

## HISTORY TIMELINE

### Suacit

Traditional: The area around present-day Valdez was known as Suacit by the Chugach Alutiiq people of Prince William Sound. The area was used as a trade route between the coast and Interior Alaska by Chugach people as Ahtna people from the Copper River Valley.

1778: Captain James Cook explored the Sound, naming it Sandwich Sound for the Earl of Sandwich. British mapmakers later changed the name to Prince William Sound.

1790. Spanish explorer Salvador Fidalgo entered the Sound to claim the region for Spain. He named the Suacit area “Valdez” after a Spanish admiral.

1800s: Chugach people from the village of Tatitlek (about 20 miles from Valdez) began trading sea otter pelts with Russian traders at the village of Nuchek in the Sound.

### Old Town

1897-1898: Gold seekers came to Valdez to follow the “All American Route” over Valdez Glacier to the Interior. A tent city sprang up and the town of Valdez was formed.

1899: The U.S. Army cut a trail through Keystone Canyon, providing an alternate route to the Interior. The trail is now the Richardson Highway.

1907: A shootout between two rival railroad companies ended Valdez’s hope of becoming a railroad town. A half-completed tunnel is still visible in Keystone Canyon.

1910s – 1950s: Valdez served as a crucial port for shipping supplies into the Interior on the Richardson Highway.

1964: The Good Friday Earthquake, the largest in American history, struck 45 miles from Valdez, devastating the town, and claimed the lives of more than 30 people.

### New Town

1964-1967: The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers assisted locals in transporting houses and buildings to a new town site four miles away. The original town site is preserved and may be visited.

1975-1977: The 800 mile long Trans-Alaska Pipeline was built to carry oil from Alaska’s North Slope to a terminal in Valdez, the nearest ice-free port.



1989: The largest oil spill in American history occurred when the oil tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground on Bligh Reef, 25 miles south of Valdez. The oil spread out across coastal Alaska, and Valdez became the center for the oil clean-up effort.

1991-2000: Valdez hosted the World Extreme Skiing Championships, tapping into the 1990s zeitgeist for extreme sports.

## DISCOVER MORE

### Museums

- Valdez Museum & Historical Archive: [www.ValdezMuseum.org](http://www.ValdezMuseum.org)
- Maxine & Jesse Whitney Museum: [www.MJWhitneyMuseum.org](http://www.MJWhitneyMuseum.org)

## MEDIA CONTACT

For additional information or media inquiries please contact:

### Valdez Convention & Visitors Bureau (Discover Valdez)

Director of Tourism Development Juno Kim: [tourism@valdezalaska.org](mailto:tourism@valdezalaska.org)

Services Manager Keenan J. Britt: [services@valdezalaska.org](mailto:services@valdezalaska.org)