

# Research Tip    Prestatehood Statutes

## I.    History<sup>1</sup>

For the first 17 years after Alaska was purchased from Russia in 1867, the U.S. Army, U.S. Navy, and Revenue Cutter Service were the governmental agencies responsible for law and justice in Alaska.

It wasn't until 1884 when the District Organic Act (First Organic Act) provided a partial government for Alaska, designating it as a "district." The First Organic Act created a civil and judicial government and declared that the laws of Oregon would be the laws for Alaska. The Oregon codes were replaced with laws drafted specifically for Alaska with the 1899 Alaska Penal Code and the 1900 Alaska Civil Code.

Several compilations of these various codes were arranged in the years following their passage. *The Laws of Alaska; Embracing the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Political Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, and the Civil Code* (Carter Code), was arranged by Thomas Carter in 1900. Also completed in 1900 was *Alaska Codes, Political, Civil and Civil Procedure: Approved June 6, 1900* (Boone Code) by Charles T. Boone. An additional compilation was done in 1906 by John Charlton, the *Compilation of the Acts of Congress and Treaties Relating to Alaska from March 30, 1867, to March 3, 1905* (Charlton Code).

The First Organic Act was problematic in that it did not create a legislature nor permit Alaskans a delegate in Congress. These issues were remedied with the 1906 Alaska Delegate Act, which allowed Alaskans to elect their first representative to Congress, and the 1912 Territorial Organic Act (Second Organic Act), which gave Alaska territorial status and created the territorial legislature, allowing for self-governance of the new territory. The *Compiled Laws of the Territory of Alaska, 1913* was the first code published for the new Territory of Alaska. Territorial codes were also published in 1933 and 1949.

The Alaska Constitutional Convention was held during the winter of 1955-56 in Fairbanks. The Alaska Constitution was voted on and passed in 1956, paving the way for statehood. The Alaska Statehood Act was signed into law in July 1958 and Alaska officially became the 49<sup>th</sup> state on January 3, 1959.

## II.    Where to Find

The following is a list of links to electronic versions of each document. Links to the Library of Congress, HathiTrust, Govinfo, and the Alaska Legislature are freely accessible to anyone regardless of location. HeinOnline and Westlaw are accessible from court and law library computers. Most of these documents are also available in print at the Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau law libraries.

**1884    District Organic Act (First Organic Act); 23 Stat. 24 (May 17, 1884)**

- [Library of Congress](#)

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<sup>1</sup> For more information, see Jessica van Buren, *Alaska Prestatehood Legal Research Resources in Prestatehood Legal Materials: A Fifty-State Research Guide, Including New York City and the District of Columbia, Volume 1, A-M 31-50* (Michael Chiorazzi and Marguerite Most eds., Haworth Information Press, 2005).

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- [HeinOnline](#)
- [Westlaw](#)

**1899 Alaska Penal Code;** 30 Stat. 1253 (March 3, 1899)

- [Library of Congress](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)
- [Westlaw](#)

**1900 Alaska Civil Code;** 31 Stat. 321 (June 6, 1900)

- [Library of Congress](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)
- [Westlaw](#)

**1900 The Laws of Alaska; Embracing the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Political Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, and the Civil Code (Carter Code)**

[Dates for this publication are unclear. Publication for this code is sometimes listed as 1900 and sometimes as 1907, but it is not clear if these are identical copies or individual editions. For assistance, contact library staff.]

- [HathiTrust](#) (1900)
- [HathiTrust](#) (1907)
- [HeinOnline](#) (1900)

**1900 Alaska Codes, Political, Civil and Civil Procedure: Approved June 6, 1900 (Boone Code)**

- [HeinOnline](#)

**1906 Compilation of the Acts of Congress and Treaties Relating to Alaska from March 30, 1867, to March 3, 1905 (Charlton Code)**

- [HathiTrust](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)

**1906 Alaska Delegate Act;** 34 Stat. 169 (May 7, 1906)

- [Library of Congress](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)
- [Westlaw](#)

**1912 Territorial Organic Act (Second Organic Act);** 37 Stat. 512 (August 24, 1912)

- [Library of Congress](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)
- [Westlaw](#)

**1913 Compiled Laws of the Territory of Alaska (CLA)**

- [HathiTrust](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)

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## **1933    Compiled Laws of Alaska, 1933 (CLA)**

- [HeinOnline](#)

## **1949    Compiled Laws of Alaska, 1949 (ACLA)**

[See also Cumulative Supplement to the Compiled Laws of Alaska, 1949.]

- [HeinOnline](#)

## **1958    Annotated Cumulative Supplement to the Compiled Laws of Alaska, 1949 (ACLA)**

[Accompanies Compiled Laws of Alaska, 1949.]

- [HeinOnline](#)

## **1958    Alaska Statehood Act; 72 Stat. 339 (July 7, 1958)**

- [Govinfo](#)
- [Alaska Legislature](#)
- [HeinOnline](#)
- [Westlaw](#)

### **III.    Law Library**

For more information or for research assistance, contact library staff at [library@akcourts.us](mailto:library@akcourts.us) or (907) 264-0585.