action plans in the 1960s essentially were local plans, and at times the aims of local hire plans and affirmative action dovetailed. The Philadelphia Plan, for instance, was developed as a localized response (with federal assistance) to the conditions of employment discrimination in neighborhoods surrounding federally funded projects, like the U.S. Mint building in Philadelphia. Affirmative action “hometown” plans were drawn up based on the idea of proportional representation—that the demographics of cities or neighborhoods be reflected in the workforce. Affirmative action always already had a local politics; local hire laws had a racial politics. As we will see in the case of Alaska, the intersection of Local Hire and affirmative action

for minorities took on a different cast from place to place.

The Alaska Hire bill faced a key constitutional pitfall. The greatest risk the bill ran was in violating Article IV, Section 2, the Privileges and Immunities Clause, of the U.S. Constitution which states, “the citizens of each state shall be entitled to all Privileges and Immunities of Citizens in the several States.” This clause had been interpreted to mean that states could not discriminate against citizens of other states in favor of its own citizens. Alaska Hire sought to do exactly that—discriminate in employment on the basis of state citizenship. “Without question, the import of the proposed legislation is discriminatory,” wrote Reginald H. Alleyne, a UCLA professor of law, in a commissioned study to the Alaska State legislature.7

The Privileges and Immunities Clause was not absolute; there were possible reasons for differentiating between citizens and non-citizens of a state that courts would find justified. In the interest of allowing states latitude in their means to solve local problems, the law would allow for instances of discrimination if there was sufficient justification for the discrimination and if the severity of the discrimination was appropriately suited to solving the problem at hand.

The Alaska legislature’s legal reasoning behind the Alaska Hire statute went as follows: Differentiating between citizens and non-citizens could be justified if the state wanted to guard against the depletion of natural resources, wherein the resources are seen as a property right of the state’s citizens. In the case of the pipeline, a portion of the lands involved was clearly public, state property. Alaska, then, would have the power to set the terms by which public leases were carried out—namely, that the lessees (oil companies) would have to agree to preferential hiring of Alaska residents as a condition for receiving a right-of-way to build the pipeline. Architects of the bill believed this level of discrimination was well suited to addressing Alaska’s unemployment problem.

7 Alleyne.
There is much to suggest that the Alaska Hire statute was imagined by its creators as a program of public assistance in the liberal tradition of the New Deal and Great Society. Robert Willard grouped the pipeline with public works projects—indicating he first and foremost saw the pipeline as an opportunity for economic development in the interest of the public good.\(^8\) He also referenced job preference on a neighborhood basis in the War on Poverty’s Model Cities Program as a precedent for Alaska Hire.\(^9\) These were paradigms that used government policy to intervene in market forces in order to ensure employment for citizens. In stressing unemployment as a problem requiring government action and the public nature of state oil and gas leases as a rationale for such intervention, the Alaska Statues was extending this liberal logic to the particular situation of the oil industry in Alaska.

Alaska Hire had a number of similarities with affirmative action, a fact not lost on Allyene in his commentary to the legislature. The 1965 executive order requiring affirmative action in federal contracts used the power of the federal government to create particular contract conditions, which a contractor could accept or reject, for the purpose of rectifying racial discrimination. Alleyne saw Alaska’s legislation as a similar use of state power, establishing contract conditions in order to rectify a similar injustice in employment discrimination against Alaskans. While the bill grappled with a long legal history of the parameters of the Privileges and Immunities clause, lawmakers also understood it as part of the contemporary matrix of equal employment opportunity measures. In their vision of using state power to establish fairness in the labor market, lawmakers used the positive rights discourse of affirmative action.

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Alaska Statute 38.40

Alaska Statute 38.40 was passed by the legislature in 1972. It placed local hiring requirements on any employer that leased land from the state for the purpose of exploring for, or producing, oil or gas, or building or operating oil or gas pipelines. The statute framed the purpose of the law as being the state fulfilling its obligation to its citizens to manage the natural resources of the state to the maximum benefit of the residents of the state. The state reasoned it should use the development of its natural resources to also develop its “human resources.” The state sought maximum employment opportunities for Alaskans out of oil and gas development on state lands specifically with the trans Alaska pipeline in mind.\(^\text{10}\) To justify the law, the statute claimed an exceptional status for Alaska. The state had a “uniquely high unemployment record,” most employment opportunities were temporary, and those jobs were usually created by “the exploitation of the state’s natural resources.” Therefore, “the state has an obligation to assure that the benefits of this employment inure to the benefit of residents of the state.”\(^\text{11}\)

The state would include a provision in all leases, rights-of-way, and contracts regarding state lands requiring the hire of “qualified Alaska residents,” prohibiting “discrimination” against Alaskan residents, and possibly requiring compliance with the Alaska Plan. It was left to the Commissioner of Labor to decide if compliance with the Alaska Plan was “feasible” or “practicable” in specific instances.\(^\text{12}\) This nod to the Alaska Plan was included only in the last version of the bill, and, given the weak language used in the statue, suggests the authors did not prioritize linking Local Hire with affirmative action in the construction trades. Nor were Local Hire and minority hire conceptualized as working or being enforced hand in hand. It may have

\(^{11}\) Ibid.
\(^{12}\) Ibid.
been included at the insistence of Robert Willard, who had spent two contentious years writing the Plan, gathering signatories, and getting it approved by the U.S. Department of Labor. Unfortunately, chapter 40 held no absolute assurances that Local Hire would work to increase minority representation in unions through mandatory compliance with the Alaska Plan.

Most of the vagaries left open-ended by the Local Hire statute—how it would be implemented, regulated, and enforced—fell at the feet of the Alaska Department of Labor. The Commissioner of Labor would have to establish how many skilled Alaskans were available to work in any given job category, and therefore how many resident Alaskans it was reasonable to expect an employer to hire. It was up to the Commissioner of Labor to determine reporting requirements for employers. The Alaska DOL was charged with maintaining lists of Alaskans available and qualified for work in the oil and gas industry, placing it in the role of referring workers to fulfill the needs of pipeline contractors. The Alaska DOL was also responsible for adjudicating complaints from Alaskans who believed they were unfairly rejected from employment and taking charges of non-compliance to the Department of Natural Resources, which in turn had the authority to charge the employer for damages, halt work, or cancel the contract.\(^\text{13}\) To truly operationalize the new law, the Alaska DOL had a significant amount of work to do.

Alaska Statute 38.40 was incorporated as an item into the legal agreements governing the pipeline. The Right-of-Way Lease between the state of Alaska and seven individual oil and pipeline companies specified the companies must comply with the law by hiring qualified Alaska residents and not discriminating against Alaska residents.\(^\text{14}\) The contract did not include any

\(^{13}\) Ibid.
specific directives for how many Alaskans should be hired, procedures to ensure residents received preference over non-residents, or reporting requirements to the Department of Labor or any other enforcement agency. The potential consequence for non-compliance with Local Hire was in the Pipeline Coordinator’s ability to temporarily suspend the project at any time if the companies failed to adhere to any element of the lease.\textsuperscript{15}

The project agreement between the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and international and local unions referenced Local Hire in a way that displaced responsibility for compliance onto unions. It stipulated that the agreed upon hiring procedures “be operated so as to assure the employment of qualified resident Alaskans consistent with … ‘Local Hire Under State Leases.’”\textsuperscript{16} This suggests Alyeska expected unions to take on the responsibility to tailor their own dispatch procedures to supply Alyeska with residents. Again, though the agreement indicated all parties were legally bound to Alaska Hire, it gave no clear indication of how it would be implemented. Furthermore, if Alyeska were found noncompliant with Alaska Hire, Alyeska could point to the unions for failing to “assure” qualified residents were sent to work on the pipeline. However, it is important to note that unions had no legal requirement in the Alaska statutes to enforce Local Hire—their efforts to give residents preference in dispatching to jobs were entirely voluntary.\textsuperscript{17}
The labor agreement governing the pipeline made unions the exclusive source of manpower for the project, supplanting the original regulatory vision of the Statute which tapped the Alaska State

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Given that the pipeline passed through both state and federally owned lands, the oil companies had separate Right-of-Way agreements with the state of Alaska and the United States of America. The federal agreement had no references to Alaska Hire.\textsuperscript{15}

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\textsuperscript{15} Right-of-Way Lease for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline between the State of Alaska and Amerada Hess Corporation, et al., 17.


\textsuperscript{17} Calkins, 8-9.
Department of Labor to be the source of manpower.\textsuperscript{18} Alyeska had an out for being accountable to local hire, the labor agreement and state law contradicted each other, and the implementation rested on the DOL (rather than employers) taking action.

**Subjects of Local Hire**

The statute outlined a five-part definition of “resident.” A resident was someone who: “1. Except for brief intervals or military service has been physically present in the state for a period of one year immediately prior to the time he enters into a contract of employment; and 2. Maintains a place of residence within the state; and 3. Has established residency for voting purposes within the state; and 4. Has not, within the period of required residency, claimed residency in another state, and 5. Shows by all attending circumstances that his intent is to make Alaska his permanent residence.”\textsuperscript{19} A person had to meet each of these criteria, to receive preference in employment under state oil and gas leases.

The imagined prototype “resident” protected by Alaska Hire seemed to be a skilled male worker. The New Deal liberalism underlying Local Hire brought with it a gender ideology of linking male citizenship with employment and paid work as the route social and economic belonging. Even setting aside the male pronouns used throughout the legislation, the presumed subject of Local Hire was male and likely not of a minority race. It specified “qualified” workers, which pointed to workers who already had skills and a place in the mainstream economy. These workers only sought not to be displaced by out-of-towners. The statute protected the Alaska labor force as it already existed, and was not taking measures to make room for those who had been disadvantaged or discriminated against —like the long-term unemployed, minorities, women, or

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 7.
\textsuperscript{19} Chapter 40, 6.
Alaska Natives. Put another way, Local Hire was not necessarily opening an avenue to fuller citizenship status through work for the same groups affirmative action was to serve. Yet, breadwinner liberalism still underlay the statute, as it sought a stable economic and social order through men working. The role of the Alaska DOL in implementing the law mimicked manpower programs of the 1960s—a kind of conduit for creating and mobilizing workers for the needs of a changing economy—confirms that Local Hire was directly descended from economic opportunity models of the Great Society.

Paradoxically, this Alaska resident was defined by mobility. The five part criteria of “resident” implied movement over time was part of the process of establishing residency. The person seeking residency must be “physically present” for a certain duration, must “maintain” an address, and must demonstrate he will “make Alaska his permanent residence.” The definition conjures an image of a man coming to Alaska, leaving to serve in the military, and then going about the work of productive, loyal citizenship, by voting and establishing a home. Contrast this to an image of an Alaska Native, someone born in Alaska with claims to the place perhaps independent of military service, political participation, or processes of development. Implied in “residency” was a process of establishing a claim to rights and belonging in Alaska. Having this gendered and racialized figure as the basis for the protections laid out in the Local Hire law put local hire in service of a very particular sector of the Alaskan population.

Local Hire took affirmative action as a legal example, even if it was unclear how it would intersect with antidiscrimination laws in practice. The statute assumed the state of Alaska had the prerogative to designate classes of people and tailor laws to protect them from discrimination, just as the federal government had done in affirmative action for minorities and women. Alaska Hire took the principle of nondiscrimination to a positive right, just as affirmative action had elevated antidiscrimination from the realm of equal treatment to the realm of measurable results. The new
law established a category of people, Alaskan residents, to be advantageously positioned in the labor market. How would this category overlap with the categories of minorities, women, and Alaska Natives that were the subjects of affirmative action, the Alaska Plan, and Native Hire agreements? Though Local Hire could have potentially been a reinforcement of affirmative action and antipoverty measures, as Robert Willard hoped, the language and politics of the Statute in 1972 suggest that Willard’s fear—that the law could in fact be a tool of discrimination—was a likely possibility.

**Outsiders Find Jobs on the Pipeline**

“You can still strike it rich in Alaska, and some do,” a local Florida news article invited readers in 1975. Three brothers from Ocala, Florida who had all found jobs on the trans Alaska pipeline were evidence of this potential. Their father had worked in Alaska in the civil service for several years. One of the brothers, Ross Nolan, worked as a security guard on the pipeline. He wrote home to a friend outlining the best way to get hired on the pipeline. “The best way to be hired is to be here,” he explained. Nolan told his friend to come in January or February, before spring brought a flood of men from the lower-48 also looking for work. He urged the friend to leave his family behind for the time being, and bring no less than $1,000 to cover housing, food, union dues, and gear while waiting in Fairbanks to get a job. By paying “Dobie dues”—a small monthly fee that put a person on the lowest priority list at the hiring hall without having to pay full membership to the union—to the teamsters, culinary workers, and laborers’ unions, he would have a chance at getting a job. Even unskilled work could earn $900 per week. “That’s a pretty well paid maid,” quipped Nolan.20 Though Alaska might seem like an exceedingly unlikely and

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impractical place for a Florida job seeker to turn to, established routes of mobility, the strength of kinship and community networks, the existing industry system of mobilizing a labor supply, and loopholes in union rules all conspired to make the Alaska pipeline an attractive and attainable job prospect in the midst of economic depression, even from great distances and in spite of Local Hire laws.

Unions within Alaska did not have a bulletproof or consistent strategy for giving residents preference over nonresidents. Any assistance the unions gave to upholding Alaska Hire was voluntary, and procedures varied from union to union, meaning residency might carry a different weight for determining a worker’s status on the hiring hall list from one union to another. The Laborer’s unions in Anchorage and Fairbanks, for instance, did not give residents absolute priority. An experienced nonresident would be ranked higher than an Alaska resident with no experience—on the “A” or “B” list as opposed to the “C” list.21 Other unions, however, differentiated between Alaskans and nonresidents within all of their lists, from “A” to “D,” giving Alaskans a greater degree of preference for employment opportunities.22

The “D” list (sometimes referred to as the “Dobie” list) provided another opening to pipeline jobs. People could sign up on the “D” list at several different unions without becoming members, paying a nominal hiring hall use fee and promising to become a full member if they were dispatched to a job. Technically, those on the “D” list were in the lowest priority spot to be hired—available workers with more seniority on that A, B, and C lists would be offered openings first. But contractors often requested certain people by name to be dispatched. The Labor Agreement with Alyeska permitted contractors to control hiring “craft foremen and general

21 Datz, 4.
22 Calkins, 11.
foremen,”23 an exception in the hiring procedures (which designated unions as the sole provider of manpower for the pipeline) that in practice allowed contractors to call specific people out to the pipeline regularly. One Alaskan retailer testified that pipeline workers could hire their friends and relatives off of the “D” list. He explained, “The guy goes in, he pays his dobie dues. On the other end, his uncle or his father or whatever, calls his name and he goes ahead of everybody else.”24

Kinship and communal networks played a heavy hand in the labor market on the trans Alaska pipeline, just as they did in the skilled trades nationally in the 1970s. Unions relied on community bonds that were almost exclusively white to keep the construction trades exclusive, even as affirmative action directly targeted the boundaries erected around skilled labor. Unions often had informal hiring and referral processes that relied on family, neighborhood, school, and church ties, making it very difficult for someone outside of those communities to break in.25 As outside capital, oil companies, and managing contractors came to Alaska to develop oil resources, they brought with them connections to organized labor in the lower-48 that relied on such pre-existing communal networks. This meant that workers in Alaska might find themselves on the outside of a tight knit community of skilled labor, or a chain of referral based on familial relations, even if they, living in Alaska, were technically much closer to the job than workers from out of state.

Alyeska defended these hiring practices as part of its prerogative as builder and custodian of the pipeline. An Alyeska official claimed the project relied on expertise from “outside,” explaining, “We needed the old-timers, the experienced hands (in pipeline work) to get started, or

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23 “Trans-Alaska Pipeline System Project Agreement,” 3.
24 Calkins, 11.
we would have been floundering around.” Such statements reflected the fact that the oil and pipeline companies were accustomed to bringing their workforce with them, an assumption that perhaps they felt applied even more strongly to Alaska. They assumed that a workforce, particularly a skilled workforce up to building perhaps the most challenging pipeline yet attempted by the industry, simply did not exist in Alaska. Imagined as an empty, frozen tundra, Alaska was the frontier on which companies, contractors, and workers arrived to develop through technology and sheer grit—not a place to meet the challenges of an economically struggling state or the needs of the indigenous unemployed.

Ross Nolan and his siblings from Florida was not the only band of brothers working on the pipeline. Four welders, all brothers by the last name of King and members of Pipeliners Local 798 also come to Alaska together. A feature in the camp newspaper, The Campfollower, explained, “The King brothers all work on pipelines, and when possible, they all work together.” Two were welding foremen and one an assistant foreman (reporting to his elder brother) for H.C. Price. The remaining brother was a welder’s helper for Associated Greene. They hailed from a town in Arkansas made up primarily of pipeliners and their families; their fifth and youngest brother, still in high school, also planned to come to Alaska as a welder’s helper. The eldest brother told the paper, “When one of us is on a job and good workers are needed we know who to call. We always try to work together.” The brothers had followed pipeline jobs all over the country and internationally, and would live together, sharing house responsibilities, when possible. The four King brothers show not just the strength of kinship ties in shaping pipeline

27 “Line Jobs Keep Four Kings Together,” The Campfollower, 07 April 1976, Vol. III No. 14, Folder: The Campfollower Vol III 1976, Box: 9, Series: 3c. Labor Publications, Lorena Showers Collection, Archives and Special Collections, University of Alaska, Anchorage. Having blood relations working together on the pipeline was not uncommon. These kinds of stories were a regular occurrence in the camp newspaper, to the point that the paper sponsored a contest for the largest family working on the pipeline. See Family of
employment, but the presumption that these connections were the best way to set up the labor force.

Kinship networks and ethnic ties proved to be intractable underlying structures of trade unionism, which made openness to outsiders—even when mandated by affirmative action or local hire laws—a difficult proposition. These networks proved resilient in the pipeline construction industry, meaning a relative or friend of a worker from the lower-48 might have a better shot at a pipeline job than a worker from Fairbanks. The oil companies and contractors reserved certain rights to hire from outside of Alaska, and union rules provided openings that enabled non-Alaskans to find their way onto the pipeline in spite of the law. As neither contractors nor union halls took on the responsibility for monitoring where their workers were coming from, strategies for circumventing the law persisted for the duration of the project. With no shortage of migrants seeking high wages on the pipeline, the Alaska DOL would be engulfed with its expanded regulatory responsibilities, and the Alaskans workers protected by local hire would only become more and more aggrieved.

**Alaskans First!**

“What happened to the hiring law? … The work season is half over and there are still hundreds of men on the union waiting lists who are Alaskans, while the pipeline is being built by outsiders. Why?” a letter to the editor of the *Anchorage News* implored.28 Conversations about local hiring had generated high expectations for the right of Alaskans to be employed on the

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pipeline by the start of pipeline construction in spring of 1974. So, as oil company professionals, managers, engineers, and specialized pipeline workers came pouring into the state, followed by unskilled unemployed pursuing the promise of an oil boom, a backlash against “outsiders” took shape immediately. Anecdotes of pipeline camps overrun by workers from Texas and California, and rumors of outright discrimination against Alaskans circulated in Fairbanks union halls. Politicians seeking re-election fueled the fire. Alaskans made complaints to their legislators and the Commission for Human Rights. They wrote in to newspapers and attended public meetings about the status of employment on the pipeline. The common refrain through these forums was that out of state workers were coming in and filling jobs—even positions not requiring experience or expertise—while Alaskans remained unemployed and waiting for their break on the pipeline. An Alaska DOL investigation of pipeline camps, legislative hearings, and reports by observers all yielded the same conclusion: Local Hire was still only an aspiration, with no enforcement or reporting mechanisms in place to make resident priority a reality during the first year of pipeline construction.

Rumors about “outsiders” taking pipeline jobs from Alaskans reached a fever pitch during the first construction season on the pipeline, the summer of 1974. Conversations focused on the unfairness of Alaskans being outnumbered by nonresidents in employment to which Alaskans felt entitled and on the nepotism and exclusivity of hiring networks that brought nonresidents the state. At a NAACP meeting about employment discrimination, a teamster business agent complained that contractors were exploiting their capacity to hand pick foremen, by hiring workers from out of state as foremen and then moving them into journeymen positions after they were already in Alaska. He said, “No question about it, it's brothers-in-law, cousins,
sons and so forth.” Newspaper reporters conveyed anecdotes about outsiders filling pipeline camps, while Alaskan workers waited in union halls. One person testified, “The camps are loaded with people from Outside. It's all Texans at Franklin Bluffs and its all people from Oregon at Galbraith.” Some framed the issue as one of explicit discrimination against Alaskans as a group; claimed one, “They don't like Alaskans. They figure if they can get them to quit, that's another job for some relative.”

Popular opinion solidified around the credo of “Alaskans First!” In the midst of the uncertainty of what was actually taking place in pipeline employment, and the potential distortions of the rumor mill, many agreed that the issue was vital. Commentators called for reliable information to determine the extent of the problem and how to best resolve it. The editor of the Anchorage Daily News argued, “Alaskans must be given the first opportunities in pipeline jobs.” Local Hire became a political football in a very tight 1974 governor’s race.

The President of the State Senate and Speaker of the State House of Representatives appointed a special legislative committee to formally investigate how programs for employment opportunities—including Local, minority, and Alaska Native Hire—were operating in practice after the first season of pipeline construction. Republican representative of Anchorage, Jess Harris, who was also an electrician, contractor, and local union member, was tapped to chair the committee. Government officials and citizens testified to the Special Senate Committee on Alaskan Employment Opportunities and Practices at public hearings in Valdez, Fairbanks, and Anchorage from August through October. The Committee found that those registering

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31 “Our Views: Pipeline Hiring.”
32 Calkins.
33 Mim Dixon and Georgina Herron, Impact Information Center Special Report: Minority Hire and Alaska
complaints about outside hire tended to have little experience or skills applicable to the pipeline project, lacked union membership (or had lapsed memberships), or were from outlying areas and were unable to show up at union halls regularly. They complained of outsiders falsifying residency, bribery, nepotism, and the Operating Engineers Local 302 dispatching operators from Seattle.34 Douglas Luna, an Equal Employment Opportunity officer for the CHR, reported that the agency was receiving complaints about Local Hire violations. “I have had one report where three members of the same family were all working at the same camp, and they were here in the state less than twenty days,” Luna offered at a public hearing in Anchorage.35

Out of state residents working in unskilled jobs and Alaska residents not able to obtain even unskilled positions were one of the biggest sources of contention. One job seeker testified, “I have been a resident of Alaska for over five years and I haven’t been in the construction business, but I have signed up at most all of the unions. … I am trying to get out on one of the pipeline jobs, even as kitchen help.” He had not yet succeeded in finding work however, and claimed that he had been told he needed to bribe a dispatcher. This was an affront to what he saw as his rightful due as an Alaskan (even a relatively recent one): “I don’t feel that, as a resident here, I should have to buy a job.”36 The stories exchanged at the Senate hearings were still far from a systematic investigation, but many felt it was enough evidence that something had gone drastically wrong between the passage of Alaska Hire Statute and the ground-breaking of the pipeline. Senator John Butrovich, who had served in the territorial and then state legislature for over twenty years, summed up what seemed obvious to many, “I’m convinced that there are a lot

34 Calkins, 10.
36 Ibid, 10.
of out-of-staters going to work and a lot of in-staters that are out of work right now.”

Alyeska did not rush to counter the impression that outsiders were taking over pipeline jobs. The company released its first round of employment statistics documenting how many minorities, women, and Alaska Natives had been hired during the first month of construction in accordance with affirmative action and Native Hire reporting requirements. The statistics did not include any reference to local versus out of state employees, attesting to the fact that Alyeska simply did not have any tracking procedures or concrete goals in place to measure its compliance with Local Hire. The company did not appear to feel bound to the law. Alyeska’s public relations representative, Larry Carpenter, and Manager of Labor Relations, Gail Sheridan, publicly questioned the constitutionality of the law and fostered the impression that AS 38 was legally questionable and therefore not binding. Sheridan pointed out that the labor agreement made the unions—not Alyeska or its contractors—responsible for dispatching Alaskans. Carpenter acted baffled by the idea of monitoring or even defining residency, saying, “If a person wants to call himself an Alaskan I don't know really how you're going to look at him and say he's not.”

The weak legal basis and enforcement apparatus for Alaska Hire, combined with the fact that Local Hire compliance was mandated in Alyeska’s right-of-way lease with the state (as opposed to the lease it held with the federal government, which covered significantly more land and had more powerful regulatory enforcement behind it), meant Alyeska felt it could dodge responsibility for the local hire controversy.

Alyeska, trying to alleviate some of the pressure building up around Local Hire over the

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37 Ibid, 5.
39 “Who's an Alaskan Anyway?”
summer, did issue a report on residents and nonresidents in its workforce. By compiling addresses on union cards from fifteen contractors, the company estimated that about 60% of the 4,000 people on the job were state residents. This was not necessarily an accurate measure of residency (or how many paychecks would stay in the state), as workers sometimes held two union cards—one from their home town and one with an Alaska address. Alyeska maintained that even though large contracts had gone to out of state companies with experience in pipeline construction, subcontract opportunities had been made available to in state contractors. The company reported to the Senate Committee that it “believed that strong and effective steps for utilization of Alaskan contractors have been taken and are continuing.”

Governor Egan criticized Alyeska’s numbers as too low during his campaign for reelection, insisting that many jobs did not require experience and therefore should employ Alaskans. Egan and the Commissioner of Labor, John Alexander, made a public show of launching a “sweeping” investigation to determine the scope of outside hiring. They added three staff positions to the Alaska DOL and invited Alaska Plan Policy Director Frank Bailey to join the investigation. The Alaska DOL interviewed 399 workers at random, in eleven of twelve camps north of the Yukon River, finding 54% to be Alaska residents. Only 37% of operating engineers interviewed were residents. In Alexander’s estimation, about 75% of pipeline jobs should be filled by Alaskans. But before any action could be taken against Alyeska, the Alaska DOL would have to demonstrate that enough Alaskans were available, ready, and qualified for work. In essence, the burden was on the state to deliver up these resident workers if the state

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40 Calkins, 18.
43 Allen, "Pipeline Check Shows Many Outside Workers."
44 Calkins, 13.

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expected Alyeska and pipeline contractors to place significant numbers of Alaskans in pipeline jobs.

**Enforcement Falls Short**

The Special Senate Committee on Alaskan Employment Opportunities and Practices found Local Hire was simply “not a reality.”\(^45\) The committee’s final report concluded that the only enforcement mechanism in place was a quarterly report requirement for contractors, a requirement that had not been met or pursued by the Alaska DOL. The August-September 1974 investigation of pipeline camps had, by January 1975, been the only attempt to enforce local hiring; that investigation, as we have seen, was spurred by the heat of widespread dissatisfaction by voters and political posturing by candidates for public office.\(^46\) The legislative report confirmed that local hiring was thwarted by a chain reaction in which large outside contractors brought with them management, personnel, and subcontractors from outside, who, in turn brought friends and relatives to fill jobs lower down the skill ladder.\(^47\)

The Committee singled out the Alaska DOL as the weak link in Alaska Hire. First, the labor agreement between Alyeska and the AFL-CIO had, in contradiction with the state law, cut the Alaska DOL out of the process of supplying a labor force to the pipeline by designating unions as the exclusive source of manpower to the pipeline. Second, the Alaska DOL infrastructure that did exist to link job seekers with job opportunities was wholly inadequate to the task of the pipeline boom. The senate report cited dysfunctional Manpower Centers across the state, particularly in rural areas, but also in big cities. Alaska Federation of Natives President

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\(^{45}\) Ibid, 1.
\(^{46}\) Ibid, 12-13.
\(^{47}\) Ibid, 17-18.
Roger Lang called out the lack of services to Alaska Natives: “Like everything else in rural Alaska we have not been recipients of or participated in the workings of the Alaska Department of Labor.” Another job seeker was turned away from a manpower center in Anchorage with neither referrals nor information, told only that unions handle pipeline jobs. Third, the law was not supported by any effective procedures for implementation and monitoring. Lang stressed, “there’s a lack of teeth in any state plan for local hire. There’s absolutely no enforcement found in the present law….” The regulations that did exist (on paper rather than in practice) were too slow and bureaucratic to make any difference in a short construction season, amounting to nothing more than what Lang called a “paper mill.” The committee above all saw that laws alone did not constitute a solution to the social problems the laws were designed to solve. It worried that, without effective mechanisms of implementation and enforcement, Local Hire would make the state “the losing adversary in a polarized situation.” The report’s number one recommendation was that the DOL “should be required to enforce the law vigorously and immediately.”

What Local Hire needed, according to the Senate report, was “an overall system” to solve these problems of enforcement. The system they described—“to effectively recruit, identify, and categorize Alaskans that are available and looking for work in both the urban and rural areas”—was essentially a manpower program. The report argued that local workers were a resource to employers who would benefit from a workforce that already lived near the place of employment. Job seeking Alaskans simply needed to be mobilized and made available to employers; employers

48 Ibid, 15.
49 Ibid, 14.
50 Ibid, 11-12.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid, 27.
53 Ibid.
simply needed to know about and be able to find this cache of labor. The committee recommended creating a more actionable monitoring system and that the Alaska DOL be restructured to the purpose of being the intermediary between workers and employers—matching Alaska human resources with employment opportunities.

Close on the heels of the legislature’s censure of the Alaska DOL, the Fairbanks Impact Information Center released its own independent study of employment on the pipeline. The report was compiled and written by Mim Dixon, an anthropologist and researcher for the Center, and Georgina Herron, a member of the Impact Advisory Committee. Their findings corroborated those of the Senate report; hearings and investigations “strongly suggest(ed) that there [was] inadequate compliance” with multiple employment laws. The Impact Information Center report pointed to the “fragmented efforts” of the nearly one dozen enforcement agencies that had some hand in overseeing antidiscrimination law, affirmative action, and local hiring. No single agency was at the helm of enforcement. Alaska Hire was left even more vulnerable to neglect than the Alaska Plan or Native Hire because the enforcement mechanisms that did exist were primarily designed to protect minorities from discrimination.

The State Pipeline Coordinator’s Office was supposed to be the solution to the fragmentation of state enforcement. Dixon and Herron related how the new agency faltered before it could even begin its work. Governor Egan’s plan for the Coordinator’s Office was to have a staff dedicated to working with Alyeska and the EEOC to meet hiring goals on the pipeline—for state residents, Alaska Natives, and minorities. The CHR and the Alaska DOL would intervene in problems that could not be resolved by the Coordinator’s Office alone, but they would not be taking the lead in regulating employment opportunity. In an agreement that

54 Ibid, 28.
55 Calkins, 31.
56 Dixon and Herron, 9.
Alyeska would reimburse the state for the operating costs of the Pipeline Coordinator’s Office (set at $148,000), the state legislature essentially approved that Alyeska would fund equal employment opportunity regulation on the pipeline. The plan began to fall through, however, when Alyeska stipulated that the Coordinator’s Office could only regulate the pipeline (and not, for instance, enforce the Alaska Plan or Alaska Hire in other projects or sectors). This created delay as the Human Rights Commission, the Department of Labor, and Pipeline Coordinator’s Office debated where oversight efforts should be centralized. As of early 1975, no solution had been reached. The proposed Coordinator’s Office staff had been reduced from six to three.\(^{57}\) The Impact Information Center agreed with the Senate that the laws were in place but the state apparatus was not. Joe LaRocca, a journalist and the director of the Center, wrote, “the truth is that there has been no real policy commitment on the part of the state to achieve resident and minority hire goals, which have been addressed with imagery rather than substance.”\(^{58}\)

**Local Hire and the Rights of the Working Class**

Alaska Hire politicized “Alaskan” as an identity category. The discourse that accompanied the law—heated debates over the fairness of who would be employed on the pipeline—gave this identity category form and substance. The discourse was marked by a binary opposition between insiders and outsiders, wherein Alaskans were imagined as deserving citizens who had fulfilled their commitments as permanent settlers of the state. Outsiders, in contrast, were cast as inauthentic, exploitative, and temporary in their arrival—not true settlers in the state. In reality, the line between the two (the one year mark) was arbitrary. People who had arrived in Alaska perhaps three years earlier, under similar circumstances and motivations as those arriving

\(^{57}\) Ibid.

\(^{58}\) LaRocca, 15.

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in 1974, believed themselves to be entitled to protections and rights to which newcomers were not. Under scrutiny, it was difficult to distinguish “non-residents” from new Alaskans or the “residents” of the Local Hire statute. Some of the men who came, settled, and voted had simply done so earlier than others.

The identity category of “Alaskan” and the insider/outsider binary it relied on was fundamentally gendered. Outside workers taking Alaskan jobs threatened Alaskans as men. Joe Marshall, the Assistant Commissioner of Labor, claimed, “it is the same as somebody going into your house and taking your bread and butter.”59 Another, in a letter to the editor of the Anchorage Times, called the influx of out of state workers “the rape of the Alaskan worker.”60 Alaskans remaining unemployed while people from out of state worked on the pipeline was akin to theft or even a bodily violation. Work was a specifically male entitlement and the loss of that entitlement was a threat to manhood and breadwinner citizenship.

Alaskan men were further emasculated by finding themselves on the losing side of the same pioneering narrative on which ideals of Alaskan citizenship rested. When the Alaska Statute emphasized mobility, voting, and settlement to establish “residency,” it blotted out other kinds of claims to the state, namely indigenous people’s habitation of the land long before statehood or even U.S. territorialization. Alaska Native people’s predominantly marginal relationship to the economic and political structures of the state and sometimes antagonistic relationship to development (of natural resources or large scale engineering projects) left them outside of the routes to citizenship imagined by Local Hire. The outrage expressed by working class Alaskans and politicians during the first season of pipeline construction stemmed in part from a perilous proximity to this marginalized status. If the legitimate residents of Local Hire were not the

59 Jane Pender, "Alaska Hi...
protagonists and victors of the oil boom, they were feminized and racialized, potentially subjected to the same dispossession Alaskan “pioneers” had already perpetrated on indigenous populations. Texans or Californians seeking fortune on the “Last Frontier” threatened to overwhelm the (only recently minted by statehood) Alaskan citizenry—in a narrative that was endlessly compelling in the American imagination but always spelled erasure for the people already inhabiting the frontier.

The identity category of “Alaskan,” when elevated to a positive right to employment opportunities eclipsed other identity categories seeking redress from the law. “Alaskan resident” presumably included and stood for all Alaskans, homogenized as a cohesive group with a singular interest in the employment regulations of Local Hire. This made less apparent the ways that white masculinity undergirded the law and the rationale behind it. At the same moment the rights of minorities, women, and Alaska Natives were being advanced in state and federal law, affirmative action plans, and regulatory agencies, Local Hire reasserted the supposedly universal rights of the Alaskan citizen. The law in fact more closely protected the interests of the white male working class in Alaska, presumed to be universal, even as the law seemed to encompass and reduce the need for the positive rights attempts by other groups to be fully recognized as citizen-workers.

The Department of Labor Redoubles Its Efforts

The Alaska State Department of Labor began concerted efforts to enforce Local Hire in 1975. The first line of enforcement was to require all Alaskans seeking work under oil and gas leases to apply for a card certifying they were residents. A person had to submit a two-page application to the Alaska DOL’s Wage and Hour division in Juneau. It included questions about where the applicant had lived, worked, paid taxes, and registered to vote in the past two years. It also asked for job qualifications, union membership, and what occupation the applicant hoped to enter. The
Alaska DOL instructed applicants to file a work application with the Department of Labor.\(^{61}\) If the residency application was successful, the Alaska DOL would issue a card the size of a driver’s license, reading, for example, "This is to certify that Ursula Bonney soc. sec. no. 000-00-000 meets the requirements of Alaska Statues 38.40.090 for Certification as an Alaskan resident." The card had a unique number, expiration date, and Edmund Orbeck’s signature.\(^{62}\)

“Resident” proved to be a coveted and contested class of belonging. Over one year, from March 1975 through March 1976, the Alaska DOL processed over 36,000 applications for residency, issuing 28,000 residency cards and denying 8,000 requests.\(^{63}\) The rejection rate—over 20%—shows that residency was not a cut and dry category. It required the Alaska DOL’s discretion and many people who thought of themselves as Alaskan were outraged to find out that they in fact were not, in the Alaska DOL’s determination. When rejected applicants discovered they had no recourse to challenge the Alaska DOL’s decision, the Alaska DOL had to act fast in March of 1975. The agency argued that emergency regulations were necessary to preserve the peace and public welfare. The new regulation would compensate for the lack of procedures for people who wished to appeal when they were denied residency status. In order to ensure due process of law, the Department had to create a process for addressing these appeals. The Deputy Commissioner explained, "The lack of fair procedures is itself an emergency; such lack may cause unrest or disturbance in an extremely volatile environment and could cause danger, breach of peace or jeopardize safety, health or general welfare of the general citizenry."\(^{64}\)


\(^{62}\) Residency card, 19 May 1975, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.


The Alaska DOL Wage and Hour Division accepted and investigated complaints of discrimination. If an available, qualified resident of Alaska felt that he or she had been discriminated against, or rejected by an employer who favored an out of state worker, they could file a formal complaint to the Division. They could submit their complaint with an official form, but, just as often, people wrote letters directly to the Commissioner of Labor or even the Governor to plead their case. The form asked for the person’s information, address, and residency card number, and the information about the employer accused of discrimination. The form had questions to determine the relationship between the worker and the employer and what wrong doing the employer may have done in not giving Alaska residents preference. “Who terminated or rejected you from employment? What was the reason given for termination or rejection?” “Were you qualified for the position?” “Are nonresidents being employed by the company in the same job classification you applied for or were rejected from? Are you able to provide names of any nonresidents still employed in your job classification?”

Upon receiving such a complaint, the Division was supposed to schedule a preliminary conference between the two parties within 10 days, then, if there was no resolution, hold a full hearing within 30 days.

One complaint, in a handwritten letter addressed to Commissioner Orbeck, is typical of the kind brought by Alaskans against companies and contractors on the pipeline. Dave Powley had applied as a maintenance operator for BP on the North Slope. He got no response, applied again with no result, and later heard that a man from Idaho, who had never before been to Alaska, was hired for the job. Powley had lived in Alaska three years. He said he intended to make it his home, but, appealing to the spirit of the law, wrote, “I feel it won't be a home for anyone if the revenue made in Alaska by companies such as BP is taken out to benefit the economy of Idaho.”

65 “Discrimination of Employment Complaint,” 1 March 1972, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
66 Notice of Complaints, 19 April 1977, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
In a postscript, Powley included the man’s name and address, pointing out that the man would be traveling back to Idaho for his week off from work. He implored Orbeck to “look into” it and respond.67 Orbeck did call BP to confirm that the man from Idaho was employed by BP and invited Powley, whose residency card was approved, to submit an official complaint form to the Alaska DOL.

During 1974 and 1975, many union locals did not comply with Local Hire. The two locals in question, Laborer’s Union Local 942 in Fairbanks and Local 341 in Anchorage, however, continued to operate under the terms of their contract with the Associated General Contractors (AGC), which used a four-tiered system in ranking an applicant’s status at the hiring hall. The system did not give Alaska residents absolute priority.68 An applicant would be placed on the highest ranked “A list” if he had worked 800 hours in the preceding 2 years; the “B list” for 100-799 hours; the “C list” if he had been a physical resident of Alaska for the preceding 6 months or had at least 2 years of construction experience. All others would be placed on the “D list.”69 In 1975, the State of Alaska unsuccessfully tried to negotiate modifications for unions to comply with the law.

In March of 1976, Commissioner of Labor Edmund Orbeck issued a Cease and Desist order to local unions non-compliant with Local Hire. Citing numerous complaints to the Department of Labor that non-residents were being dispatched ahead of Alaskan residents, Orbeck declared in no uncertain terms, “That is a violation of Alaska Law.”70 He directed all unions “to respond to all open job calls by dispatching all qualified Alaska residents before any

67 Dave M. Powley to Edmund N. Orbeck, October 1977, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
68 Harold J. Datz to Charles M. Henderson, memorandum, 6 May 1976, Local Hire Legal NLRB folder, box 6408, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
69 Datz, 4.
70 Edmund N. Orbeck, “Cease and Desist Dispatching Non-Residents When Qualified Residents are Available to Fill Pipeline Project Jobs,” 1 March 1976, Local Hire Legal NLRB folder, box 6408, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
non-residents are dispatched.” This meant an Alaskan resident on the D list would be given the opportunity to take a job even before a non-resident on the A list. He reiterated the five part criteria for residency and directed individuals to the Alaska DOL for obtaining the required residency card.71

**Local Hire Under Attack**

In mid-1976—going into the third year of pipeline construction—many unions had to abruptly change their procedures in response to Orbeck’s cease and desist order. As the unions feared, workers brought complaints against unions to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for suddenly implementing the local hire practices. Two non-resident workers on the A list, Thomas Parsons and Ronald Greathouse filed complaints when they were bypassed for residents with less work hours.72 They were exactly the type of workers that the local hire laws were designed to guard against: those that come to Alaska, earned wages over the construction season, then returned to their homes out of state. Parsons was a carpenter from Arizona, where he voted, owned property, and held a driver’s license. He acquired an Alaska driver’s license and paid non-resident Alaska state taxes. He worked for about 1200 hours in Alaska in 1975, then returned to Arizona. Greathouse was a driller from Utah with similar circumstances. Neither was eligible for a residency card from the Department of Labor.73

Workers filed complaints with the Region 19 National Labor Relations Board in Seattle. The regional director, Charles Henderson, sought the advice of the general legal counsel of the NLRB in Washington D.C. The legal counsel advised that in the past the NLRB had upheld

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71 Orbeck, ”Cease and Desist.”
72 Datz, 5-6.
73 Ibid, 6.
preference based on residence in a geographic area, that the Project Agreement clearly held precedence over the prior AGC agreement, and that the unions did not violate labor law in failing to dispatch non-resident workers.\(^74\) He noted that there was still the possibility that Local Hire laws could be ruled unconstitutional in violation of the Equal Protection and Privileges and Immunities Clauses of the constitution. But, until then, the unions were not responsible for any detriment brought to its members by complying with local hire.\(^75\) Henderson followed the general counsel’s advice. He wrote back to each of the three men charging that the Laborer’s unions in Anchorage and Fairbanks had violated labor laws—Greathouse, Parsons, and Kulchak, refusing to take further action or issue a formal complaint. He attached a summary of his findings, based on the memorandum from the general counsel. The men had charged that the unions had violated the law on two counts: first, that giving preference to residents was itself unlawful; and second, that the unions had unilaterally changed their practices established through collective bargaining without the participation of all parties to the contract. Henderson argued that preferential hiring of residents was lawful, had precedence, and had not yet been found invalid in any court. He further explained that when the unions abruptly changed their process by dispatching residents from lower on the call list before any non-residents, they were merely coming into compliance with the project agreement and responding to the cease and desist order from the Commissioner of Labor. Henderson advised the workers that they could file an appeal to the NLRB in Washington D.C.\(^76\) One man chose to appeal, but it was quickly denied, predictably, as Henderson’s conclusions has

\(^{74}\) Ibid.
\(^{75}\) Ibid, 8.
been a direct reflection of the sentiment in Washington.\textsuperscript{77}

Despite the legal challenges to Local Hire, the National Labor Relations Board upheld preferential hiring in the face of complaints brought to the board by non-residents in May of 1976. Governor Hammond spun it as a “breakthrough” in which Local Hire “(had) been upheld and formally accepted.”\textsuperscript{78} Without acknowledging that critics still had the avenue of legally challenging the constitutionality of Local Hire in court, many took the NLRB’s decision as evidence that Local Hire was viable, enforceable, and a precedent for future development projects in the state.\textsuperscript{79} Lawyers for Orbeck and Spear, already in the midst of fending off a request for an injunction against the department of Labor by Betty Cloud and five other plaintiffs, took Henderson’s summary as a boon to their cause. They found it encouraging that the NLRB had concluded that residential preference was not simply permissible; it was legally binding as part of the Pipeline Project Agreement. Conveying this news to Orbeck and Spear in a letter, and referring to their crusade against the pending injunction, one lawyer wrote, “I hope that you are able to vanquish the forces of evil and non-residents on Monday.”\textsuperscript{80}

In 1975, the Alaska DOL proposed repealing the existing resident hire laws and replacing them with new, modified regulations. In November, the Alaska DOL held a public hearing on the proposed changes in Anchorage. The changes faced staunch and unified opposition from unions and employers. The president of the Alaskan Federation of Labor, Dwayne Carlson, explained why they could not support this set of regulations, even though the Alaskan Federation of Labor and affiliated unions had supported local hire in the past. Carlson defended union support of the

\textsuperscript{77} John S. Irving to James M Kulchak, 28 July 1976, Local Hire Legal NLRB folder, box 6408, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
\textsuperscript{79} “NLRB counsel affirms local hiring rule.”
\textsuperscript{80} Kevin F. Kelly to Edmund N. Orbeck and William Edward Spear, 20 May 1976, Local Hire Legal NLRB folder, box 6408, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.

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spirit of Local Hire, “The history of the hiring halls, if anyone would care to research it, and the presence of collective bargaining, reflect a constant struggle by the labor unions to obtain preference of hire for residents.”\textsuperscript{81} But he vehemently opposed Section 35.140, “Private Recruitment Permitted,” which required an employer to seek qualified Alaskan resident workers from the employment office of the Alaska DOL in the case that a resident could not be obtained within 48 hours from the union hiring hall. He believed that the unions should be the source of recruitment for jobs on the pipeline, and that the proposed role of the DOL was an attack on hiring provisions between the unions and employers. He claimed it was “an attempt to, at least as I see it, to destroy the hiring halls and we are not going to stand for it.”\textsuperscript{82} Carlson also lamented the lack of enforcement of Local Hire, which he felt should be carried out by the Alaska DOL and its investigators, rather than placing the burden on employers to know and ensure that their workers are residents.

Ira Sills, an attorney for the Laborer’s union in Anchorage, echoed the same sentiment. “We think Section .140 is a fairly blatant attempt to simply circumvent the whole hiring hall procedure,” which “interferes with the basic freedom on contracts between employers and labor unions.”\textsuperscript{83} He argued that the proposed regulations would ultimately interfere with the actual implementation and benefit of local hiring for Alaskans, as the constitutional vulnerabilities of the law would mean it would not be properly enforced and would face prolonged legal challenges, and perhaps ultimate defeat. Finally, he criticized the regulations as inefficient. If the labor union could not provide a resident worker in 48 hours, the employer would have to submit a request to

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid, 7.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, 16.
the DOL, which would take as long as three days for a reply.\textsuperscript{84} Bob Johnson of the Teamsters then testified to the same point, that the regulations would subvert the sacrosanct union hiring hall process.\textsuperscript{85}

Contractors testifying that day joined the unions’ case that the regulations upended the established hiring process. They stressed the undue burden the regulations placed on employers. Robert Strange, of Alaska Constructors, Inc., pledged loyalty to the union contracts: “We are a union contractor; we have union agreements; we have collective bargaining agreements….” Strange cited a portion of the regulations that prohibited “the rejection of a resident referred to an employer from any source including his own initiative in favor of a nonresident.” This was a violation of their collective bargaining agreements to “utilize the union hall as our exclusive hiring agency”; the contractor could not simply hire someone from off the street.\textsuperscript{86} But Strange was most opposed to the potentially costly lack of efficiency it would create for the employer. He wanted the freedom to fire a less productive Alaskan resident before a more productive nonresident, and balked at waiting 5 or 6 days to have workers dispatched.\textsuperscript{87} Finally, he found to be an “unfair burden” the requirements placed on employers to maintain knowledge of their workforce and file reports to the DOL. “You are asking us to monitor, you are asking us to enforce, you are asking us to check, you are asking us to report….” Strange felt that to fulfill this bureaucratic duty would require a full time employee dedicated to the task.\textsuperscript{88}

Alyeska filed written comments opposing the regulatory changes on similar grounds. They circumvented existing labor agreements, created undue delays for the employer, and—of particular concern to Alyeska, which directly employed primarily professionalized staff—

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 15-16. 
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid, 17-18. 
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, 13. 
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, 10. 
\textsuperscript{88} Ibid.
expanded the category of “employee” to include administrative and managerial staff, a requirement the company thought it could not meet with “barely qualified Alaska residents.”

Alyeska’s testimony was imbued with a cool threat: the regulations would cause the pipeline to cost more and delay its completion. This translated into a higher pipeline transportation tariff, which meant less revenue for the state of Alaska.

In response to one man’s complaint that a nonresident had been hired before him and inquiry into other available jobs on the pipeline, a business manager for a local in St. Louis Missouri of the International Union of Operating Engineers claimed, “As far as job security of Alaska residents it is the failure of the State to enforce their law and not the problem of this organization.”

The 1976 Cease and Desist order from Orbeck triggered a number of legal actions seeking to prevent, at least temporarily, the Department of Labor from enforcing the Alaska Hire law. Six plaintiffs filed in the Anchorage Superior Court for an injunction and restraining order that would bar the Department of Labor from enforcing local hire while the plaintiffs pursued their legal challenge to the constitutionality of Local Hire. They challenged both the one-year residency requirement and the flat employment preference for Alaskans. The injunction would allow the plaintiffs, all of whom were denied or ineligible for residency status, to remain employed on the trans Alaska pipeline in the meantime. In July 1976, the court upheld Local Hire in its entirety. The plaintiffs then appealed the decision to the Alaska State Supreme Court in Juneau. The state Supreme Court in a close vote in 1977, ruled that preference for residents was in fact constitutionally valid. However, they found that any durational residency requirement over


90 Herman B. Jones to Peter Kelly, 16 September 1977, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
30 days was constitutionally infirm.\(^{91}\)

Another laborer attempted the same injunction strategy later that year, October 1976, in a Fairbanks court. Sarkis Kalousian believed that he met the requirements of a resident, that he paid taxes as a resident, had been in residence for over one year, held a resident driver’s license and fishing license, and was registered to vote with no claims of residency in another state. After the DOL denied him a residency card, he appealed, but believed he faced the threat of imminent harm while he waited for his appeal to be processed. Kaloustian was hired on the pipeline before Local Hire was put into effect, but as the construction season came to an end, he would most certainly be laid off, as residents were given preference for being retained during the winter months when jobs were scarcer. Kalousian asked that he either be granted a temporary residency card or the Department of Labor be restrained from enforcing local hiring laws.\(^{92}\) An attorney further testified that in his experience appealing denials of residency cards, the DOL was often slow, made arbitrary decisions, and refused to divulge their process or reasoning behind its decisions.\(^{93}\)

The state legislature stopped funding Local Hire for a period in 1977, likely due to the Alaska Supreme Court’s decision that the one-year residency requirement (the Department of Labor’s primary indicator to base enforcement on) was invalid.\(^{94}\) The original plaintiffs for the case appealed the court’s decision again, this time taking the Hicklin v. Orbeck case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Perhaps in the hope that Local Hire would survive, the DOL recovered some funding and resumed enforcement of the Local Hire statute, since revised to require only 30 days


\(^{93}\) Sarkis Kaloustian v. State of Alaska.

\(^{94}\) Jay. S. Hammond to Terry L. Henderson, 11 May 1978, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
Local Hire in the Supreme Court

Hicklin v. Orbeck was argued in the U.S. Supreme Court on March 21, 1978. Robert H. Wagstaff presented the case of the appellees (Hicklin) and Ronald W. Lorensen defended the Alaska State Department of Labor (Orbeck). Wagstaff argued that the DOL had implemented “a broad based economic preference given to all Alaskan residents” and was therefore discriminating against residents of other states. He argued that this discrimination was unconstitutional because it was not properly suited to solving the problem Alaska used to justify the discrimination: chronic unemployment. Therefore the state did not have “a substantial and compelling and legitimate interest” for violating the Privileges and Immunities Clause. He conceded that unemployment was a problem for the state, but that more tailored solutions—like training programs, or preferential treatment for the unemployed—should be used before discrimination against citizens of other states. The attorney’s position was that Alaska did not have the right to interfere with someone from another state seeking a job in Alaska by requiring that they be present for 30 days before they could become employed. Wagstaff even challenged the premise of Local Hire—that the state could compel preferential hire of residents based on its leases to oil and gas companies—by questioning if Alaska even had claim to subsurface resources that were being extracted by private industry.

Wagstaff painted the Alaska Statute as expanding out of control, enumerating “the real dangers of Alaska Hire.” It already applied to private enterprise not necessarily taking place on

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95 Edmund N. Orbeck to J.L. Arsenault, 18 May 1978, 6-4 Complaints Pipeline Local folder, box 6407, series 369, Alaska State Department of Labor, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.
state lands, and could possibly be interpreted to include any job the state could link to Alaska resources. Wagstaff pointed out that even a Toyota dealership might fall under Local Hire, as the crates used to ship cars came from Alaska lumber. He warned that local hire laws threatened to spread to other states if Local Hire was upheld in court, leading to a rise in economic protectionism and isolationism between the states.97

Lorensen’s argument rested on the assertion that the state of Alaska owned the land and oil underneath it, and the state had a responsibility to develop those resources in such a way as would benefit its citizens. He argued the discrimination against non-residents was valid because the Local Hire law did rely on training programs, and a durational residency requirement was necessary so that unemployed Alaskans would have time to complete their training and get a job before more skilled out of state residents came and took the jobs. He presented Alaska’s creation of a residency classification as part of a broader attempt to strengthen the Alaskan economy, not to give a broad, discriminatory preference to all Alaskans. He argued that the Local Hire law did not interfere with anyone’s right to travel, where in travel meant to migrate permanently to Alaska rather than “travel casually.” He conceded the scope of the law was wide, covering not just the lessees, but their subcontractors and suppliers as well—though the law had never been enforced for suppliers.98

Questions and comments from the Supreme Court justices during the oral arguments reveal some of the broader concerns at stake beyond the strictly legal question of whether a residency requirement for employment violated the Privileges and Immunities Clause. First, they tried to determine if Wagstaff was in fact arguing against giving employment preference to state residents in public employment, contracts, or public works projects. Justice Blackmun asked if

97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
Wagstaff would be opposed to residency requirements for employees of the state. He also brought up the Great Depression, asking if Alaska were to set up a Works Progress Administration type project, should Alaska have the right to restrict it to residents of the state. Wagstaff dismissed these concerns as irrelevant to the law at hand. Local Hire was only for employment connected to oil and gas leases, which Wagstaff characterized as “strictly private activity.” The justices pressed Wagstaff to answer the question—whether Alaska could require that only state residents work on a WPA project funded by the state without violating the Privileges and Immunities clause—directly. Cornered, Wagstaff maintained that he believed such a requirement could be found unconstitutional. Justice Rehnquist seemed taken aback at the implication; “So a state cannot use its own tax moneys to relieve unemployment among its own residents?” Wagstaff backpedaled, saying that a state certainly would have the right to such a design, but that in Alaska’s case the discrimination against non-residents was not adequately suited to the unemployment problem and the claim to regulatory jurisdiction over state oil and gas leases was a far cry from public employment. Wagstaff suggested that the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was “a good bona fide way of addressing this problem without discriminating.” This again triggered a reaction from Rehnquist defending preferential employment, who said a lot of [Alaska Natives] are not interested in just sitting at home and getting a check every month to buy groceries, they want to work.” The line of questioning spoke to the court’s suspicion that a ruling against Local Hire might have broader implications for a New Deal liberalism that empowered the state to stimulate employment as a form of social welfare. The exchange about Alaska Natives indicated that paid work—not just public assistance—was the preferred vehicle of uplift for minorities. The court might not be convinced that reining in individual states’ powers to boost employment among the disadvantaged was in the best interest of the nation.99

99 Ibid.
The second preoccupation of the justices was around the scope of Local Hire and how it might expand to the regulation of all employment, spread to other states, and even usurp federal power. The justices and lawyers spent a significant amount of time determining exactly how broadly Local Hire could impact employment in Alaska. Wagstaff argued that the state could easily find grounds for Local Hire in all types of jobs by identifying any relationship with a state-owned resource, and that, in the event of another gold rush, non-residents might only be able to take gold out of the state after residents had enjoyed the first helping. Lorenson pointed out that Local Hire currently only applied to 6% of the Alaskan workforce (the amount directly related to the pipeline). Alaska’s basis for the right to implement local hiring, its ownership of land and resources being leased, raised more questions about the scope of the law. It was unclear to Justice Marshall if the state had jurisdiction to regulate the pipeline itself or the oil that flowed through it. The answer was neither; as Marshall pointed out, “That gas does not belong to Alaska once it hits the pipeline.” The state was only overseeing employment during construction of the pipeline since it had provided the right-of-way that allowed the resource to be developed. But that only made the situation more sticky. The United States owned the vast majority of land the pipeline crossed; the state, only a small portion. Marshall pressed, “Where do you get jurisdiction on United States’ land?” and, “You would go on to the United States’ land and enforce your state law?” The Alaska DOL in fact had. The justices were not dissuaded that Alaska’s tactic could easily be adopted by other states, though Lorenson tried to argue that Alaska, in its large quantity of resources owned, was an exception. The justices promptly offered examples of western states with large amounts of “developable resources” they might wish to impose employment stipulations on. Wagstaff accused Alaska of insulating itself from the national welfare and interfering with the “strong national interest” Congress had declared in Alaskan oil and gas. The court seemed to be leaning towards reining in the young state’s brash assertion of jurisdiction
over lands, resources, and labor markets it had only recently secured authority over.\textsuperscript{100}

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled against Orbeck in a unanimous opinion issued June 22, 1978. The court found that there was legal precedent for defending the right of citizens of one state to travel to another state seeking employment or to pursue an occupation. The court agreed with Wagstaff that the relationship between Alaska’s unemployment and the statute was not strong enough to warrant “pervasive discrimination.” Furthermore, Alaska’s ownership of oil and gas was “insufficient justification” for the discrimination; the state’s interest in the natural resources simply did not outweigh the importance of the Privileges and Immunities clause.\textsuperscript{101}

Peril to national unity was the overarching theme of the court’s opinion. The opinion quoted two cases to illustrate the purpose and imperative behind the constitutional question at hand. Paul v. Virginia (1869) argued, “It has been justly said that no provisions in the Constitution has tended so strongly to constitute the citizens of the United States as one people as this [Privileges and Immunities Clause].” Baldwin v. G.A.F. Seeling (1935) claimed the constitution “was framed upon the theory that the peoples of the several states must sink or swim together, and that in the long run prosperity and salvation are in union and not division.”\textsuperscript{102}

The concern expressed in oral arguments—that Alaska was overstepping its jurisdiction and fostering isolationism—proved to be a central sticking point for the court, which believed the equal treatment of citizens across state lines was necessary for creating a whole nation. Alaska’s own vision of statehood, in which it finally broke out of its colonial status as a territory by owning and managing land and resources, was put in check by the court’s prioritizing federal power and maintaining Alaska as a resource for the entire nation and all U.S. citizens. In spite of some justice’s seeming propensity for New Deal liberalism to uplift the unemployed, economic

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid.
protectionism at the local level was not going to be permissible in the crisis of the 1970s. The national interest in Alaskan oil and gas extended to the economic opportunity for U.S. workers created by the pipeline. Put simply, the court would not stand for Alaskan exceptionalism; Alaska—and the frontier narrative of ever expanding growth it represented—were too crucial as the landscape for American exceptionalism in the 1970s.

**Conclusion**

Local Hire was an attempt to protect Alaskans as a class, up to the point of giving them a positive right to preferential treatment in the labor market for oil and gas development. This tactic was in fact modeled after affirmative action for minorities and women, in which members of a protected group were treated differently in order to produce a certain result, in this case, higher numbers of employment in contracts with the state. As we saw in the elements of the statute and the heated political discourse surrounding it, however, the category of “qualified Alaskan residents” was narrower than the entire population of the state. The male, white working class emerged as the actual referent of “Alaskan,” even as the category retained the legitimacy of universalism. Meanwhile the projects of creating recourse for the poor, unemployed, and historically discriminated against faded and fell to other agencies and legal apparatuses. Local Hire floundered first because the state power necessary to make it a reality was not in place. The Alaska Department of Labor, in trying to muster the regulatory resources to fulfill its mission, then found itself up against a labor movement directly undermined by the state’s crusade and an industry that already had a firm upper hand in Alaska. Local Hire’s ultimate defeat came in the Supreme Court, which saw the statute as an affront to national unity and federal authority. The court did not question the implications of giving an economic preference to a designated class that, in practice, was comprised of white men in the age of affirmative action for minorities and
women. The court retained its faith in breadwinner liberalism, but placed limits on Alaska’s reach for economic autonomy in the name of the national interest.
4. Affirmative Action: Alyeska Makes Room for Women

In May of 1974, Glenda Straube gained the distinction of becoming the first female teamster on the trans Alaska pipeline, but only after a long ordeal. She passed the teamsters test for a “chain man,” a surveyor who helps hold the measuring tape and cleans and cares for the surveying equipment. Straube worked her way up to the teamsters “C” list by getting experience on temporary jobs, sometimes as brief as a single day, that no one else—particularly more senior male members—wanted. She attended union calls in Fairbanks regularly for almost three months. Finally a call for a chain man on the pipeline at Atigun Camp came up that no one on the A or B list wanted. She was dispatched to the job. She left behind her two young children with friends to go to the orientation center in Fairbanks. She attended the orientation, but as the rest of the new hires were boarding the bus for the airport, she was approached by a Bechtel employee. He informed her, “I’m sorry. You can’t go. There are no facilities for women.” She was placed on standby in Fairbanks, paid $336 a week indefinitely, until Alyeska came up with a resolution. The job itself paid $8.47 an hour for ten-hour days, seven days per week. With overtime pay, Straube could have been making over $700 per week as a chain man.1

She waited for two weeks before speaking to the All-Alaska Weekly about her predicament. “I feel like it is unfair; it’s kind of like I have been bought off. And one of the worst parts was coming back to the union hall and listening to my job come up again and seeing them hire a man to take my place. I personally feel I am getting the run around.” The paper called Alyeska about Straube’s situation and asked about its policy on women. That same day, Alyeska sent Straube to work as a chain person at Dietrich

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1 “Mother of Two Dispatched To Slope As a Surveyor,” All-Alaska Weekly, 24 May 1974.
Camp and issued a statement that the company did hire women, and any camps that could not currently accommodate women would be getting additional facilities.\(^2\)

Comments like Glenda Straube’s showed that women had the expectation of receiving equal employment opportunity on the pipeline and the political discourse to persuasively articulate those expectations. Alyeska’s quick response showed that the company felt compelled, if not entirely prepared, to remove obstacles that could be perceived as discriminatory. This chapter examines how equal employment opportunity had taken on a life of its own by the start of pipeline construction, in spite of the Alaska Plan’s shortcomings and even before government regulation put an affirmative action plan in place for minorities and women. It was this momentum that would produce concrete changes in employment practices for women and breathe life into Alyeska’s affirmative action plan. Affirmative action in the hands of Alyeska and under the command of the federal government opened up the contest over pipeline jobs to the national labor market, eliminating the local autonomy creators of the Alaska Plan had hoped to maintain while racially integrating the construction industry.

**Bringing Affirmative Action to the Pipeline**

Lawmakers used the Trans Alaska Pipeline (TAPS) Authorization Act to finally halt all legal challenges to the pipeline, which had begun in 1970 with the Stevens Village lawsuit and continued for three more years with legal actions by environmental groups. Energy shortages shifted national public opinion to favor the previously unpopular Alaska pipeline. In the fall of 1973, President Nixon made pipeline authorization a legislative priority. In October, another oil crisis—an OPEC oil embargo

\(^2\) “Mother of Two Dispatched To Slope As a Surveyor,” 1, 13.

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against the United States in retaliation for aiding Israel—created an even more favorable political environment for approving the pipeline. The House and Senate passed the Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act by a wide margin, and Nixon signed it into law on November 16, 1973. It prohibited any further legal challenges to the pipeline. The Act was a major blow to the integrity of the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), environmentalists’ main tool for fighting the pipeline. Senator Ted Stevens praised the TAPS Authorization Act as a “Second Statehood Act” because it allowed Alaska to finally move forward with the resource development that would economically sustain the state.³

The Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act superseded challenges to Alaskan oil development at that moment, but it also included a clause that would permanently expand the coverage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Specifically, it built off of Title VI, which outlawed discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin (but not sex; only Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, outlawing discrimination in employment, included sex) in any program receiving Federal financial assistance—like a grant, loan, or contract. The Pipeline Authorization Act expanded this to cover “any activity conducted under any permit, right-of-way, public land order, or other Federal authorization.”⁴ The Act went yet another step beyond Title VI, from outlawing discrimination to requiring affirmative action and including sex as a protected category. This meant that even a project funded and executed completely by private capital and firms would be required to maintain affirmative action programs subject to regulation by the federal government. The TAPS Authorization Act shut down any loopholes the oil companies might be able to exploit, by bundling various Titles of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 with Executive

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³ Coates, 246-47.
Orders for affirmative action into a single, comprehensive federal requirement. Without the TAPS Authorization Act, for instance, Alyeska and the oil companies would have been prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex and national origin in employment by the Civil Rights Act, but not necessarily in the awarding of contracts. Nor would they have been required to maintain affirmative action plans in employment or contracting practices—as affirmative action, according Executive Order 11246, was only required of federal contractors. The Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act used the condition of federal authorization to expand the regulatory authority of the federal government in a way that placed burdens previously only associated with federal contractors onto private industry. The Act itself was vague, leaving it up to the Secretary of the Interior to create new rules and regulations to carry out the section of the Act on affirmative action.

Ironically, the federal government was using the same legal foundation for expanding its powers that the state of Alaska used to justify its Local Hire law. Federal lawmakers claimed that when the Alyeska Company required a Right-of-Way contract with the U.S. government to use public lands, this justified government regulation of employment and contracting practices on the pipeline. Alaska placed certain regulatory requirements—mandating preference in hiring for state residents—on Alyeska using the same basis. Yet, Alaska’s authority, and the premise that the contracting relationship between the state and industry was a valid support for expanded authority, would be challenged in the Supreme Court while the TAPS Authorization Act, somewhat arbitrarily, cleared the way for a permanent and less disputed expansion of federal regulation.

The Department of the Interior drafted new regulations for affirmative action on federally authorized projects. The DOI made them public and invited comments in April
of 1974. Meanwhile, Alyeska secured a Right-of-Way agreement with the United States and state of Alaska and began construction on the pipeline. The TAPS Authorization Act had increased federal regulation to include the pipeline, but not required Alyeska to have the affirmative action plan approved before a right-of-way could be issued or construction could begin. It was up to the DOI to decide on new regulations and make its requirements known before Alyeska could proceed with writing and implementing an affirmative action plan. After years of delay over environmental issues and land claims, the DOI was not interested in putting up a roadblock for the project. But this meant the pipeline would go through an entire construction season with unclear responsibilities for affirmative action. The Department was still receiving comments and revising the regulations throughout the summer of 1974.

**Sex Discrimination on the Pipeline**

With no affirmative action plan in place, Alyeska faced accusations of sex discrimination less than a month after ground breaking. Glenda Straube’s story—she was told by Bechtel at the last minute that she would not be dispatched to a pipeline camp because there were no facilities for women—was not an isolated incident. Alyeska in fact did not design the pipeline camps with the presupposition that women would be living and working there alongside men. Contractors had been telling women applicants that they could not work in jobs that required them to be dispatched to pipeline camps because there were no facilities for women. Rumors were circulating that women were simply not allowed in the camps at all and that a “No Guns, No Liquor, No Women” rule applied.

Caroline Peters—the member of Anchorage Women’s Liberation who joined the Alaska Plan Policy Board—jumped into the fray. Peters formed a new organization,
“Better Jobs for Alaska Women,” in October of 1973 amidst concerns that the Alaska Plan was not including women. In anticipation of the 1974 construction season, she attended public meetings about pipeline job opportunities and pressured Alyeska to remove barriers to women’s employment. Having been subject to the “no facilities” excuse before as a firefighter, Peters focused on this issue. She told the All-Alaska Weekly, in response to cases like Glenda Straube’s, “It is beyond my comprehension that a large, complex multi-million dollar organization such as Alyeska is having so much difficulty providing these facilities. Under the law, these facilities must be provided.” She drew attention to the many women who would be seeking employment and housing in the pipeline camps: qualified women seeking jobs, women currently in training to become surveyors, the predominantly female culinary workers’ union, and approximately one hundred women who had joined the teamsters and laborers’ unions.\(^5\)

To disbelief that women would want to work under harsh Alaskan conditions in construction, she argued, “The women want to work for the same reasons most of the men want to work—the jobs are high paying, you learn a skill that puts you in an employable market if you become an apprentice in a trade. And you enjoy the benefits and protection of working with union affiliation.”\(^6\)

The Alaska Plan did not assist women’s employment. The Plan did not address women as economic citizens that deserved or required “affirmative action,” above and beyond equal treatment, to help integrate them into traditionally male jobs, certainly not construction. The ideal of proportional representation was strictly reserved for minorities. The CHR’s framework stalled out at the level of a negative right to be free from discrimination. “Women’s rights” at the CHR referred to women having the


individual liberty to pursue whatever work they chose to, but it did not amount to a positive right to affirmative action to ensure they were employed equitably across industries and had the ability to earn a livelihood.

Glenda Straube and Caroline Peters made it clear that women wanted pipeline jobs and were ready to leverage the discourses of rights, equality, and discrimination in order to obtain them. Women applied the rights and equal opportunity frameworks of the Alaska Plan and the CHR to their own purposes. Straube and Peters framed their grievances in terms of equal treatment. They pointed out discrete instances where women were being treated differently than men. They claimed that women were being denied an opportunity to work in construction if they chose and that sex discrimination violated their individual liberties. Better Jobs for Alaska Women staked a claim to affirmative action for women, recommending a goal for the Alaska Plan of 800 women in construction, or 8% of the workforce.\(^7\) The recommendation did not go so far as to assert that women should be proportionally represented in construction or on the pipeline, but did conceptualize the gender integration of the industry as a group-based right. Peters proposed that women wanting to enter traditionally male jobs were “a tremendous social change all over the country.”\(^8\) Complaints of sex discrimination on the pipeline were firmly entrenched in the language of individual freedom and opportunity, and began pushing the boundaries of affirmative action for women.

A public meeting about discrimination on the pipeline held during the first construction season shows just how pervasive rights consciousness was, whether about race, sex, or local belonging. The Fairbanks branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People hosted a meeting in July 1974 to hear complaints of

\(^7\) Snapp, 1, 13.
\(^8\) Snapp, 1, 13.
The meeting brought together a host of government and private players in pipeline employment. The state legislature, the CHR, local unions, Green Construction Company (a major contractor for Alyeska), the Alaska DOL, and the Pipeline Compliance Office all had representatives at the meeting. Workers who felt they had experienced discrimination on the job or in the pipeline camps recounted their experiences. An African American teamster foreman, for instance, explained that he was unfairly terminated after a white Operating Engineer foreman would not allow him to inspect a truck, and the conflict escalated into a shouting match. A cook’s helper was harassed by her supervisor, who kept touching her and following her to her room. When she resisted, he assigned her to less desirable work on the night shift as punishment. When she asked for a lock on her door, she was told male workers did not have locks on their doors. Given that her supervisor was also her union steward, she had no way to complain to the union. The teamsters’ agent complained about hiring from “Outside” to the disadvantage of Alaskans. All the participants spoke of their experiences in terms of “harassment” and “discrimination.”

In 1975, several women of the Culinary Workers Union in Fairbanks filed a complaint with the Alaska Human Rights Commission, claiming that at times the union had refused to refer women and minorities to service jobs on the pipeline, or sent whites or men at the request of employers. One woman, after being called for up a position, was told by a union official that it must be filled by a man. She later received a second call, only to be told that there were no facilities for women. A man below her on the list was then dispatched to fill the same job. Another woman was told that only men would be called off the list for three positions, because the company had requested men only. Yet another woman was told by a union official that the union had to comply when an
employer made specific requests. The complaint charged further that pipeline experience was a factor included in the A, B, C, and D list system at the hiring hall, and therefore past refusals to dispatch women to pipeline jobs were compounded, and the list system perpetuated sex discrimination.

A union representative, Merrill “Whitey” Weir, denied that the union discriminated against women, but admitted that at one time it had specified that some jobs were male only. He claimed that the Culinary Workers had the highest minority membership in the state, at least 35%, and was the first union to send women to the North Slope. The Culinary Workers Union did in fact have a high minority and female membership. It was not included in the Alaska Plan because it was not a construction trade, so it was not held to any specific goals or timetables for its minority membership. This case is an example of where affirmative action’s focus on increasing numbers might not touch particular forms sex or race discrimination in segregated or female-dominated industries. Weir could claim the union was progressive with high membership of women and minorities, yet still have discriminatory practices. He claimed the complaints had no basis and were made by people disgruntled about not getting a job of the pipeline.

The Commission determined that "it is the Union's clear statutory duty to follow non-discriminatory referral practices regardless of contractor requests." Failing to reach a resolution with the union out of court, the commission filed a suit against the union Fairbanks Superior Court resulting in a restraining order for the union to cease discriminatory practices. The union then legally challenged the HRC’s jurisdiction over

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9 Diane Simmons, "Culinary pot Boils In and Out of Court," All-Alaska Weekly, 4 April 1975.
11 Simmons.
12 Ibid.
the issue, but was defeated. HRC was allowed jurisdiction over the case, which was given class action status, and the union was ordered to comply with a subpoena to share its records with the HRC. In September 1977, two years after the women had first approached the HRC and several months after pipeline construction was already completed, the union and the commission reached a conciliation agreement meant to settle all claims of sex discrimination against the union. The first provision would be that the union would comply with state laws against discrimination and make job referrals without regard to sex. Further, the union would inform all employers and job seekers using the hiring hall that the union cannot accept requests on the basis of sex. The union and commission agreed to a claims process by which women who experienced discrimination could receive lost wages and benefits. These included women who had the requisite number of work hours but were not placed on the “A” or “B” list and women who were passed over for jobs because of a “male only” call. The union would run a large notice in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner announcing the settlement and inviting women to send written claims to the Human Rights Commission. Each claim would be evaluated by a neutral examiner, and required evidence such as witnesses and written documentation that the woman was at the hiring hall, able to work, and missed an opportunity due to discrimination.

14 Niel Thomas, Executive Director, Alaska State Commission for Human Rights vs. Hotel, Motel, Restaurant, Construction Camp Employees and Bartender’ Union, Local 879, Conciliation Agreement, 30 September 1977, box 6, folder II.156, Alaska Public Interest Research Group Records, Archives, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage.
Alyeska Responds

Alyeska’s community relations representative was relieved that the liberal-leaning All-Alaska Weekly downplayed the story about the NAACP’s discrimination meeting. He wrote to his colleagues, “We were lucky, because its the kind of piece (the editor) usually banners on the front page.”  

Oil companies in Alaska had used public relations since the 1960s to foster an image of being environmentally friendly, good employers who benefited local and national interests. The Alyeska public relations department kept track of stories about Glenda Straube, Caroline Peters, and the NAACP and circulated memos debating how to respond. Alyeska moved quickly to counteract the damage of bad publicity. The accusations of sex discrimination caught Alyeska with no affirmative action plan or clear policies on women’s employment. With the new federal affirmative action regulations drafted and publicized, Alyeska certainly had an idea of what would be expected. But, perhaps lulled by the leisurely pace at which the DOI was making the new Federal Code, the company was surprised by the immediate demand for equal employment opportunity for women. Alyeska had to quickly change its practices, clarify its policies, create new personnel positions, and consistently communicate to all of its contractors.

First, Alyeska moved to make a policy statement for its contractors to abide by and publicize. Glenn Lundell, Alyeska’s Manager of Manpower Resources brought the sex discrimination complaints to the attention of Peter DeMay, the Vice President of Project Management. He wrote in a memo, “Increasing pressure is being received from women’s organizations, and women individually, regarding employment opportunities. One of the major difficulties is that it seems our contractors in the past have been telling

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16 Berry, The Alaska Pipeline, 88.
women applicants they cannot hire them because Alyeska will not allow women in the camps.” Lundell drafted a policy statement on women in pipeline camps and recommended Alyeska distribute it to all contractors in order to avoid liability if women began pursuing complaints formally. The statement stood to correct the “misunderstanding” and asserted that “Alyeska does not have a policy of excluding women from field site jobs.” However, the statement also reflected Alyeska’s naiveté around the issue. It assumed that women would only be coming to the camps to work in “clerical or administrative positions,” not in male dominated jobs. It did not commit to any steps to promote equal employment opportunity for women; it only indicated that women would be accommodated in camps if needed. It was an extremely minimal statement of nondiscrimination that hardly anticipated the extensive affirmative action plan to come.\(^\text{17}\) DeMay agreed that “Every effort must be made to correct Alyeska’s overall posture.”\(^\text{18}\) He issued the statement to all of Alyeska’s contractors.

Next, Alyeska changed Lundell’s position from Manager of Manpower Resources to Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. Lundell would be in charge of affirmative action at Alyeska and of ensuring contractors were also practicing equal employment opportunity. While the federal regulations were still pending, Alyeska wrote a preliminary affirmative action plan. It was not reviewed or approved by the Department of the Interior, but it was necessary insurance since discrimination was becoming a defining issue on the pipeline. The brief, two-page plan committed to nondiscrimination and to awarding contracts to minority owned businesses, but offered no concrete goals or timetables. Only a small percentage of workers would be employed


directly by Alyeska (and those would be office and managerial jobs), because subcontractors would do almost all hiring for construction jobs. Therefore, Alyeska’s first draft of an affirmative action plan amounted to little more than passing the buck to its subcontractors to individually submit affirmative action plans to Alyeska for approval and oversight. Every contractor was required to become a signatory to the Alaska Plan, per an agreement with the Secretary of the Interior, fulfill Section 28 of the Right-of-Way agreement about equal employment opportunity, and comply with federal antidiscrimination laws. The only quantified goal laid out as of yet was for Native Hire, which had been established by the Secretary of the Interior as early as 1969. Alyeska promised that it, and its contractors, would provide 1,000 job training or employment opportunities to Alaska Natives in the first year of the project, and 3,500 opportunities over its duration. Alyeska would oversee the recruitment and placement of Alaska Natives, while contractors would be required to cooperate with on the job training for Alaska Natives. To accompany the draft affirmative action plan, Alyeska assembled a list of thirty minority owned businesses in Anchorage, Fairbanks, rural Alaska, and (a few) outside of Alaska that contractors could consider for work on the pipeline.¹⁹ The initial plan was a far cry from what would be required by the DOI in the coming year. Alyeska’s urgency in composing an affirmative action plan in response to sex discrimination complaints signaled that, for corporations, the best defense was a good offense. Affirmative action was the best proof of nondiscrimination, and became the very definition of equal employment opportunity.

With a plan in place, however preliminary, and designated personnel to oversee equal employment opportunity at Alyeska, the company redoubled its communication

and publicity efforts. E.L. Patton, the President of Alyeska, issued a company-wide memo that was much firmer than DeMay’s initial “clarification” memo to contractors. It read, “recent complaints indicate the subject of equal employment needs to be brought most directly to your individual attention.” Patton rehearsed the legal imperatives for equal opportunity, warning that “recent claims of discrimination in employment resulting in payment of very substantial monetary judgments and settlements by the employers involved, emphasize that meticulous compliance with these laws is imperative.” He reminded the recipients that the EEOC had recently been empowered to sue in its own name, and that the agreements governing the pipeline required the companies to set and uphold affirmative action goals, or risk the loss of the right-of-way permit. He indicated that the best strategy was to prevent complaints and extra scrutiny before they began: “The expense, time and effort of responding to various compliance agencies can be vastly reduced by insuring an absolute minimum of complaints of discrimination or anything less than complete, serious adherence to our internal affirmative action plan.” The memo instructed contractors in the seriousness of the issue and publicly declared Alyeska’s commitment to equal employment opportunity. Patton closed the memo, “I have, by personal pledge, committed to a course of affirmative action to achieve equal employment opportunity.”  

Next, DeMay requested a report of accommodations for women in existing camps, plans for accommodations in new camps yet to be built, and how and at what cost existing camps could be modified to make provisions for women. Alyeska had not taken into account that women might live alongside men in the pipeline camps, as no accommodations had been made for women when the camps were built. The existing

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camps consisted of barracks, offices, recreational areas, cafeterias, and bathrooms with no differentiation by sex. Johnson determined, according to state law, that all that was needed to accommodate women were separate bathrooms. Each camp was designed a bit differently, and would require different solutions to the problem. The bottom line was that each of the eleven camps could house up to six women for a cost of $42,000. In new camps, the bathrooms in each of the barracks would simply be partitioned so that men and women would have separate washrooms. The offices and recreational facilities would all have two bathrooms. Existing camps were more of a problem, as individual barracks would need to be dedicated to women workers, leading to a problem of underutilization. For instance, if only a few women lived at the camp, they would still occupy a 20 bed unit. To solve the problem of existing offices and recreational areas only having one bathroom, locks would be provided, essentially turning them into single occupancy restrooms. Alyeska planned to make the renovations as they became necessary.

Alyeska publicized all of these measures. When newspapers ran stories about Glenda Straube and Caroline Peters, they were immediately followed with a story about how Alyeska was providing facilities for women and had a policy of equal opportunity for women. Public pressure from women, the risk of litigation, and impending federal laws triggered Alyeska to take action to remove barriers to equal opportunity employment for women before federal regulations went into effect.

A Second Chance for the Alaska Plan

Since the Alaska Plan was approved and the Alaska Plan Policy Board was formed in 1972, the All-Alaska Weekly reported, the Alaska Plan “had been sitting on the shelf collecting dust.” Without financial or political support, the Alaska Plan was left nearly unimplemented. A Republican State Senator from Galena, John Sackett, successfully mustered renewed support for the plan in the state legislature in June 1974. He convinced the Senate finance committee to appropriate $100,000 for the Alaska Plan. Sackett used the momentum of the Local Hire controversy to give the Alaska Plan another chance. He argued that “too many Texans” were being hired on the pipeline, misleadingly conflating the Alaska Plan with hiring preference for Alaskan residents. The financing enabled the Alaska Plan to open a new office in Fairbanks with two field coordinators for six months (in addition to the original office in Anchorage) in August.

The Alaska Plan received another boost when the Department of the Interior released its new guidelines for affirmative action on federally authorized projects in September 1974. The regulations affirmed preexisting hometown plans as a baseline for affirmative action goals. The regulations also instructed the Alaska Plan to set new, expedited goals and to set goals for women, since approval of the pipeline would mean more job opportunities that could be opened up to women and minorities. The goal for minorities remained 28%, but at to be achieved at a faster pace than the original seven

year plan. The new goal for women was 7.4% for each craft over five years.\textsuperscript{28} The Alaska Plan had greater weight now that it was supported by federal requirements for affirmative action.

Public officials trying to enforce antidiscrimination and make affirmative action work in earnest were not optimistic, however. The director of the Alaska Plan, Frank Bailey, resigned on September 23, 1974, as the first season of pipeline construction was winding down. He made a statement expressing his frustration, “It’s just too damn discouraging that no one wants to cooperate; no one ever works as fast as they could for more minorities and no two agencies have ever given me the same answer as to what is going on in Alaska relative to minority hire.” Bill Vaudrin, director of the Commission for Human Rights, followed suit three days later for similar reasons. He told the Associated Press, “Most unions, contractors, and state people are just trying to protect themselves. They’re not out to hire minorities.” Vaudrin was also frustrated with lack of funding and staff to handle the sharp increase in cases since the pipeline began. At the time of his resignation, the CHR had a backlog for 207 complaints related to the pipeline and had only taken one case to court.\textsuperscript{29} The modicum of funding and authority the Alaska Plan received in 1974 seemed like too little, too late. One construction season of the three-year project had already slipped by.

The two officials’ resignations brought more attention and scrutiny to affirmative action and the Alaska Plan. The resignations coincided with the fever pitch over Local Hire and the accusations against Alyeska of discriminating against women and minorities. A legislative committee was formed to assess employment on the pipeline,

\textsuperscript{28} Bailiwick: Feminists in Hard Hats, 1975, directed by Frank Herriott, produced by Sue Pittman, film, 28:45 minutes. Originally aired on KUAC. Courtesy Seattle Municipal Archives.

\textsuperscript{29} Mim Dixon and Georgina Herron, Impact Information Center Special report: Minority Hire and Alaska Hire on the Pipeline, 1 February 1975, Folder: DC 4r-Local Hire News releases and General Corres. 72-75, Box: 2848, Series: 369, Record Group 07, Department of Labor Office of the Commissioner Subject Files 1942-1980, Alaska State Archives, Juneau, 8.
specifically the status of programs for minority, female, Alaska Native, and Alaskan resident hiring. The resignations increased the likelihood that the US DOL might determine that the Alaska Plan was not working and decide to impose a mandatory federal plan. The one thing officials, contractors, and unions could agree on in Alaska was that they did not want a federally imposed plan and were unified in trying to buy more time for the plan to work. At the hearings, the role of the Alaska Plan office came into question. Republican Speaker of the House Tom Fink questioned Junior Ramos (the interim director of the Alaska Plan after Bailey’s resignation) about what the field coordinators actually did. Ramos responded that they interviewed minority applicants and tried to place them in jobs. Fink asked, “Do you think it is your job to act as an employment agency?” Ramos agreed, that yes, for the time being the Alaska Plan office was primarily trying to place the unemployed in jobs.\textsuperscript{30} The Alaska Plan—even with more federal force behind it—was still falling back on the manpower model rather than embracing the responsibility of affirmative action.

The hearings resulted in a renewed vision for the Alaska Plan, but one that would greatly collapse affirmative action with the objectives of Local Hire. The new intention for Alaska Plan office was for it to be folded into the Pipeline Coordinator’s office to consolidate state enforcement of equal employment opportunity, presumably for both Local Hire and minority hiring under the Alaska Plan. A six person staff would work with Alyeska to implement the programs. The CHR and the Alaska Department of Labor would only step in to address complaints or problems, as a last line of defense if discrimination or violations of the law did occur. The legislature funded the office and its staff with $148,000, under the agreement that Alyeska would reimburse the state for

these costs. The new plan virtually put employment regulation in the oil industry’s hands and dissolved the Alaska Plan as a distinct affirmative action plan implemented by a coalition of Alaskan interests. But even this new plan stalled. The CHR and Alaska DOL were awaiting new appointments under Jay Hammond, the new Republican governor. The CHR, Alaska DOL, and pipeline coordinator Chuck Champion had to agree on procedures.\textsuperscript{31} Alyeska constrained the use of funding to enforcement only on the pipeline. The Pipeline Coordinator’s office continued with its work, primarily around environmental violations, but employment monitoring and enforcement of the Alaska Plan and Local Hire fell off of the Coordinator’s agenda.\textsuperscript{32} While the Alaska DOL attempted to fill in the gap of enforcing Local Hire (as we saw in chapter 3), the Alaska Plan was left with almost no regulatory infrastructure.

**Expansion of Federal Regulation**

Since fall of 1973, Alyeska had awaited instruction from the Department of the Interior for how to implement affirmative action. The new federal guidelines were not issued until September of 1974. The DOI seized on the mandate of the Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act to impose an unprecedented level of equal employment opportunity regulation on Alyeska and future projects that required federal authorization. Comments submitted to the DOI challenged this expansion of authority at every turn;\textsuperscript{33} the Department, in response stood by its expansion of powers. One


\textsuperscript{32} Joe LaRocca, ”Pipeline Coordinator's Annual Report,” Spring 1975, Folder: DC 4r-Local Hire News releases and General Corres. 72-75, Box: 2848, Series: 369, Record Group 07, Department of Labor Office of the Commissioner Subject Files 1942-1980, Alaska State Archives, Juneau.

\textsuperscript{33} The Federal Register does not specify who issued which comments to the Department of the Interior, but it is clear most represented the input of oil developers and contractors, while some were reactions from
comment argued that the TAPS Authorization Act did not require active inclusion of certain groups, just prohibited intentional exclusion. The DOI responded that it interpreted the Act to require “provisions to assure affirmative action to cause nondiscriminatory practices.” The DOI unequivocally required affirmative action, rather than leaving discrimination prohibitions as the only measures for creating equal opportunity. The DOI used the existing affirmative action requirements for federal contractors as a model for applicants’ (for federal authorization) requirements. This model consisted of submitting an affirmative action plan to the Department, complying with reporting requirements, and cooperating with periodic reviews. The new regulations specified that applicants create affirmative action plans covering all aspects of employment, including “recruitment advertising, hiring, firing, up-grading, promotion, demotion, or transfer, layoff, or terminations, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, or benefits, selection for training, or apprenticeship, use of facilities, treatment of employees or any other employment practice.” They also specified—in a move commenters would argue exceeded existing demands on federal contractors—that applicants create affirmative action plans for contracting with minority and women-owned business in subcontracts.

The regulations included women in affirmative action in both employment and contracting practices. Commenters protested that there were rarely complaints of sex discrimination in contracting, therefore affirmative action should not be required for making contracts with women-owned businesses. The DOI held its ground. The Department agreed that federal demands should not exceed those of preexisting “hometown” plans. But, because the Alaska Plan, at the behest of the Department of proponents of affirmative action.
Labor, included an allowance that goals and timetables would be increased if the pipeline were built, the DOI had free license to add additional requirements to the Alaska Plan. The DOI specifically indicated that it would add goals for women in construction and expedite the goals of the Alaska Plan.

Commenters also requested that the DOI designate a hiring source for contractors to turn to in the event they found their workforce lacking in minority representation. They suggested that if labor unions were unable to provide qualified applicants, the State of Alaska Employment Office be given the opportunity to fill vacancies. The DOI declined to add this procedure to the regulations, as federal antidiscrimination law had never before designated specific sources of employees. Yet, the request reveals something about how private industry hoped to cope with affirmative action and how different preferential hiring plans approached the task of integrating the work force. The oil industry saw affirmative action as a manpower problem. It hoped that social services by the state could provide minority workers to fulfill affirmative action commitments. Alyeska’s reassignment of Glenn Lundell from Manager of Manpower Resources to Equal Employment Opportunity Officer demonstrates this same tendency to think in terms of how to find desirable workers in the labor market to meet the needs of the project. Affirmative action increased the demand for minorities and women in the workforce and companies sought institutions that would supply minority and female workers to meet the goals.

**Affirmative Action Goes to Washington**

Alyeska had sixty days to draft an affirmative action plan and submit it to the DOI for approval. DOI designated Patricia Mayo (who participated in the Alaska job development conference of the late 1960s, served as an advisor the Alaska Plan, and was...
a member of Anchorage Women’s Liberation) as the federal contract compliance officer for Alaska. She and a staff of twelve people met in Anchorage to work out how the new federal regulations would be implemented. As Mayo put it, their job was to “(resolve) issues of a law that has never been in operation before.” Because pipeline construction was already underway and debates over discrimination and employment practices captured public attention, all eyes were on Alyeska. Local and national attention was focused on how equal employment opportunity programs, including Local Hire, Alaska Native Hire, and the Alaska Plan, were faring in their first year of the project. The two months in late fall 1974 that Alyeska spent working out an affirmative action plan was yet another opportunity for interest groups and state actors to try to shape the objectives and practices for pipeline employment. In their efforts, they once again felt the tensions between Local Hire and affirmative action. Just as Local Hire had diverted hiring goals for Alaska Natives and minorities to give hiring preference to all Alaskan residents, affirmative action now threatened to circumvent Local Hire.

In October, Representative Parren J. Mitchell, an African American Democrat from Maryland, accused both Alyeska and the DOI of denying black businessmen the opportunity to compete for pipeline contracts. He claimed that the Department was guilty of “delay, evasion, and duplicity” by stalling for months in issuing affirmative action guidelines and not consulting minority Congressmen for input. He thought the guidelines were too soft because they did not set any quotas for use of minority contractors. He disbelieved Alyeska’s claim to have already awarded $44 million in minority contracts, and argued that only a small fraction of that sum trickled down to

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minority sub-contractors. Mitchell called for Congressional hearings, and failing that, an investigation by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.\(^{35}\)

The Senate Interior Committee responded by holding a meeting in Washington D.C. to consider the accusations. The meeting coincided with the series of hearings about pipeline employment held in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Valdez by the Alaska State Legislature. Alyeska representatives denied the company was discriminatory, offering that 71 contracts, worth a total of $52.2 million had already been awarded to minority firms, 48 of which were Alaska Native, two of which were African American, none of which were Latino. The black and Latino businessmen took this as evidence that Alyeska’s practices were indeed discriminatory. Republican Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska accused the minority businessmen of trying to “beat out” Alaska Natives for contracts. He further insisted that, “Alaskans come first,” meaning that preference for Alaskan contractors should come before affirmative action for minorities on a national scale. The minority businessmen disagreed, arguing that because the project crossed federal lands, it should be open to all minority firms in the U.S.\(^{36}\)

The hearings found that affirmative action was already undermining Local Hire in employment. Minorities living in urban areas or outside of Alaska were having an easier time getting pipeline jobs than rural Alaska Natives. The geographic and cultural barriers Alaska Natives encountered coming from villages and predominately subsistence lifestyles across Alaska amounted to greater obstacles than the racism minorities living in Anchorage or out of state might experience. The President of the Alaska Federation of Labor, Dwayne Carlson, testified to the logistical barriers unions and contractors faced in trying to recruit Alaska Natives, and exhibited the prejudice the

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construction industry had towards indigenous people. He explained that, “We’ve never been set up, and we never will be ... to house, to feed, but more important, to handle them socially. Now what do they do on weekends, in their spare time?” This attitude resulted in unions and contractors competing for urban minorities already acculturated to mainstream employment in order to meet affirmative action goals. Carlson admitted, “Everybody now is competing for the minority in the metropolitan areas. Every employer is trying to hire him.”

This particular discrimination against Alaska Natives fueled animosity against outsiders and the sense of competition for jobs amongst minority groups. One person claimed African Americans had come to Alaska from San Francisco “by the plane full” to be hired on the pipeline. Another expressed concern that affirmative action was failing Alaska Natives while giving minorities from “outside” an advantage in the labor market: “When a minority comes up from Montana that is a resident and a college student going to school in Montana, he is not a resident here and his minority as far as I’m concerned, does not even exist in this state. I was raised up here and a lot of my friends are out of work that are Indians of Alaska.” The Anchorage Daily Times, however, supported Local Hire above all else, editorializing, "As far as we’re concerned, Alaska workers are a minority of their own--native, white, black or whatever--and after they get jobs, then we can consider solving the ailments of the rest of the country." The Alaska Plan had certainly experienced opposition in Alaska, but in theory it was always compatible with and even a support for Local Hire and Alaskan economic protectionism. When affirmative action on the trans Alaska pipeline became a national

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37 Calkin, 20.
38 Calkin, 21.
39 Calkin, 20.
issue directly overseen by the federal government, however, it triggered another set xenophobic animosities.

**Alyeska’s First Plan**

On November 23, 1974, just within the requisite sixty days since federal guidelines were established, Alyeska submitted its first affirmative action plan for contracting practices to the Secretary of the Interior. In the introduction the plan, Alyeska emphasized the new and expanded level of federal regulation that brought about the plan. It said, “Never before has a privately constructed, privately financed project been regulated with respect to those who may participate in the construction activity.”

The introduction laid out the purpose of the plan as compliance with Section 403, Title II of the Trans Alaska Pipeline Authorization Act and "to provide maximum participation to minority business enterprises" in activities related to the pipeline. It emphasized that the plan was result oriented, designed to bring about awarding a significant amount of contracts to minority and women owned firms.

The primary mechanism Alyeska proposed for ensuring minority and women owned businesses won contracts was a two part process of identifying and collecting information about such businesses, then distributing information to help those businesses gain equal opportunity to the bidding process. *Alyeska Reported* it had “mounted a major campaign” by reaching out to minority business associations and government agencies to identify minority owned firms all over the country. It screened 5,500 potential firms and sorted them as either having a potential to do business with

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42 Ibid, 1.
Alyeska or not. Of these thousands, only 300 were placed in the “potential” category. Based on statistics gathered by the Department of Commerce in 1969, the vast majority of minority owned businesses were too small (72% reported no paid employees and the average number of employees was four), in areas irrelevant to pipeline work (approximately two thirds), or in a location that could not serve Alaska.43

In 1969, 4.3% of all business in the United States were minority owned, while .7% of all business receipts went to minority owned firms. Alyeska argued that in setting a goal for minority contracts on the pipeline, it would be reasonable to aim for 4.3% (as minority business organization had requested) in order to bring the amount of business received up to the proportion of minority owned businesses. Except, Alyeska claimed, minority business were not “generally of the same size and capacity of non-minority business.” The trans Alaska pipeline faced unique obstacles to employing minority firms because it required tools and facilities that were specialized and on a large scale.44

Alyeska arrived at the goal of $115 million dollars to minority businesses, which was under 2% of the $6 billion dollar budget. The justification for this figure was that the amount of contracts actually potentially available to minority firms was only $2.5 billion (after subtracting work and materials not capable of being performed or provided by small businesses, such as line pipe, construction equipment, and terminal berthing facilities). 4.2% of that much smaller budget was just under the $115 figure,45 a sleight of hand that made Alyeska appear to cooperate with minority activists’ demands.

Moreover, Alyeska used a fuzzy logic to claim that it had already awarded $58 million dollars to minority and women owned firms. “Ownership” was not a straightforward concept, as businesses frequently had multiple owners, and ownership

43 Ibid, 4-5.
44 Ibid, 5-7.
did not necessarily correspond with having control or decision making influence in the operation of the business. If 50% or more of the business was “owned or controlled” by a minority, 100% was credited towards Alyeska’s goal. Joint ventures, in which more than one business entered into a temporary partnership to bid on and perform a job, could also count towards minority contracts. In these situations involving a minority firm, Alyeska would determine a percentage of the contract to be credited. Employing a firm with a minority individual as stakeholder could then count towards Alyeska’s affirmative action goal, but it was not at all clear how well this corresponded to concrete minority participation (or profit) in constructing the pipeline.46

On December 10, 1974 the Department of the Interior’s Office of Equal Opportunity rejected both the contracting practices and employment practices portions of Alyeska’s proposed affirmative action plan.47 Dissatisfied with the first affirmative action plan, and alleging unfair contracting practices on the pipeline, the Minority Enterprise Task Force held a demonstration, coordinated in four different cities, in protest. The protestors picketed Bechtel, ARCO, and Exxon. The protest did not have the support of minority contractors in Alaska.48 Alyeska had until the end of January 1975 to submit a new plan.

**Alyeska’s Final Affirmative Action Plan**

Alyeska’s first component of the affirmative action plan was an employment application process that supposedly eliminated discrimination by simply assessing the skills required for any given job. Applicants would indicate their race and sex on the

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46 Ibid, 5-6.
47 Dixon, 54.
application so that Alyeska could determine the composition of the applicant pool and track the rate of hiring for women and minorities. In other words, it was not a “color-blind” process but one that actively monitored the sex and race of applicants.\(^4^9\) Second, Alyeska committed to increasing the skills of its current employees to allow them to advance through on-the-job training or acceptance at skill centers or educational institutions. The plan touted that Alyeska had already sent 10 clerical employees to Anchorage for training. Alyeska would identify candidates for additional training and promotion, relying on state-run vocational skills centers, community colleges, and universities.\(^5^0\)

Glenn Lundell, director of the equal employment opportunity program for Alyeska, joined the Alaska State Manpower Services Council and the Greater Anchorage Borough Manpower Services Council—the two primary sponsors of CETA funding of manpower programs in Alaska. As CETA funded programs recruited, referred, trained, and transported workers, Alyeska would be there to advise what kinds of jobs were available. Alyeska also contracted directly with the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) to recruit and refer Alaska Natives for Alyeska jobs. The AFN subcontracted with four other Native organizations across the state (including the Fairbanks Native Association, though this contract would be dropped when the FNA received its own contract from the Alaska DOL to provide the same services) to run manpower programs feeding into the pipeline. These were actions that helped Native Hire, which also counted towards the affirmative action goals.

Alyeska promised to actively recruit minority and female employees by soliciting organizations that specifically served or represented women and minorities. Alyeska


\(^{50}\) “Alyeska EEO-Affirmative Action Plan,” 16.
would foster relationships with nongovernmental organizations, community organizations, Alaska Native corporations, government agencies, and private employment agencies in order to recruit minority and women workers. The affirmative action plan compiled an extensive list of nongovernmental organizations that might be sources of female and minority employees, including Native associations across the state, Filipino organizations, the NAACP, the Urban League, Better Jobs for Alaska Women (the organization founded by Caroline Peters), and the National Association of Women in Construction (NAWIC). Alyeska and its contractors cast a wide net to recruit from organizations outside of Alaska. They maintained contact with the national offices of organizations that also had branches in Alaska, like the NAACP, Urban League, and NAWIC. Bechtel wrote to the Washington D.C.-based organization, Wider Opportunities for Women (WOW). Bechtel's Manpower Services Department was hoping WOW would send back a list of women with resumes looking for work in engineering. In trying to meet affirmative action goals, Alyeska and its contractors turned to NGOs that already had systems of referral and membership lists of minority and women workers. Prior to affirmative action, the pipeline construction industry had relied on unions, foremen, and the mobility of workers to fulfill its “manpower” requirements, and required very little recruitment efforts. Affirmative action forced the industry to seek out new sources of labor to meet the goals for hiring women and minorities.

When it came to goals and time tables, Alyeska’s affirmative action plan was far less ambitious than the Alaska Plan. The Alaska Plan’s formula for determining goals was simply based on the percentage of minorities across the general population of

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Alaska. The Alyeska affirmative action plan, however, marshaled a complex set of data to decipher “reasonable targets” for employment. The plan included nearly 30 pages of charts analyzing demographics, the labor force, unemployment, and job classifications. The Alyeska affirmative action plan was crafted less around the ideal of “proportional representation,” and more around the idea of “reasonable targets.” To determine a “reasonable target”, Alyeska took into consideration the current levels of minority or female employment in various job classifications, how many minorities and women were available to promote or transfer who already worked at Alyeska in some capacity, the number of women and minorities in their applicant pool, how many women and minorities were seeking employment in the area, and the size of unemployment in the area. Based on these compared factors, Alyeska took stock of where women and minorities were underrepresented in the company, to what degree, and their prospects for increased representation.

At the time the affirmative action plan was written, Alyeska had 360 total employees in 3 offices in Alaska, one office in California, one office in Washington state, and stationed in pipeline camps along the construction route. Because Alyeska hired Bechtel to manage the pipeline project, who in turn hired five major contractors to manage sections of the pipeline and innumerable subcontractors large and small for every facet of pipeline construction, Alyeska was the direct employer of only the smallest fraction of employees connected to the pipeline. The vast majority of Alyeska’s direct employees had nothing to do with construction. They were managers, professionals, and office workers. Alyeska’s analysis found that it had no women or minority employees at the level of officials and managers. In the professional category, 4% were (unspecified) minorities and 3% were women. In the technicians’ category, 4% were minorities and 21% were women. Office workers and clerks were 90% women and
21% minorities. Women and minorities were concentrated in lower skilled positions in the company.

Alyeska set numerical goals to make the workforce “reflect the race and sex distribution of the labor market.” This definition allowed Alyeska to take into consideration how many women and minorities were in the labor market that were qualified for various job categories—numbers for which there were no statistics. Alyeska made estimates based on how many women were enrolled in educational programs, and arrived at the conclusion that about 10-14% of the labor market consisted of women qualified for jobs at Alyeska. For minorities, Alyeska used percentages that were close to the overall proportion of minorities in the general population. Therefore, in real terms, goals for Alaska Natives were the most ambitious, goals for other minorities were modest but in keeping with the proportion in the population, and goals for women were far below proportional representation. Over the coming year, Alyeska planned to increase the percentage of minorities in the managers and officials job category by 6%, and by 2% for women. In numbers this meant one or two minorities and one or two women. For professionals, Alyeska would hire about 7 to 9 people in each category (minorities, women, and Alaska Natives). According to Alyeska’s math, the company already had significant numbers of women and minorities in technicians and office positions and therefore needed no goals in that area. The way that Alyeska tied its goals to the current state of the labor market meant that the goals reflected the current reality of the sex and race composition of the workplace—including sexual and racial divisions of labor—than it reflected a vision for a fully integrated workplace.

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54 Ibid, 53.
Conclusion

Equal employment opportunity on the trans Alaska pipeline seemed to be unprecedented in many ways. The federal government created new laws to specifically ensure that the private project would have plans for affirmative action, making the pipeline the first non-federal contractor to have affirmative action on a multi-billion dollar scale. The federal requirements made hiring goals for women in the construction industry—a change from the exclusively male Philadelphia Plan and hometown affirmative action plans from the early 1970s. Affirmative action on the pipeline attracted national attention and debate over what priorities would define equal employment opportunity on the historic project.

Yet, affirmative action on the pipeline was ultimately weak compared to the hype it generated. Affirmative action was a year late going into effect, meaning one third of the project passed by before Alyeska and its contractors had specific goals. Affirmative action for the vast majority of employment on the pipeline was left to Alyeska’s managing contractors, Bechtel and Flour, and their subcontractors. Unlike Alyeska, who was in direct agreement with the U.S. and State of Alaska governments, the contractors and subcontractors were not under the direct oversight of the Department of the Interior and federal and state regulatory agencies. Alyeska approved their individual affirmative action plans and wrote compliance requirements into the contracts. Most of pipeline employment, and all pipeline employment concentrated in construction trades subject to the Alaska Plan, were one or two contractors removed from government oversight. Alyeska—exempt from the Alaska Plan—used rationales in its affirmative action plan that resulted in minimal objective increases in minority and women employees. Unlike Alaska Native Hire, affirmative action in the private sector did not match up to preexisting social services, NGO constituencies, and state funding.
structures that could fulfill the demands created by affirmative action goals. Affirmative action triggered backlash and xenophobia in its clash with Local Hire. Given these setbacks, it is likely the practices and policies of affirmative action had only a small material impact on employment opportunities on the pipeline.

That is not to say that the pipeline was not a site for a significant advancement in equal employment opportunity as a national priority, rights discourse, and set of corporate, government, and union practices. The threat of litigation and forecast of increased government regulation was enough for Alyeska to address specific barriers to opportunity before having an affirmative action plan. When public relations were a significant factor in oil companies’ future in Alaska and the nation, individual workers were able to exercise influence through the media, often faster and more effectively than relying on government agencies for enforcement. The discourse and expectations generated by the Alaska Plan and affirmative action proved malleable and promiscuous, creating power behind equal employment opportunity even when affirmative action programs seemed to be institutionally flimsy.
5. Feminists in Hard Hats: Representing National Progress

In November 1975, women gathered in Fairbanks’ First Presbyterian Church at a meeting of the National Organization for Women (NOW). They were there for a special advance screening of a film produced by NOW and the local Public Broadcasting Service station entitled “Feminists in Hardhats.” The film documented a roundtable discussion with four women who worked in nontraditional jobs on the trans Alaska pipeline and lived in the pipeline camps. The film opened with a narrator (seated next to a red hard hat) explaining, “This is the first time the federal government has required construction goals for women” and introducing the obstacles and pressures women faced when they entered the construction trades. Caroline Peters, the former fire fighter and founder of Better Jobs for Alaska Women, served as the moderator. The women discussed how they negotiated being a minority among thousands of men and learning new skills in the middle of immense pressure to prove their abilities. They explained the roadblocks they encountered in hiring halls, apprenticeship programs, and workplaces on the way to finding jobs on the pipeline. Virginia Baim, a teamster and foreperson of a warehouse on the pipeline, concluded, “I think that without the EEO [equal employment opportunity], Human Rights Commission, and the Alaska Plan there would be no women on the pipeline.”

The tone of Feminists in Hard Hats was celebratory. Even though the women had to overcome barriers to entry and encountered sexism on the job, they seemed to feel that women on the pipeline had already conquered the most significant hurdle just by breaking into formerly all-male jobs. They were confident the law and the state

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apparatus to enforce it were on their side. They also saw their struggles and accomplishments in terms of a larger women’s movement. Virginia Baim described what she saw as the most important benefits of working her job on the pipeline, “The feelings of our own strength, our abilities to handle things, the fantastic reward of being able to relate to men, finally, on a relatively equal basis.” These dividends, in Baim’s opinion, came from undertaking nontraditional jobs as a feminist project. She said, “The only way you are going to get that is if you approach it from a feminist aspect.”

The National Organization of Women seized on the image of women in hardhats to represent the women’s movement, but the organization did not invent that image. Stories and images of women workers on the trans Alaska pipeline were used to different effect by the Alyeska Company’s public relations, the mass media, and the women’s movement. As we saw in previous chapters, Alyeska faced a public relations crisis at the very outset of construction. Charges that the company was discriminating against women, minorities, and local Alaskans received significant media attention. These charges resulted in an investigation of pipeline employment by the Alaska Department of Labor, then a series of hearings in the state legislature that turned into national deliberations over affirmative action and Local Hire on the pipeline. The pipeline received more media attention that blighted Alyeska’s image beyond the issues of employment. Extended articles in Playboy and Rolling Stone magazines painted the Alaska pipeline as a place of debauchery where prostitution, drug use, and gambling ran rampant. Facing high levels of public scrutiny and government regulation—perhaps the highest a private construction company had ever had to contend with—Alyeska developed sophisticated public relations responses, particularly in representing

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3 Bailiwick: Feminists in Hard Hats.
women on the pipeline. Alyeska maneuvered a dramatic shift in public perception about employment on the pipeline by making women construction workers on the pipeline an object of cultural fascination and a symbol of women’s progress in the American workplace. These representations disseminated across the national media landscape. The New York Times profiled women in nontraditional jobs “earning good pay in a man’s world.”\textsuperscript{5} Cosmopolitan magazine called the Alaska pipeline an “800-mile freedom trail” for adventurous women realizing their dreams on the Last Frontier.\textsuperscript{6} The women’s movement then spotlighted women on the pipeline as examples of concrete progress for women gaining economic opportunity.

This chapter asks why women on the pipeline were such relevant subjects during the 1970s and what they represented to different authors and audiences. I look at how the Alyeska Company generated an alternative set of narratives and images featuring women workers on the pipeline as a part of its public relations campaigns. I trace how these were reproduced and disseminated through other media channels that cast women who contributed to Western oil development in nontraditional jobs as productive national subjects who were also fulfilling the vision of the women’s movement. “\textit{Feminists in Hard Hats}” became a salient figure in public culture in the 1970s through the productive intersection of narratives about the women’s movement and national mythologies of the frontier.

\textbf{One of the Guys}

In the fall of 1974, the \textit{Fairbanks Daily News-Miner} ran a story about a 22-year old fuel tank driver on the trans Alaska pipeline on the cover of its weekly supplement on 

oil and resource development in the state. Jan Burson was the only woman teamster working at 5 Mile Camp, just north of the Yukon River and one hundred miles shy of the Arctic Circle. Burson drove a 2,800-gallon fuel tank around the worker camp for ten hours a day, refueling generators and equipment to keep it running. A photo of Burson standing by her truck accompanied the story under the headline, “Teamster Bosses Say Burson Girl Excellent Fuel Tank Driver.” The article focused on what a good job Burson was doing as the “only lady Teamster” in camp and her ability to get along with the other workers like “one of the guys.” For the News-Miner and other media that would publish a spate of similar stories over the course of pipeline construction, a woman working among men on the pipeline was newsworthy.7

The Fairbanks Daily News-Miner headline suggested Jan Burson was a significant news item because of her sex and her “excellent” job performance, but the article quickly made clear that a woman working a nontraditional job was the dominant angle of the story. In fact, it was because Burson was a woman that her work was seen as exceptional in the first place. Had she been a man, of course, the simple performance of her job would have passed unnoticed. The article invited the reader to consider the contrast between Burson and her all-male surroundings. In her photo, she was bundled up in a thick jumpsuit, gloves, and a hard hat as snow falls around her. The backdrop was of the cab and fuel tank of the truck, with details like funnels, hoses, and metal framing her portrait. This drew the viewer into seeking out clues to Burson’s gender: a label on her hard hat reading “JAN,” a bit of blonde hair peeking out from the hardhat, shaped eyebrows, and a slightly feminine silhouette visible in spite of the zippered suit.

Though she was singled out because she was a woman and the article capitalized on her difference as a source of interest, the main point of the story was to show how well Burson adapted to the male world of work. It opened, “Jan Burson doesn’t mind it a bit when someone calls her ‘one of the guys.’ In fact, (she) considers it a compliment, for that phrase signifies she’s been ‘accepted’ by the male Teamsters.” Her co-workers testified to the surprising fact that “she’s doing as good a job as a man could possibly do” and they would “like to see a lot of guys work as well as she does.” She worked the same hours and held to the same standard as the men. Burson adjusted so well to the job in just one month by learning some “rules” of construction work. “Number one rule is that just because you’re a woman, you can’t win other workers over to your side.” The number two rule, barely distinguishable from the first, was that “just because you’re a woman, you can’t put yourself on a pedestal.” The article implied that women tried to seek out special accommodation or treatment because of their sex. This suspicion against women as having a kind of undue advantage over male workers seemed oblivious to the more likely reality of workplace sex discrimination where women experienced exclusion, harassment, or higher performance expectations “just because” they were women. In this scenario, it was up to Burson to earn acceptance and avoid conflict by downplaying any sexual difference. She explained, “You’ve got to be ‘one of the guys’ to get along.”

Burson left a “sedate” secretarial position in Juneau to find a more “active” job on the pipeline with the opportunity to earn significantly more money. She described herself as someone who liked to be busy, whether working, skiing, or scuba diving. With her earnings, Burson hoped to purchase a sailboat, which she could live on while she finished her college degree in “environmental technology and marine biology” in

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8 Ibid.
Seattle. Her professional ambitions, and the evidence that she was on her way in pursuing them, with two years of college already under her belt, signaled that she was not a permanent addition to the Teamsters. She enjoyed the job, and said, “I am going to stay here as long as they will let me.” But this did not mean she was seeking a life long career in construction; it meant that she would make the most of a temporary opportunity, perhaps three years. Pipeline construction had a built in expiration date and was a means, “for the time being,” to a financial end. This allows the story to avoid the potential interpretation that Burson was displacing male workers in construction.9

Though Burson was the subject of the article, men held significant sway over what her work on the pipeline meant. The headline privileged what “teamster bosses” said over what the “Burson girl” did or said about her own actions. The article’s concern was as much about how men were accepting Burson as a fellow worker as it was about how Burson negotiated working in an all-male job classification. Other teamsters, identified by name and rank in the union, vouched to her “excellent” work; it was their testimony, rather than any comments by Burson, that proved she was good at her job. When explaining why she came to work on the pipeline, Burson said, “My boyfriend also encouraged me to come work on the pipeline.” He worked at another camp ninety miles north. Her reference to her boyfriend further validated her motivation for pursuing pipeline work and that she was welcomed by male workers. Perhaps more importantly, it signaled her heterosexual, monogamous attachment to a man, in effect shutting down any implication that she was as lesbian or sexually interested in the men she worked with. The long distance relationship—present but not part of daily camp life—helped ensure Burson’s status as “one of the guys.” These credentials were meant to prove her intent was not to attract men or bring sexuality into the workplace. Until

9 Ibid.
the 1970s, women were often barred from pipeline construction camps just like guns, alcohol, and drugs—the implication being that the only women who came to worker camps were prostitutes. As we saw in Chapter 4, the rumor that women were not allowed in pipeline camps galvanized the criticism against sex discrimination at Alyeska. Burson had to be drawn as a legitimate worker against the idea that women, as prostitutes, threatened the order of pipeline camps.10

The News-Miner article validated the presence of women in pipeline construction, going so far as to credit pipelining as an avenue for feminist progress, but under a very constrained set of conditions. Burson was making breadwinner wages while simultaneously breaking down the sexual division of labor and investing in her future of professional advancement. Her story was an answer to the women’s movement for equal employment opportunity. It was a warning that equality would cut both ways—if women wanted the same jobs and earnings as men, they would be held to the same standards and not be given protective treatment “just because” they were women. Burson’s acceptance and legitimacy as a worker still rested in the hands of men who dominated the unions and industry. It was their standards and work culture to which she had to adapt. Her acceptance hinged on her ability to seamlessly join the male workplace without making any new demands on it and performing a worker identity that negated the corruptive specter of prostitution. Furthermore, she remained a novel minority, and a temporary one at that. If Burson served as an example of the women’s movement’s success, that success might very well be capped at the few exceptional women working in an exceptional time and place.11

10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
Jan Burson was a prototype of a representation of women pipeline workers that would become widespread over the course of the trans Alaska pipeline project. Between 1974 and 1977, women workers—especially construction workers—on the pipeline, were regularly featured in newspapers, magazines, television, movies, photography, Alyeska’s public relations, and women’s movement materials. Like Burson, they became an object through which narratives about women’s progress, the nation, and the pipeline were spun. The *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*’s profile of Burson was a template for the many stories that would follow. Though women workers on the pipeline were used to convey a range of interpretations about gender and work in the 1970s, many elements showed consistency across authors, audiences and genres. First, they had an overwhelming focus on women moving into male-dominated spaces and jobs. They treated women breaking new ground in a “man’s world” as a new and novel phenomenon. Second, the stories emphasized the women’s individual ambitions trajectories, and results. The media was very interested in what motivated women to come to the pipeline, what they planned to do with their earnings, what they had left behind, and what future they imagined after pipeline work was over. They were less a look at structural forces remaking the labor market and opportunities than individualized profiles, interviews, and photographs. Third, the hardhat—or sometimes a truck, tool, or piece of equipment—became a signifier of this movement into male jobs. Women literally filled men’s hard hats when they entered blue-collar jobs. This represented the success of the women’s movement in America to create equal employment opportunities for women. The fourth feature of this type of profile was an emphasis on how women were received by male workers and their impact on gender relations in the workplace. Prostitutes—as the other kind of women the media were fascinated with in the Alaska pipeline boom—perpetually served as the counter example
to legitimate women workers. Descriptions of women workers were always an indirect address to the idea that women who entered the male world of work must be there to trade in sex. For Jan Burson, the resulting portrait was of a hardworking, exceptional, non-sexual woman who was fulfilling the aspirations of the women’s movement without permanently disrupting the male world of work.

**Women Tend to The Campfollower Family**

Alyeska’s public affairs department, and the PR firms it hired, exercised significant control over how the media accessed the pipeline and interacted with workers, often through press releases and authorized pipeline tours with Alyeska press liaisons. The department also produced its own publications for different audiences. These included a glossy, color paper for stakeholder oil companies, and a more modest black and white newsprint paper for workers living in the camps, *The Campfollower*. The purpose of *The Campfollower* was to create a sense of unity and shared identity among the camps, and boost morale and pride among workers. The name of the paper was a double entendre alluding to sex workers following military or work camps. Though the paper solicited contributions from workers, and claimed to represent them, the paper was indisputably a product of Alyeska’s public relations. In fact, small rival papers cropped up in camps that wanted fewer official stories from Alyeska and a more authentic representation of camp life.

The editor, two staff writers, and a photographer produced the newspaper weekly. Some of these employees were poached or freelanced from local newspapers and respected national magazines, creating blurred lines between disinterested news coverage and representations produced for the purpose of aiding Alyeska. Their operations were based at the Alyeska office in Anchorage, but every week the editor
traveled to Fairbanks to print the paper with the Fairbanks Daily News Miner’s facilities. From there, the editor and staff would go to one of the pipeline camps to research stories for the next issue. They would check in at the pipeline camp, talk to the camp manager, recreation director, or workers, and usually spend the night there, before heading back to Anchorage to write and lay out the paper, before beginning the cycle all over again. They printed several thousand copies a week, primarily for pipeline workers, but issues did circulate beyond the line to family members and people simply fascinated with the Alaska pipeline.\(^1\)

As one of the editors of *The Campfollower* recalled, the stories the paper printed were “just feel good stuff.”\(^2\) It stuck to a formula: usually a combination of stories on a technical aspect of the pipeline, the progress of the job, a particular trade, and human-interest pieces. The paper solicited contributions from workers—poetry and letters to the editor were popular items. Regular contributors included a spiritual column by the lead pipeline minister, a humorous advice column called “Pipeline Polly,” and a cartoon series by a field medical technician. Classified ads might come from the lower-48 or a camp down the road, often from family and loved ones wishing a worker happy birthday, or anticipating seeing each other on the next R&R.

The paper’s masthead, illustrated with a drawing of the camps surrounded by pipe and caribou, read: “Alyeska Pipeline Service Company — An Equal Opportunity Employer.” The company took what was usually used in a legal context of personnel policy, compliance reports, or job announcements, and made it the core identity of Alyeska. Whereas the masthead could have certainly read “Delivering Oil to America” or “Engineering Pioneers”—both very popular tropes for narrating the pipeline at the

\(^{12}\) Vicky Sterling, interview by Georgia Welch, 1 October 2013, audio recording over telephone.  
\(^{13}\) Ibid.
time—the one thing the paper seemed most intent on communicating was that Alyeska was a fair, progressive employer.

Figure 7: Masthead for The Campfollower

The implementation of affirmative action on the pipeline was in fact transforming the established employment practices of the pipeline construction industry. A new sexual division of labor was emerging that helped meet affirmative action goals, while at the same time entrenching particular restraints on women’s employment. For example, the position of “bullcook” had traditionally been filled by men (as the name implies) who followed pipeline work from job to job. A “bullcook” did camp maintenance including food prep, cleaning, and light repairs. On the Alaska pipeline, this position came to be occupied predominantly by local women (often Alaska Natives or immigrants) and to be seen as domestic service, interchangeable with “maid.” At the time, this was held up by many as progress for women. In publicizing women in nontraditional jobs on the line, Alyeska representatives emphasized how the position was “unisex” as now it was open to both sexes. A 2009 obituary for a woman from Missoula proudly remembered her as “the first female bullcook” on the trans Alaska pipeline, another allusion to the narrative of women breaking barriers. Yet, what is perhaps more evident in retrospect, is that this was an entrenchment of a new division

14 Ibid.
15 Associated Press, “No Sex Barriers on Alaskan Pipeline,” Bay City Times (Bay City, Michigan) 20 February 1976.
of labor that both demoted the status of bullcook and relegated women to domestic type labor and lower pay.

This shifting division of labor did create new opportunities for women, and increase their presence in the workplace and camps. But affirmative action was not penetrating deeply enough to prevent a solidification of gender-based divisions that would ultimately prove constricting. About half of the women who belonged to unions and worked on the pipeline were members of the Culinary Workers’ union, a union that had a majority female membership and a high representation of Alaska Natives. The percentage of workers on the pipeline who were women in trades considered nontraditional for women was 2.5% Most of those women belonged to the Teamsters and Laborers’ unions—trades with lower skill requirements. Very small numbers of women belonged to skilled unions like the Operating Engineers, Electricians, and Pipeline Welders.17 When they were in skilled unions, they were in low skill positions. Women were breaking into the Operating Engineers union, to be “oilers” of heavy equipment rather than operators of it; women often drove buses but not big trucks.18 Women like Jan Burson were the exception. While the presence of women, particularly in nontraditional jobs, was noticeable, most women on the pipeline were in domestic service, clerical, public relations, or unskilled jobs.

I see The Campfollower and its representations of women workers and families (both literal and figurative) as serving a dual purpose. First, they were a key way Alyeska was able to naturalize this evolving division of labor and the presence of women in formerly all-male workplaces while creating an identity as an equal opportunity employer. Second, they mitigated the very real tensions and conflicts

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17 Bailiwick.
18 These lower skilled positions had traditionally been apprenticeships, but in the coming years they would turn into positions without advancement for many women and minorities.
arising from sexist reactions to affirmative action and women on the job. One of the primary ways the paper did this was by representing pipeline workers as a family. Workers with whom I have done oral histories have said repeatedly that the relationships they formed living in the camps and working on a crew were “like a family.” This was a trope *The Campfollower* used regularly, creating an idea of the pipeline family in a number of ways.

First, the publications staff sought out real families on the pipeline and wrote stories celebrating them. For instance, the paper held a contest looking for the largest immediate family of workers on the pipeline—the winners were a clan of 17. Another profile of “four Kings” recognized four brothers (with the last name King) who worked on the line. From Arkansas, they were all members of Pipeliners’ Local 798, a pipeline welder’s union based in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The pipeline was both a place where family members worked together and where symbolic families were formed.

Camp weddings were often front-page news. One couple met and later married in Coldfoot camp, celebrating with 300 coworkers and a cake. Another couple literally got married on the pipeline (standing on top of the pipe), in their work clothes (the article discussed the bride’s failed attempt to climb atop the pipe in heels and a wedding dress). One article covered a couple who were expecting a baby. Their camp threw a baby shower and eagerly anticipated the “Tonsia Pipeline Baby’s” arrival (named after the camp). These family relationships on the pipeline—couples, parents and children, siblings, as well as extended family—were held up as a model for the kinds of connections pipeline workers should develop with each other. The paper praised

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families for supporting the pipeline, and in turn cast the pipeline as a source of connection between the family members.

The paper often presented families filling roles on the pipeline that mimicked gendered divisions of labor within the home that were familiar and nonthreatening. For example, six family members who all lived in the same camp were praised for making Isabel “a friendly camp with a family feel.” The paper referred to the wife and mother of the family as “mom,” papering over the obvious—that her work was not just a labor of love, but a means to a paycheck. Her job within the camp as head waitress mapped onto the domestic labor expected of women in the home, while her husband’s job, as a operating engineer out on the pipeline construction site, correlated with the ideal of bread winner in a nuclear family.  

These gender roles extended to the figurative family of pipeline workers and campmates. Men were often shown exercising authority or laboring on the actual pipeline, whereas women were depicted in a realm of service within the camps. A superintendent who went by the name “old man” in turn called his subordinates “son,” guiding and disciplining them like a father figure. In contrast, a cook at Isabel was shown as a mother figure caring for the workers and even decorating the camp for Christmas. She expressed a motherly affection, saying: “I’ve grown rather fond of those hungry, tired faces.”

The portrayal of literal and figurative pipeline families naturalized the presence of women on the pipeline and the sexual division of labor being reshaped by affirmative action. By comparing the camps to families, women could be seen as daughters, romantic partners, and mothers rather than exclusively as workers. For men in the

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construction trades and pipeline industry, it may have been more palatable to see women as family members than as co-workers. Even though women were potentially displacing men in certain jobs (some were even working alongside them as teamsters, operators and laborers), the paper chose to show women creating and sustaining family in the camps.

The Campfollower’s depiction of women as a positive, unthreatening, and wholesome influence on camp life served as a counterpoint to another cultural interpretation of working women, in which they were demonized as leaving their responsibilities of home and family in the selfish pursuit of a paycheck and a man’s job. At the same time, it deemphasized women’s labor, its contribution to building the pipeline, and the fact that it was paid. Even the name of the paper, alluding to prostitutes, suggested men in the camps were the true builders of the pipeline, where as others were illegitimate “campfollowers.”

The family mentality was also a powerful construction for containing the conflict of sexual harassment or discrimination. Antagonism of women by men could be colored as harmless spats or jokes that take place between siblings, spouses, or parents and children. In my oral histories, scenarios I would define as sexual harassment—everything from men sending an unsuspecting woman into a men’s restroom, to locking a woman in a port-o-potty and lifting it off the ground with a crane—are described by women workers as ultimately harmless (if unnerving), even affectionate hazing by the men they came to regard as their family.27

One worker I interviewed recounted a story of how a group of men stared at her and made obscene comments one day in the cafeteria. This is how she responded:

27 Debra Bell, interview by Georgia Welch, Carlsbad, California, 24 February 2012, audio recording; Vicky Sterling.
“So the next day, I saw one of these guys, he was by himself, so I just went up and stood in front of him and looked at his crotch. He said ‘What are you doing?’ And I said, ‘Do you like this? Can I ask you a question? Do you have a wife or a girlfriend?’ He goes, ‘Well, I’m married.’ And I said, ‘Do you think she would appreciate what you did to me yesterday? You and your pack mentality, get in your little group, but standing here one on one you can’t even look me in my eye. And you can do that to me. I said I don’t appreciate it, and I don’t think your wife would appreciate it.’ He goes, ‘Oh yeah yeah, well you’re right.’ And he was a sweetheart to me ever since.”

Whether we interpret her comments as saying the man’s wife would not appreciate being harassed, or the man’s wife would not appreciate him harassing other women away from home, or both, her confrontation clearly deployed the device of familial relationships to police the man’s behavior and push him to accept her presence in the camp and on the job. So, while the family metaphor may have reinforced a sexual division of labor that might ultimately limit women’s job mobility, and deemphasize the harm of sexual harassment, in this case we see how it was used as a way to navigate conflict and bring it to some level of resolution that made one individual’s circumstance more bearable.

Women appeared in the camp paper far out of proportion to their actual presence in the camps. Alyeska used *The Campfollower* to show the enjoyable side of pipeline life by devoting space to covering camp recreation like pool and movies, facilities like saunas and gyms, time off, special events like holiday parties and meals. The paper featured women almost like another amenity, or novelty that made camp life fun or comfortable. A visit from Miss Alaska beauty contestants was front-page news, and a woman doing the most banal of tasks might warrant a photo and caption, or like, Jan Burson, her own story.

One photo of several workers checking in at a desk at Fort Wainwright includes five women dominating a small group of new arrivals, for instance. The caption reads “They’re Here!” and then describes the “new pipeliners” going through orientation, without any specific reference to the women or gender. There is little interesting or
distinctive about this photograph, beside the fact that there are women in it. I see this photo as meeting a desire to see women and circulate images of them. But it also melded with a progress narrative of women’s arrival in nontraditional jobs and Alyeska’s emergence as an equal opportunity employer. It was a kind of visual evidence of this narrative, and the caption “They’re Here!” deftly allows for either reading—women are arriving on the pipeline, breaking into nontraditional jobs, or are here to be looked at and enjoyed by a predominantly male audience. In the camps, women were news. As one interview subject told me, “everyone knew when a woman arrived in camp.” They were an important part of that “feel good stuff” the paper wanted to amplify and circulate.

In the face of expanding regulation of nondiscrimination, conflicting expectations as to how equal opportunity could be achieved, and very real conflicts over women’s presence in the workplace and their access to jobs, Alyeska had to cultivate an identity as an equal opportunity employer. The Campfollower served this purpose internally, using representations of women and families to naturalize the emerging division of labor in pipeline construction. Women on the pages of The Campfollower were simultaneously proof that Alyeska was progressing toward an equal workplace, and reassurance that those changes would have limits.

**Making the Pipeline a Feminist Frontier**

The Alyeska Report was a quarterly, glossy, full color newsletter. Whereas The Campfollower was directed towards the internal social world of pipeline workers and contractors, the Alyeska Report was produced for a broader audience. It was written to

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28 “They’re Here!” The Campfollower, 19 February 1975.
29 Vicky Sterling.
keep the general public informed of the pipeline’s progress and address public criticism of the project. The company tried to show that it was being transparent and having open communication about the project. The *Alyeska Report* addressed the most pressing issues associated with the pipeline, taking a pro-active role in shaping the public discourses and beliefs about the project. The publication solicited professional journalists, writers, and photographers for items, relying much less on the work of its own public relations employees, giving the *Alyeska Report* an air of journalistic integrity.

Like *The Campfollower*, women were integral in creating this message. Two of the eleven issues featured long form articles on women workers, and the back cover often addressed concerns about equal opportunity employment. The first article on a women worker appeared in April 1975. It was very similar in form to the Jan Burson piece, in that it was a profile of a woman, photographed wearing a hard hat working in a nontraditional field. In this case, Jean Pollock was a teamster who drove a flatbed truck. “What was a nice lady like her doing in a place like that?” the article asked. Pollock replied, “Working hard and bringing down $1,000 a week.”

The second article on women workers explicitly tied women construction workers to the women’s movement. It was titled “Women Find Challenges on Pipeline.” The fascination with women pipeline workers had only grown over the past year, in part because Alyeska continued to promote the story. Television crews and personalities flocked to the pipeline, as did photographers and magazines. Journalists and writers often came to Alaska to work on the pipeline with the express intent of writing nonfictional accounts or novels centering on what was already understood as a historic and exceptional moment in Alaskan and U.S. history. Alyeska hired a professional reporter and photographer to visit the camps, conduct interviews, and

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write an in-depth article in April 1976. The reporter was Betzi Woodman, an Alaskan correspondent for Reuters. Woodman was well established in her career, beginning as a reporter for the *Anchorage Daily News* who wrote the “About Women” section in the early 1960s. She became an authority on the oil industry and covered the pipeline for Reuters throughout the 1970s. She also wrote for publications of the oil and engineering industries including *Alaska Construction* and *Oil Report* and the *Engineering News Record*, and for specific companies including British Petroleum, Standard Oil Company, Alaska Airlines, and Alyeska. Woodman had ties to the oil industry, and she likely also held sympathy for the women’s movement. She was part of a generation of women in journalism that witnessed women’s opportunities expand from being largely confined to the women’s pages to a more equal footing with male reporters. Just prior to writing the article for Alyeska about women on the pipeline, Woodman served as the president and a fundraiser for the Alaska Press Women. While Woodman’s feminist involvement does not seem to run much deeper than promoting women’s interests within her professional field, she would have been aware of the transformations women activists created in the profession and may have identified with other women trying to work in male dominated occupations.31

A number of things are distinctive about Woodman’s article for the *Alyeska Report*. First, rather than being a profile of an exceptional woman, it imagined women collectively as a group with shared, politicized interests and experiences. Second, it addressed the structural mechanisms in place that helped create the phenomenon of women pipeline workers. Third, it recognized sexual harassment as one of the challenges on the pipeline. Fourth and finally, it addressed the women’s movement, and

even gave significant space to thinking about the relationship between feminism and the pipeline. Yet, parts of the overall message are consistent with the profile of Jan Burson: the successful integration of the workplace relies on individual women’s behavior and ability to adapt. And the pipeline becomes the means for women’s advancement and achievement.

The article opens with a series of unattributed quotes from women talking about what challenges they face as women working on the pipeline. Their tone and observations are variable, even at times contradictory, but they establish a collective voice that will be repeated in extensive quotes throughout the article: “It strikes home the first time a woman goes to eat. She walks down a center aisle, followed by 500 pairs of male eyes that all seem to reflect the same thought.” “You have to prove yourself beyond what any man would have to on the job. Once you pass that bath of fire, you’re generally accepted.” “The people I meet are fabulous. I never mixed with blue collar workers before and I am beginning to see what makes this country tick.”

Woodman writes that she and the photographer traveled from the farthest north pump station down the line to Valdez, interviewing women to ask, “Who are these women who brave the resentments, long hours, harsh working conditions? What do they do and how do they feel about their work and the conditions?” They also interview men to find out “how they feel about this unique situation—women working for the first time alongside men on a huge construction project.” Woodman explains that women are being employed on the pipeline as part of an affirmative action program. The article is punctuated with small, square color photos of women within the text. They are in their work environments, almost all out of doors, wearing heavy coats or rain gear. Four are wearing hard hats, while one holds a hard hat propped under her arm. Only one, a

32 Woodman,12.
bullcook, is photographed inside without a hard hat (though she wears a bandana tied around her head). Spanning the lower half of two pages of the three-page spread is a more stylized set of black and white photographs of one woman, a communication center operator at Old Man Camp. The photos look more like a fashion shoot, with her hair and make up carefully styled. She poses in different clothes in a series of different tasks, like operating the radio, and shooting pool in her time off.\(^\text{33}\)

What are the “challenges” women on the pipeline faced exactly? The challenges described by the article and the women Woodman interviewed echoed the discussion of the *Feminists in Hard Hats* roundtable. The challenges tended to fall into one of two categories: the pressure to perform well at one’s job and the pressure to cope with sexual harassment. Woodman summed up these factors in more direct terms than the interview subjects tended to acknowledge: “They have all felt pressured to prove themselves in their work and most have been sexually propositioned overtly or by implication.”

Most of the women talked about having to perform well, oftentimes better than the men around them, in order to earn their place on the pipeline. As one woman put it, “You have to prove yourself beyond what any man would have to on the job,” and another, “the pressures are heavy …” An oiler felt she had to defend her adequacy to the task because she was “not physically built.” Though her job only required that she be able to work a wrench and a screwdriver, she still felt people would think she was under qualified because she did not fit the physical mold of a male construction worker.

Within the text of the article, many women responded to this pressure by defending their capabilities and professionalism. The oiler said, in spite of her small build, “I keep the cranes spotless.” A traffic director claimed, “I take good care of my trucks.” A security guard spoke to the importance of keeping her uniform clean and keeping a

\(^{33}\) Ibid.
professional distance from the social life of the camps: “I think its important to maintain the image of our guards by neatness, promptness, business-like behavior.” There seemed to be a need to prove that the women in fact did work, by citing how many hours they worked—70 per week, just like the men, and the specific tasks they competed as part of their jobs—the more physically challenging, the better. Again, the testimony of male coworkers and supervisors is used to prove that women are good workers. About the communications center operator featured in the photo shoot, a supervisor comments, “She’s accurate, has good diction, and her voice always has a lift—an upbeat.”

The women interviewed for the article were certainly in a difficult position to speak about the “challenges” they faced on the pipeline. As women in nontraditional jobs, they were already highly visible on the job site and in the camps. They experienced additional pressure to do their jobs well. The media attention they received heightened this pressure and put them in an awkward situation. They would not want to complain about their coworkers and supervisors in print, let alone in a company publication other pipeliners were likely to read. Just as they felt pressure to “get along” on the job, in their interviews they probably also wanted to portray themselves as amicable and able to adapt to life in construction. Calling attention to problems they encountered would likely only hurt themselves, making them appear ungrateful for the opportunity to work, divisive, or as the source of the problem. It is in this context that the women talk about sexual harassment in mostly oblique references, which become a subtext to the article. Though Woodman asserts that most women had been sexually propositioned, none of the women actually spoke directly to this experience. They referred to “the guff and joshing” and “flirting” as minor obstacles they overcame. One woman said, “many things were really eye openers for me, things that bothered me,” without explaining.

34 Ibid.
what it was that opened her eyes or bothered her. The article ends with five paragraphs of extended quotes by a laborer, Barbara Maier, who identified herself as part of the women’s movement. She described a hypothetical scenario of a woman worker faced with a sexual proposition: “(Women workers feel) the pressure to do the job well, get along with fellow workers and be left alone. But here—no. The foreman pushes the issue and as a result a woman makes her statement. ‘Yes, I’ll opt for easier conditions in return for favors’ or ‘No, don’t harass me.’”\textsuperscript{35} Debra Bell, an oiler on the pipeline experienced just such a scenario when a co-worker took her aside in a truck and said that she could sleep with the foreman in exchange for the opportunity to “stay on” and continue working into the off-season.\textsuperscript{36}

This article, and Maier’s quote in particular, establishes a missing link between illicit sex work and legitimate labor on the pipeline. Where as articles like “Teamster Bosses Say Burson Girl Excellent Fuel Tank Driver” and Rolling Stone’s “Dark Side of the Earth” paint women construction workers and prostitutes in a kind of virgin-whore opposition, the experience of sexual harassment demonstrates that, in the sexist logic of the day, women construction workers had to go out of their way not to be implicated in trading on their sexuality. Simply entering a male-dominated work and living environment was read as an invitation for men’s sexual advances. The two challenges—the pressure to do well at one’s job and the harassment ranging from jokes to outright propositioning for sex—were related. Proving that they were working hard and competent at their jobs was a way to distance themselves from the implicit accusation that they were seeking sexual attention, a stigma that was both expressed and perpetuated by harassment.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{36} Debra Bell.
The women interviewed in the article did not so much try to refute the dichotomy between workers and whores, as try to ensure they personally came out on the right side of the equation. More comments from Maier show the distance they tried to create between hard workers and a vaguely identified “other” that takes advantage of her sex. She says, “I feel that any healthy woman who wants to work on the pipeline can do the physical work. I believe in most cases, a woman who makes it clear that she wants to work will be treated fairly. And the flip side of the coin—if she wants the easier street, that avenue is always open.” Other women also reacted against the idea that they might be receiving special treatment because they were women. The oiler was worried that she was perceived as having a “cushy job.” A bull cook who had the good fortune of being taken under a welder’s wing and trained in pipe welding insisted, “I don’t want any favors.” Just as Jan Burson, the fuel tank driver, was adamant that she was not receiving any advantages “just because (she) was a woman,” the women interviewed up and own the pipeline were trying to disassociate their sex with their work.

The burden was on women to prove, through their responses to challenges on the pipeline, their intention to work. As Maier put it, a woman had to “make her statement.” Many of the women argued that, ultimately, their own actions determined how they were treated by men on the pipeline. One claimed, “The pressures are heavy, but you can establish how you want to be treated. You have to let it be known right off what you are and how you will respond to the guff and joshing … and this does not depend just on words.” Another, “I think it depends on how a woman acts as to how she is treated…. They treat me with respect…. The ways that the women acted to get this respect and acceptance varied greatly. “Flirting” and wearing a dress to dinner was all an acceptable part of adapting for one woman, while for another, keeping her

37 Ibid.
uniform modest and neat was a way of maintaining a boundary. This sets up a kind of circular logic, in which harassment is not necessarily an obstacle to their work, which might require a collective response, but a personal trial each must overcome that tests her true intentions and sexual morality. Being treated with respect becomes a testament to their own good character and resourcefulness. This mentality drastically muted the potential for a critical expose of sexual harassment. As women workers believed they could earn acceptance on an individual basis through their words, actions, or appearance, the implication was that women who were not treated with respect, or continued to experience harassment, had failed a test of their character, or were perhaps “asking for it.”

In spite of the article’s focus on “challenges” and the anxieties about harassment and sex it revealed, the women and men’s comments and tone of the article were overwhelmingly positive. The pipeline was allowing women workers to meet financial goals—to support their children or elderly parents; to buy a home; to retire; or to send their children to school. Women reaped personal benefits from the pipeline, getting physically fit, enjoying the natural beauty surrounding pipeline camps, finding adventure, and meeting new people. The pipeline gave them the opportunity to rise to challenges and was a proving ground for women to show their equal worth. It also held out the promise of financial independence and being a stepping-stone to other goals. Their presence was also an achievement in its own right. Women were working on equal terms with men, they gained access to male dominated jobs. Just by working on the pipeline, they attained degree of freedom (usually from dead end jobs) and personal satisfaction (by enjoying beauty, adventure, new people). Maier, who is given the final word in the article, claims, “The pipeline is a unique experience for women. It is an

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38 Ibid.
avenue in which the revolution can speak.” Maier’s quote is like Virginia Baim’s interpretation that the pipeline was an ideal arena for feminist self-actualization. The pipeline is an “avenue” for feminism in several respects; it becomes both the journey and the destination for the women’s movement. Feminist pioneers are no longer the vocal critics of sex discrimination at Alyeska that shook the first season of construction; in the *Alyeska Report*, feminist pioneers are the pipeline’s best subjects.

**Feminists in Hardhats Help Out the Man of the Year**

In 1976, Frank Moolin, Alyeska’s project manager for the entire pipeline, was named “Construction’s Man of the Year” by a weekly industry magazine, The Engineering News Record. Moolin was responsible for managing 5 major contractors, 3.3 billion dollars worth of contracts, and twenty thousand employees at peak employment. Every year, the ENR wrote an editorial naming fifty men who had “made outstanding contributions to construction,” followed by a banquet in New York City which revealed which of those man was honored as “Man of the Year.” The banquet was timed to coincide with a cover story featuring the winner. Incidentally, the magazine pondered changing the plaque to read “Person of the Year” sometime in the future, as that same year the first woman appeared on the list of nominees of “Those Who Made Marks in 1975.”

ENR praised Moolin for his management skill and “key role in spurring worker productivity.” When Moolin received his award, he gave an address to 500 other industry leaders at the banquet defending the pipeline against rumors of inefficiency and corruption and criticizing government regulation. The next day, the

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ENR published a feature story called “Frank Moolin, Jr. Ramrods Alaska Pipeline,” painting Moolin as a demanding, pragmatic manager responsible for keeping the massive project on track.42

The award was an opportunity for good publicity for the pipeline amidst sharp scrutiny of the project and a quickly escalating scandal surrounding falsified inspections of pipeline welds. When construction got underway in spring of 1974, some of the most vocal critics of the pipeline seemed to be overcome. Environmental opposition had been overcome; Native land claims resolved, and Alyeska had made significant efforts—some material, some merely symbolic—to be regarded as an employer that would benefit the community and economy with minimal risk to the environment. But with the public eye focused on the project, no problem went unnoticed. In just the past year, news outlets had reported on work stoppages spurred by conflict between welders and teamsters, a 60,000-gallon oil leak in a pipeline camp, and accusations of race and sex discrimination. In November of 1975, Alyeska triumphantly publicized that the pipeline was halfway to completion only to be met with a multi-article expose of corruption on the pipeline in the Los Angeles Times. The series claimed, “Widespread lawlessness, a helpless government and the stranglehold of a single Teamsters Union chief severely threaten a state crucial to the nation’s future energy independence. Police officials admit they are staggering under a runaway crime wave that has left vast areas of this country’s largest state virtually unprotected.” This image later proved to be exaggerated, but the paper reported as fact that organized crime as infiltrating the state, the pipeline itself was

vulnerable to foreign invaders who wanted to sabotage the pipeline, felons were working for Alyeska, and the company was loosing everything from screwdrivers to trucks to theft. Bent on finishing the pipeline as fast as possible, the Times reasoned, Alyeska did not want to slow down work or provoke union leaders by reporting crime. The pipeline had overwhelmed the state authorities, police had abandoned their posts for more lucrative pipeline jobs. The projected cost of the pipeline had been steadily increasing, and Standard Oil and British Petroleum had just borrowed another $1.75 billion more to finance the project. The Times speculated that the cost increase was due to the waste and corruption on the pipeline, and warned that ultimately consumers would pay for it at the gas pump.

A scandal was brewing as Moolin accepted his “Man of the Year” award. In October, a whistleblower had come forward to say that the company contracted by Alyeska to inspect pipeline welds, Ketchbaw Industries, had instructed him to falsify inspection results in order to keep pace with the progress of the welders, thereby not hindering pipeline progress. Some welds were never inspected, and fake x-rays were used for some inspections. The contractor fired the whistle blower, and Alyeska fired the contractor, and by February both parties were suing each other for tens of millions of dollars. In the months following the Engineering News Record event, the scandal would only intensify, ending in a Congressional investigation.

When Moolin addressed the banquet, he used the award as a platform to “replace some myths with facts.”

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engineers and leaders in the construction industry, Moolin launched into a less than diplomatic defense of the pipeline. He called each of the Los Angeles reporters out by name, refuting some of their claims—for instance, that Alyeska had lost 10 miles of pipe—point by point.

If Moolin used his speech to confront pipeline controversies head on, he—and his public relations employees—took a different tack with the press. Through the coordinated effort between a public relations coordinator from MacGraw Hill Publications, the company that published the Engineering News Record, and Larry Carpenter at Alyeska, Moolin gave an interview with the Associated Press. Variations on the resulting article were published the next day in dozens of local newspapers all over the country. But the headlines were less about Moolin and his award than about what was fast becoming a familiar figure in the popular press: women workers on the Alaska pipeline. They read, “Pipeline Boss Praises Women,” “Women Work Wonders on the Alaska Pipeline,” “Alaska Pipeline Boss Says Women Among His Best Workers,” and “No Sex Barriers on Alaskan Pipeline.”

Quite similar to the praise Jan Burson received as the only teamster at 5-Mile, these articles presented a view of women workers through the eyes and words of a male authority figure. Moolin described women’s role on the pipeline, the equality they experienced, and positive impact they had on the project. Like Burson, women were painted as exceptional because they were good workers. Many women, Moolin claimed,
“feel they’re pace setting and strive to out do everyone. Some of our best workers are women.” For Moolin, sameness seemed to be the definition of equal opportunity. He stressed that women worked the same jobs and earned the same wages as men: “They’re iron workers, truck drivers, laborers, warehouse persons, cooks, and — something there’s no unisex word for — bull cooks. That means they clean the dorms.” This equality did have a limit, he acknowledged, which he naturalized as a result of union brotherhood. “Nobody calls them ‘Klondike Annies’ and they do everything the men do except welding.” They did not weld “because welders are very close knit. They move from construction job to construction job as a unit, a very fraternalistic group that likes to think they’re the Marine Corps of the industry.” He implied women were good for the pipeline not only because of their work, but because of their civilizing influence. “My experience shows that women have been beneficial. At least the men shower and shave.” Moolin explained equality extended to the living conditions in camps. “All the workers, men and women, live in the same bunkhouses and use the same toilet facilities.” He obliquely addressed sexuality, saying, “It’s up to them if they go to the saunas separately or together,” and, “Of course, there’s pairing off. But we don’t try to establish moral codes.”

Why did the PR team estimate that talking about women workers was the best use of this opportunity for Moolin to speak to the press? First, it was already a tried and true formula. Images and articles about women workers had proved enticing to the press in the past, so they probably thought the focus on women would ensure more newspapers would pick up the story than if it had solely been about Moolin receiving an award. Second, it was good publicity of Alyeska’s strong hiring record when it came to women, a way to promote its image as an equal opportunity employer, one of Alyeska’s foremost community relations concerns. Third, the popular image of women on the
pipeline could deflect attention away from, and offer a degree of resolution to some of the “myths” Moolin was trying to deflate. The emphasis on hard work and productivity countered the accusation that Alyeska was “featherbedding,” hiring more workers than the job required, and that many on the pipeline spent time asleep on buses or waiting around. Women were not just exemplary workers, they were used as evidence of exemplary management to counter the Los Angeles Times’ claim that management was corrupt and turning a blind eye to abuses. The emphasis on women’s “beneficial” influence tempered the popular notion that all-male camps were a breeding ground for violence, tension, and a general loss of humanity. Furthermore, depictions of escalating crime in Alaska revolved around prostitution. The description of women as productive workers who occasionally “pair off” with men gave the pipeline the more benign atmosphere of a co-ed dormitory.

**Cosmopolitan on the Freedom Trail**

*Cosmopolitan* magazine featured a story, about “Daring Girls on the Alaska Pipeline” in 1976 by Steve Kline, a reporter who had written extensively about the impact of the pipeline for the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner*. Kline did not shy away from hyperbole: “For women, the Alaska pipeline has become an 800-mile freedom trail.” “Up and down the line, the old ways are changing. And they’re changing fast.” The women in the profile had abandoned their feminized, service sector jobs as bank tellers, waitresses, and teachers in the lower 48 for much more lucrative blue-collar jobs, traditionally reserved for men. Kline depicted them doing exciting tasks like setting up explosives, commuting by helicopter, and unloading barges. They were finding

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adventure, progress and unprecedented wages by transgressing gender barriers on the “Last Frontier.” The author lingered over descriptions of Alaska as an extreme place unlike any other. The North Slope was an inhospitable wilderness of Arctic wind chill, “jagged peaks,” and polar bears. *Cosmo* invoked Alaska’s “gold-rush past” as a corollary to its “boom town present,” as Fairbanks and Anchorage were deluged with outsiders and oil money. It saw the women migrating north “in unprecedented numbers” as a change in the gender composition of work and land. The women, who “spiced the air with winds of change,” stood in sharp contrast to the wild landscape and masculine work environment of the oil field.49

![Daring Girls on the Alaska Pipeline](image)

**Figure 8: Steve Kline, "Daring Girls on the Alaska Pipeline," *Cosmopolitan*, June 1976**

Though the article unabashedly used this rhetoric of women’s freedom, it also saw working in men’s blue-collar jobs as a menace to women’s femininity. They meet “grizzled trucker(s),” rather than eligible bachelors. One woman could not rid herself of

the smell of oil after servicing pipeline equipment with a grease gun all day. She complained to *Cosmo*, “the ... oil makes my hair stick up in the back, and I’m so embarrassed about the way it looks I go to work wearing a bandana. Nothing can get my hair clean.” Furthermore, *Cosmo* reproached women for spending their new money on partying and luxuries. They blew their earnings—wages that would presumably otherwise go to breadwinner men—on sports cars and Bombay gin. One woman indulged in a $2,000 fur coat from Nordstrom’s; in crass taste, she wore a t-shirt and jeans under it.\(^{50}\)

The magazine’s imagined audience was the “*Cosmo Girl*”—a young working woman, assumed to be white, single, with disposable income to spend on clothing and cosmetics. *Cosmo* coached its readers to manipulate gendered markers of class—such as clothes, speech, and taste—to secure upward mobility, usually through marriage. The example of the women in Alaska was ultimately a cautionary tale—taking men’s blue-collar jobs, the “daring girls” compromised their femininity and, by extension, their social mobility. The magazine ultimately judged the female takeover of men’s jobs as disruptive of the gendered class station it advocated for its readers. It saw the Trans-Alaska Pipeline as a conduit of changing gender norms that, like Alaska, presented both an alluring opportunity and a perilous extreme.\(^{51}\)

**The Pipeline and International Women’s Year**

Right around the same time Alyeska was publicizing its progress in hiring women workers through Moolin’s Man of the Year award, the National Commission for the Observance of International Women’s Year was assembling a report investigating

\(^{50}\) Ibid.
\(^{51}\) Ibid, 138.
barriers to women’s full participation in society and making recommendations for how to rectify those barriers. The commission was created by executive order in 1975, to implement the resolutions adopted by the United Nations for International Women’s Year. President Ford appointed 35 members to serve on the commission (mostly women and a few men, prominent in politics, business, education, entertainment, or community service), who were charged with making a report to the president.\textsuperscript{52} By invoking the preamble to the constitution in its title, “To Form A More Perfect Union,” the report was laying claim to the guiding principles of the nation, representing women’s empowerment as necessary in fulfilling the purpose of the constitution.

The commission’s report featured women workers on the pipeline as an example of women making advancement in construction. The report—quite uncritically—directly adopted materials from Alyeska, including images, statistics, and anecdotes. The report is more attuned to institutional obstacles for women in construction and the need for collective responses, but still incorporates the elements of women’s individual determination, pioneering spirit, and the opportunity of the frontier. The report paints women in non-traditional jobs as worthy, hardworking national subjects.

In 1975, a program director at Advocates for Women, a job center that tried to create opportunities for women to become apprentices in the skilled trades, told the Los Angeles Times: “Women must understand that they are pioneers.” She elaborated that they would need “stamina and courage to survive the hassles they are going to face when they get out on the job.”\textsuperscript{53} The program director was trying to illustrate that in addition to simply learning how to be an electrician, welder, or carpenter, women trying to access jobs in traditionally male dominated industries also needed particular

character traits to withstand the obstacles that came with these work environments. Equating sex integration of the workplace with pioneering also promised progress—the women who endured the trials of breaking new ground would be taking a monumental step towards sex equality, and making it easier for the women who came after them.

By the mid-1980s, the allure of “pioneering” had been lost for Susan Eisenberg and many women like her. One of the first women to apprentice as an electrical worker in Boston in the late 1970s, and an emerging poet, she believed she was opening doors for women to follow after her. Yet, after several years of endurance but little change in the industry (women remained less than 2% of the workforce), in her words, “the toll of never breaking beyond the pioneering phase was becoming evident.”54 Her poem “Pioneering” described this toll: The “lonesomeness of pioneering” was “like the slow eating away of acid on metal: / the damage only visible over time.”55

Considering representations of women as pioneers can help us think about the narratives, discourses, and images available for presenting feminism through mass culture. American exceptionalism seemed to be an easy fit for creating a progress narrative of women and equal employment in the 1970s. I would argue it helped present women’s economic inclusion as a natural progression, in the national interest, non-threatening to men’s status in the workforce, and disassociated from radical feminism. I think it is important to think about how narratives of pioneering shaped the women’s movement, particularly as we look for ways to see that history with fresh eyes. Pioneering is a common trope used to describe the women’s movement. It helps shape the history of the women’s movement into a progress narrative, with forward momentum towards a better future. The attachment to a progress narrative is

55 Ibid, 4-5.
abundantly clear in the historiography of the second wave with titles like, “Tidal Wave,” “Moving the Mountain,” and “No Turning Back.” What do we gain or lose by letting American exceptionalism provide the organizing principles of narratives of feminist movement? Where does it place feminism in relationship to imperialism and conquest? Where does it leave women of color, particularly Native American women, or the Alaska Native women that predominantly worked as domestics on the pipeline? And what happens when feminism needs a new frontier, or another “first” in order to sustain its reason for being?
Conclusion: Equal Employment Opportunity on the Last Frontier

June 1997 marked the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the trans Alaska pipeline. The most expensive private engineering project in U.S. history, it employed 70,000 people and cost $8 billion.¹ The pipeline traverses 800 miles of mountain ranges, rivers, permafrost, and fault lines. At its peak output, the pipeline transported up to two million barrels of oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez each day.² The Smithsonian National Museum of American History commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the pipeline with “Oil from the Arctic: Building the Trans-Alaska Pipeline,” an exhibition funded entirely by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the corporation that built and continues to maintain and operate the pipeline.³ In the past 15 years, the Alaska pipeline has appeared in numerous other venues of popular and public history: it was featured in an “American Experience” documentary produced by the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS); an episode of the History Channel series, “Modern Marvels”; the general interest magazine American History; a coffee table book of photographs and essays entitled Crossing Alaska; and a mass market paperback book by an Alaskan journalist entitled Amazing Pipeline Stories.

While each of these representations are in different media, and have varying levels of detail, nuance, and historical accuracy, the basic story they tell has been celebratory, painting the pipeline as a national achievement and a symbol of the nation’s unique and exemplary character. The project is seen as an agent of American progress, a protagonist that has to overcome political and legal opposition from environmental activists and Alaska Native claims to land. The environment itself presents the greatest

² Ibid, 69.
challenge to extracting oil, and these popular histories dramatize Herculean efforts of engineers and laborers in the extreme climate and landscape of Alaska.

This narrative—of trials and triumph on the “Last Frontier”—is couched in a particular understanding of the United States in the world. The energy crises of the 1970s provide the global setting for this story and drive an overriding national imperative to build the pipeline. The back cover of Amazing Pipeline Stories proclaims, “America Needed the Oil.” But the need went beyond providing fuel to the nation; the pipeline served as a path to independence from a chaotic world. Dependence on foreign oil is cited as a deep national vulnerability that bordered on a spiritual crisis that the pipeline could remedy (the pipeline was part of a larger package of initiatives introduced by President Nixon called “Project Independence”). The History Channel drives this point home: “There was a psychological effect on the American character … a malaise. People felt that we were losing control. … [The pipeline] helped to show a spirit, that we are a capable people, that we can overcome adversity.” In popular history, the pipeline has become a symbol of American exceptionalism in the late 20th century.

Women figure as prominently in these contemporary commemorations as they did in the Alyeska public relations blitz during the construction days. The front cover of Amazing Pipeline Stories features a photograph of a woman teamster in a hardhat defiantly meeting the camera’s gaze. A chapter on “Women at Work” largely recycles the images, quotes, stories, and statistics that appeared in newspapers, magazines, and the Alyeska Report in 1970s. The American Experience documentary and Smithsonian exhibit both include nods to the pipeline as a space where women made exceptional

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advances in traditionally male dominated fields of work. An exhibit of photographs at the Alaska State Library entitled “Women on the Pipeline” features photos of women at work on the pipeline in clerical, skilled trades, unskilled labor, and domestic positions in the camps. Hardhats stand out as a theme in the exhibit. A monument to the pipeline erected in Valdez in 1980 is a statue of five workers on the pipeline, including a surveyor, a teamster, and a laborer. The teamster is a woman, described by the sculptor as “a unique woman … a woman who wanted to be a pioneer, to build something in possibly the last frontier in the world.” The story of women’s new found economic inclusion is nested so comfortably in the celebratory story of the trans Alaska pipeline that feminism and American nationalism are almost collapsed into the same narrative form.

These cultural representations of the pipeline are directly descended from Alyeska’s public relations efforts in the 1970s, in which the company shifted focus from environmental harms to engineering innovation, from discrimination to support of women and minority workers, and from corporate exploitation to patriotic imperative. All of these books, films, and exhibits relied on some level of sponsorship and cooperation from the Alyeska Corporation, just as the media in the 1970s had to go through Alyeska for information about and access to the pipeline and its workers. The oil industry has remained invested in managing public perceptions of the project for four decades, certainly past the point of necessity for overcoming political opposition to the trans Alaska pipeline, in part to legitimize and naturalize continued energy development in the north.

Public relations helped define equal employment opportunity in the 1970s, creating definitions that endure today. Equal employment opportunity was not simply a policy, a personnel procedure, or a legal formation. It was a lexicon whose key coordinates were the concepts of rights, discrimination, fairness, and equality. What the case study in this dissertation shows, by analyzing a cross section of four different approaches to defining and implementing equal employment opportunity, is that this lexicon was a highly malleable container for a diversity of claims. Even as the black civil rights movement provided the initial impetus for antidiscrimination and affirmative action in employment, the discourse of equal opportunity was also accessible for white men to claim group rights on the basis of “reverse discrimination” or local belonging.

For Alaska Natives, equal employment opportunity created routes to wage labor under a schema in which federal paternalism mingled with the Native movement for self-determination. Equal employment opportunity was flexible enough that when women complained about receiving different treatment from men, avenues designed to create male heads of households opened to bring women into almost exclusively male job categories.

In the midst of government, corporate, worker, activist, and nongovernmental organization attempts to adapt and create institutions of fair employment, equal employment opportunity was also being defined in the realm of cultural representation. What Alyeska successfully created, beyond the effects of its affirmative action practices, was a discourse of equal employment opportunity that tied private resource development—and the trans Alaska pipeline specifically—to a larger national narrative about the expansion of liberal rights and equality. Alyeska’s community relations department certainly exaggerated the extent to which women were securing a previously male entitlement to equal access to all job categories, but my concern is not
strictly how and to what degree Alyeska misrepresented the reality of equal employment opportunity. Rather, I show that Alyeska and the regimes of representation the company fed created yet another interpretation of equal employment opportunity that existed alongside and established an interpretive frame for the programs I compare in the first four chapters. In the compelling narratives and images that travelled from Alyeska publications to national media to present day tributes to the pipeline, equal employment opportunity is tied to participation in pioneering as national development. It extended fuller economic citizenship to groups previously discriminated against based on their sex or race, in the form of contributing to a project framed as national necessity. This was a powerful and convincing vision of equal employment opportunity, one that promised unity instead of competition or conquest and the possibility continued expansion of individual liberties, energy development, and Westward movement.

Some might assume that Alaska is a place so different from the rest of the nation that its history does not reflect larger problems in United States history. It is a state not even connected to the contiguous U.S. Geographically, it shares more in common with Canada and Russia than the plains, deserts, forests, and mountains of the lower-48. Statehood came late, in 1959. Its cities are dwarfed by immense wilderness. Over half of the state’s acreage is owned by the federal government, in national parks and refuges. Alaska’s population does not resemble that of any other state; Alaska Natives were a majority of the territory’s population until the 1930s, and remain the largest minority in the state. Their relationship to the federal government did not follow the same course of other Native Americans. Alaska Natives were never subject to reservations, and since the 1970s they have been organized into corporations instead of tribes. Alaska’s economy has revolved around a few, primarily extractive industries. In addition, the
pipeline itself seems like an atypical project. The boom it created was a bright spot in a long stretch of economic decline and rising unemployment in America.

I argue, however, that these differences in fact illuminate historical processes and changes in the United States as a whole. Alaska is not so unique as to be exempt from the same historical forces as the rest of the nation, and where meaningful differences do exist, they make Alaska instructive rather than irrelevant in a wider context.

First, Alaska in the 1970s held an important symbolic position as America’s “Last Frontier” and was a tenet of national identity in the 1970s. Alaska’s monumental geography, scarcity of development, indigenous population, and inaccessibility all contributed to its mythology. People talked about Alaska and the pipeline in well-worn Western discourses of personal and national independence, strength, character, and discovery. But they also spoke in contemporary discourses of protecting wilderness and wildlife, assessing environmental impacts, and the previously unforeseen costs of development. They spoke of inclusion, civil rights, and equality, and fairness, positioning Native Americans, African Americans, and women as agents joining the project of American pioneering. Alaska’s emblematic status meant that when it became the stage hotly contested national issues—environmentalism, civil rights, feminism, labor unionism, poverty, the size and role of federal government, they were addressed with a heightened investment their outcomes. The trans Alaska pipeline represented a promise of return to national prosperity as well as an opportunity to get Western development right—a kind of “do-over” in which the nation would not repeat the destruction, exploitation, or conflict of the past.

Second, the trans Alaska pipeline was on the forefront of changes to the gender of economic citizenship in the late 1960s through 1970s. The construction of the pipeline occurred at a moment that the breadwinner liberalism that governed welfare and
employment opportunity of the Great Society was colliding with a contracting economy, feminist demands for economic inclusion, and weakened organized labor. The racial liberalism that accommodated civil rights demands, and relied on the prospect of continued economic prosperity in the 1960s, had to contend with the early signs of an economic neoliberalism which would undercut government social services and increasingly set the conditions for equal employment opportunity in the 1970s. As this dissertation shows, equal employment opportunity was comprised of many, sometimes competing, rights claims based on group identities. The tensions between the Alaska Plan, Alaska Native Hire, Local Hire, and affirmative action show that even the pipeline boom was not big enough to preempt the competition for access to jobs and priority in hiring. The comparison of four different plans shows that equal employment opportunity did not consist simply of the removal of barriers to opportunity; it had specific populations in mind and required government agencies, corporations, NGOs, funding structures, and unions find ways to put them into practice.

Third, this case study of the trans Alaska pipeline shows that equal employment opportunity, including affirmative action, was deeply indebted to manpower programs extending back to antipoverty initiatives of the 1960s. Manpower programs sought to alleviate unemployment exacerbated by discrimination and by the changing industrial composition of the American economy by re-making the workforce. These programs recruited, trained, rehabilitated, and acculturated target populations—youth, minorities, and the poor—to particular sets of skills and logics that made them more employable. They reflected a belief that, with some government interventions to reform the pool of labor to meet the needs of particular industries, full employment was within the realm of possibility. Equal employment opportunity programs relied heavily on the notion that sustained economic growth would provide the continual expansion of job opportunities.
that could accommodate the influx of minorities and women into workplaces. The trans Alaska pipeline provided a temporary bubble that made this belief still seem possible, even during an economic recession.

Fourth, the trans Alaska pipeline, though deeply shaped by the local politics, environments, demographics, economy, and culture of Alaska, transcends the local and teaches us about U.S. state formation in the 1960s and 1970s. Alaska was developing its infrastructure of politics and governance in the midst of the Great Society and the civil rights movement. Key institutions of that era—like commissions for human rights, civil rights legislation and enforcement agencies, antipoverty programs, manpower and employment programs—were foundational to the state of Alaska. Their aspirations were etched into the fabric of Alaskan politics and played out as the state met the challenges and growth of the 1970s. Some might assume that because Alaskan statehood was a rather recent event, Alaska would have been a marginal concern in Washington D.C. Not so. Alaska had a history of a high level of federal involvement and was at the forefront of a number of national concerns in the 1960s and ‘70s about American Indians, poverty, energy, and environmental conservation. Furthermore, Alaska, as a new state that struggled to break out of its colonial dependence on the federal government and secure autonomy, was a testing ground for the rearrangement of local and federal relationships in the 1970s. Affirmative action, CETA, Local Hire, and Alaska Native Hire were all shot through with a tense and changing relationship between local and federal power. In this case study of employment on the trans Alaska pipeline, we see that the federal state was dispersing its power and funding among local actors, but at the same time, setting clear limits on local autonomy.

Fifth and finally, the representations of equal employment on the trans Alaska pipeline are instructive for understanding how social movements are absorbed into
mainstream cultural understandings of the social order. Images and stories about women workers gained traction beyond Alaska in national discourses because they both recuperated older narrative grooves and served a purpose for contemporary debates. Feminists in hard hats elicited American mythology about colonizing projects on the western frontier. But they also enabled private industry to advertise their progressive role in an inclusive, democratic society. Women workers served as the company’s evidence that it was meeting the demands of antidiscrimination and affirmative action and even make the claim that energy development was agent of social equality. For women’s rights advocates, feminists in hardhats represented the potential of nontraditional jobs to be an avenue for women to achieve full economic citizenship and personal fulfillment within America’s capitalist democracy. For the nation, at a moment of economic and political vulnerability on a global scale, feminists in hardhats brought forceful civil rights demands of the 1960s and 70s into the purview of a national progress narrative. Women workers on the trans Alaska pipeline have been used to convey a message that the territorial expansion of the nation and capitalist development of natural resources provided the conditions for the extension of rights and citizenship to women and minorities.
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Interviews

Debra Bell, interview by author, 22 February 2011, Carlsbad, California, in person with digital recording

Karen Day, interviewed by author, 19 July 2011, Portland, Oregon, in person with digital recording

Phil Day, interviewed by author, 19 July 2011, Portland, Oregon, in person with digital recording

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Biography

Georgia Welch will receive her Ph.D. in United States history and certificate in feminist studies from Duke University in spring 2015. Her dissertation is entitled “Right of Way: The Trans Alaska Pipeline and Equal Employment Opportunity, 1968-77.” It examines the influence of breadwinner liberalism and manpower employment programs on the emergence of affirmative action by comparing four different equal employment opportunity programs for women, minorities, indigenous people, and local residents during the construction of the most expensive private engineering project in US history. Her article examining the tensions between the famous 1968 feminist protest against the Miss America Pageant, and the less well-known first Miss Black America contest, a civil rights protest that took place on the same day in Atlantic City will appear in Feminist Formations in Fall 2015. She received the Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women’s Studies in 2014.