

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE-University of Alaska

About Homesteading in Alaska

The homestead law is designed as an agricultural settlement law for purposes of farming. Anyone seeking land who does not desire a farm should inquire about the many other laws by which land may be obtained, an explanation follows this chapter.

All unappropriated public lands in Alaska adaptable to agricultural use are subject to homestead settlement or entry if they are not mineral or saline in character, and are not occupied for the purpose of trade or business and have not been embraced within the limits of any withdrawal, reservation or incorporated town or city.

Persons desiring to make homestead settlements or entries should first fully inform themselves as to the character and quality of the lands they desire to enter and should in no case apply to enter until they have fully examined the land. Satisfactory information as to the character and unrecorded prior use of the public lands cannot be obtained in any other manner.

Information of record as to whether a particular tract of land is subject to homestead settlement or entry may be obtained from the Land Office of the land district in which the tract is located. The public land records are available to the public between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR A HOMESTEAD

1. Applicant must be 21 years of age or the head of a family. A veteran, under 21 years of age, who is entitled to veterans' benefits, is also qualified to make a homestead entry.

2. Must be a citizen of the United States or have legally declared his intention to become a citizen. In the case of the latter, patent will be withheld until the entryman receives his citizenship. In fact, final proof can be made only by citizens of the United States.

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3. Must not have perfected homestead entries for a total of more than 160 acres in Alaska. A Homestead entry in the states is no bar against homesteading 160 acres in Alaska.

4. A married woman is not qualified to make a homestead entry if she is residing with her husband and he is the head of the family and the main support.

5. Military service records are necessary in order to substitute creditable service for residence. It is the applicant's responsibility to furnish same. This may be a certified copy of certificate of discharge, or where same is not available, applicant's statement, corroborated as far as possible, giving all data available regarding his military service, as other acceptable evidence.

HOW TO FILE

SURVEYED LAND

The Homestead Entry application must be filed on Form 4-007. It is suggested for legibility that the application be typed or written in ink (if possible). All questions should be answered. The instructions to applicant on the reverse side of the application should be read carefully before attempting to fill out the application.

An application to enter must be accompanied by a non-refundable service charge of \$25.00, without regard to the amount of acreage.

UNSURVEYED LAND

Notice of location of settlement or occupancy claim in Alaska (Form 2560-1) is filed in duplicate in the land office after you have initiated a homestead settlement claim by actual settlement or occupancy of the land as described below. A \$10.00 filing fee must accompany the location notice.

Settlement is initiated through the personal acts of the settler placing improvements upon the land and/or establishing residence thereon. A person making settlement

on unsurveyed land is required by law, in order to fully protect his rights, to do two things within 90 days after date of settlement. They are: file a notice of the settlement in the land office, and post a copy on the land. Unless a notice of the claim is filed within 90 days after date of settlement, no credit can be given for residence and cultivation prior to the filing of notice. When filing the notice of location it is extremely important to give the date on which settlement or occupancy was made. The mere filing of a location notice without actual appropriation of the land is not sufficient to hold the land against valid appropriation of another settler and such notices are not acceptable. Settlement or occupancy requires the staking of the land and placing improvements on and using the land, followed within a reasonable time by further acts of settlement and improvement. The term "settlement" has further been defined as "comprehensive acts done on the land by way of establishing or preparing to establish an actual personal residence, going thereon, and with reasonable diligence, arranging to occupy it as a home to the exclusion of one elsewhere." The law makes it plain that a homesteader must proceed faithfully and honestly to comply with all the requirements.

The controlling date on a homestead location notice is the date of filing in the land office. However, prior to the filing of the location notice there must have been some appropriation or settlement of the land.

Metes and Bounds Description: Unsurveyed land must be described by metes and bounds. Such a description consists of a definite starting point known as Corner No. 1, continuing a definite distance in a definite direction to Corner No. 2, thence to Corner No. 3, thence to Corner No. 4, and back to the point of beginning. The directions must be cardinal directions (north, south, east and west) whenever possible. The all-important point of beginning must be described accurately in relation to a survey monument where possible, or to natural features such as a mouth of a creek or stream, river junctions, mountain peaks, or other prominent points or natural objects appearing on the map of Alaska. Mileposts, towns, bridges or road junctions are generally not good in that they often change, but they may be utilized as a supplement to the description. Narrow strips of land along streams, water courses or other natural objects will not be permitted.

(A claim will normally not be acceptable if it is more than four times as long as it is wide). The approximate description of the land, by section, township, and range as it will appear when surveyed must be furnished; or, if this cannot be done, a statement must be filed setting forth a valid reason why such a description cannot be given. Where it is not possible to tie the point of beginning to a survey monument, the latitude and longitude must be given with as great accuracy as possible. A free hand sketch showing the point of beginning and the outline of the tract claimed is helpful, and often it is advisable to obtain a U.S. Geological Survey topographic map of the area and draw in the claim and submit this with the location notice. If required ask the land office for further information regarding marking and describing unsurveyed lands.

HOW TO PROVE UP (REQUIREMENTS)

RESIDENCE -- The homestead law contemplates that the homestead will be the person's home. Therefore, residence is defined as "a home to the exclusion of a home elsewhere".

Establishment of Residence -- Residence must be established on the land within 6 months from date of the Notice of Allowance, or filing of the location notice as the case may be. However, an extension of 6 months may be approved when the filing of an application containing a witnessed statement that residence could not be established within the first 6 months because of climatic reasons, sickness or other unavoidable cause, and a \$5.00 service fee, is submitted to the land office. The entry year will still be based on the date of the notice of allowance, or the date the location notice was filed, regardless of whether or not a request for an extension of time to establish residence is made.

Maintenance of Residence -- The entryman is required to maintain his residence on the homestead each year during the first, second, and third "residence years." The first residence year begins on the date actual residence is established on the land and normally does not coincide with the entry years or calendar years. During each residence year, a homesteader is entitled by law to absent

himself from the land for not more than two periods, aggregating as much as five months. However, two absences in different residence years must be separated by a substantial period of residence on the land, if they together total more than five months. An application is not required for such absences, but the entryman must file notice in the land office of the time of his leaving and the time of his returning to the land.

Residence Requirements for Veterans -- Certain veterans may apply their service toward the residence requirement. Veterans of World War II and the following conflicts may apply their service credit as follows (43 CFR, Pt 181):

| Number months of Service Credit | Number of months of residence required during the first three years after entry | | |
|------------------------------------|---|----------|----------|
| | 1st year | 2nd year | 3rd year |
| 19 or more | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| 18 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| 17 | 7 | 2 | 0 |
| 16 | 7 | 3 | 0 |
| 15 | 7 | 4 | 0 |
| 14 | 7 | 5 | 0 |
| 13 | 7 | 6 | 0 |
| 7 to 12 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| 6 | 7 | 7 | 1 |
| 5 | 7 | 7 | 2 |
| 4 | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| 3 | 7 | 7 | 4 |
| less than 90 days | 7 | 7 | 7 |

Reduction in Residence Requirement -- The manager is authorized to grant a reduction in yearly residence requirements to homesteaders who make proper showing in their application that the climatic conditions made residence on the homestead for 7 months in each year a hardship. In such cases, a reduction in the terms of residence to 6 months in each year over a period of 4 years, or to 5 months in each year over a period of 5 years, can be allowed. If you wish to avail yourself of this provision, you must file in the land office an application corroborated by 2 witnesses setting forth the climatic conditions which render it a hardship for you to reside on the land for 7 months a year. The statement of claimant and the witnesses must be submitted during the first year.

Leave of Absence -- After establishment of residence, and under certain conditions, a leave of absence may be granted for a year or less. This type of leave is used where failure or destruction of crops, sickness or other unavoidable casualty has prevented the homesteader from supporting himself by cultivation of the land. A \$5.00 service charge is required. The period during which a homesteader is absent pursuant to duly granted leave cannot be counted in his favor.

CULTIVATION -- Since the homestead law is designed for agricultural settlement it requires cultivation of the land before patent. Section 2291, Revised Statute, as amended, and 43 CFR 2567.5 defines cultivation as, "consisting of actual breaking of the soil, followed by planting, sowing of seed and tillage for a crop other than native grasses."

Webster's New World Dictionary defines the following: Tillage -- to prepare land for the raising of crops, as by plowing, fertilizing, discing, etc. Cultivate -- to prepare and use land for growing crops; tillage. To break up the surface soil in order to destroy weeds, prevent crusting and preserve moisture (prepare seed bed). To grow from seeds, bulbs, shoots, etc. (The cultivatable season in most parts of Alaska is generally considered to run from mid-May to mid-September).

Some Further Important Items -- Roots and stumps of cut trees must be removed in order for the area to be considered cleared and ready for cultivation. Burn piles and windrows cannot be counted as cleared and cultivated acreage. After clearing the seedbed must be prepared by breaking the ground with a plow, heavy disk or some other appropriate machine. "Walking" heavy tracked equipment across the land while churning the tracks will generally not break the ground sufficiently to prepare a seedbed.

The normal requirement for all homesteaders sets the following minimum amount: first entry year no cultivation required; second entry year, 1/16th of the total area required; third entry year, 1/8th of the total area required, and fourth and fifth years, if Final Proof is not submitted before this time, the 1/8th minimum must be kept in cultivation. The "entry year" is fixed from the date the notice of allowance is issued, or the date the notice of location is filed in the land office, as the case may be.

There are two exceptions to the regular cultivation requirement: 1) Commutation Proof -- persons filing commutation proof are required to show substantially continuous residence upon the land for at least 14 months following the date of establishment of residence. If a commutation proof is filed before the end of the second "entry" year, cultivation of only 1/16 of the area must be shown. However, if commutation proof is delayed until the third entry year, cultivation of 1/8 of the area during the third entry year must be shown (For necessary fees refer to Final Proof) 2) The requirement as to cultivation may be reduced if the land entered is so hilly or rough, the soil so alkaline, compact, sandy, or swampy, or the precipitation or moisture so light as not to make cultivation practicable. However, this condition must not have been apparent at the time the land was first taken up. No reduction in area of cultivation will be permitted on account of expense in removing the standing timber from the land. Application for reduction in cultivation must be accompanied by a \$5.00 filing fee.

A reduction may also be allowed if the entryman, after making entry and establishing residence, has met with misfortune which renders him reasonably unable to cultivate the prescribed area. In this case an application for reduction is not filed, but notice of the misfortune and of its nature must be submitted to the Manager of the Land Office, within 60 days after its occurrence; upon satisfactory proof regarding the misfortune at the time of submitting final proof a reduction during the period of disability following the misfortune may be permitted.

Habitable House -- Habitable house means a dwelling suitable for year-round occupancy. The homestead law requires that a habitable house be on the land at the time of filing final proof. There are no requirements as to size or materials.

FINAL PROOF -- Upon completion of requirements as to residence, cultivation and habitable house, the applicant is ready to file Final Proof, which consists of the testimony of claimant and testimony of each of two witnesses.

Final Proof must be filed before expiration of the 5 year statutory life on both surveyed and unsurveyed land. (Using Form 2211-2) Final Proof must be accompanied by a nonrefundable service charge of \$25.00 without regard to

the amount of acreage. Commutation Proof is also filed on Form 2211-2. All Final Proofs must be made under oath. Final Proof papers for unsurveyed lands must be accompanied by a Homestead Entry Application, Form 2510-1 and a non-refundable service charge of \$25.00.

PUBLICATION: POSTING AND SURVEY

Notice for publication is issued upon acceptance of the claimant's Final Proof if the land has been surveyed. The necessary papers for publication are mailed to the entryman who takes or sends them to the designated newspaper. The publication period for rectangularly surveyed land is 5 weeks and on special surveys it is 9 weeks. In the case of special surveys only a copy of the notice and plat must be posted on the land during period of publication. Upon completion of the publication the entryman is responsible for filing the publisher's affidavit of publication with the land office. If all is in order and if no protests are received within 30 days from date of publication, final certificate is forwarded to the Washington Office for patent. Patents cannot be issued until the land is surveyed and the plat filed in the land office. Upon receipt of the patent, the land office then mails the patent to the homesteader advising the patentee to have it recorded at the local District Recorders Office. This is for the protection of the patentee and is required by State Law.

There is no further dealing with the land office with regard to registration, taxes, etc., after receipt of patent.

ADDITIONAL ENTRIES

Contiguous Land -- Section 2 of the Act of April 28, 1904 (33 Stat. 527; 43 U.S.C. 213), as amended, authorizes any person who has previously entered less than 160 acres of land under the homestead law, who has not perfected the entry, or, if proof has been made, who still owns and occupies the land, to enter other and additional land lying contiguous to the original entry which, with the land first entered, will not in the aggregate exceed 160 acres. Applicants for an additional entry under this act must file their application on Form 2510-1 accompanied by a \$25.00 nonrefundable service charge.

Before final proof may be submitted, the entryman must cultivate an amount equal to one-eighth of the area of the additional entry for at least one year after the additional entry is made and must maintain this cultivation until the submission of proof. This cultivation may be performed on the original entry, on the additional entry, or both, but must be in addition to that required and relied upon in making proof on the original entry. Residence must be made on the original entry and not, repeat not, on the additional entry.

Final proof for an additional entry under this act may be submitted only at the time of final proof for the original entry, or subsequent thereto, but must be submitted within the five (5) year statutory life. Commutation proof cannot be filed for entries under this act.

Contiguous or Noncontiguous Land -- Section 6 of the act of March 2, 1889 (25 Stat. 854; 43 U.S.C. 214), authorizes any qualified person who has previously filed final proof for a homestead entry of less than 160 acres to enter so much additional land, either contiguous or noncontiguous, to the land originally entered, as when combined with the acreage of the original entry will not exceed 160 acres. Applicants under this act are not required to show that they still own or occupy the original entry. The entryman is required to comply with the residence and cultivation requirements of the ordinary homestead law and must have a habitable house on the land before submission of final proof.

APPLICATION TO AMEND

An application to amend should generally be based upon the fact that an error was made in the original description of the land. An amendment may also be granted where, through no fault or neglect of the homesteader, the land is found to be so unfit or unsuitable for occupancy or cultivation as to make it practically useless. This last amendment may not be granted except where at least one legal subdivision of the original entry is retained in the amended entry. An application for amendment should be filed on Form 4-005, and must be accompanied by a \$10 service charge.

CONTESTS

Any homestead entry or settlement claim may be contested if the homesteader is failing to live up to the requirements of the homestead law. A contest may be initiated by either the government or a private party.

If the charges brought would warrant the cancellation of the entry, if proven to be true, and the answer by the entryman denies the charges, the contest will be referred to a Hearings Examiner and a hearing will be held. This hearing is somewhat like a court trial and is conducted for the purpose of obtaining the facts in the case.

SECOND ENTRY

Where a person has made a homestead entry or entries but failed to perfect them, his right to make another homestead entry is governed by the Act of September 5, 1914, which provides that the applicant must file an application for second entry and show, to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Interior, that the prior entry or entries were made in good faith, were lost, forfeited or abandoned because of matters beyond his control, and that he has not speculated in his right, nor committed a fraud or attempted fraud in connection with such prior entry or entries. The determination whether or not the second entry is allowed is left to the discretion of the Bureau of Land Management. Title 18 U.S.C. Section 1001, makes it a crime for any person to knowingly and willfully make to any department or agency of the United States any false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations as to any matter within its jurisdiction.

Character of the Land -- As each applicant is required to state that he is well acquainted with the character of the land described in his application, and as all entries are made subject to the rights of prior settlers, the applicant can not make the statement that he is acquainted with the character of the land, or be sure that the land is not already appropriated by a settler, until after he has actually inspected it. The character and occupancy of public lands cannot be determined in any other way.

Information as to whether a particular tract of land is subject to entry may be obtained from the Land Office of the land district in which the tract is located.

We hope that we have answered your questions pertaining to homesteading in the State of Alaska, and will be happy to help you with any specific problems pertaining to your entry. Please remember that for the sake of brevity, homestead requirements herein are general; therefore, any unintentional conflict or omission in this pamphlet must be subordinated to the land laws and regulations. The full regulations are found in 43 CFR 2567, 2906, and 1821.

TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS IN ALASKA

Bob Thomas, Alaska Dept of Hwys

"You can't get there from here" describes surface transportation facilities into most areas of Alaska. A limited highway network connects several of the major cities with the lower "48" via the Alaska Highway. A unique marine highway utilizing ferry ships expands this network to serve major coastal communities between Ketchikan and Kodiak. Communities located on major rivers are served during the summer months by river barge. Communities located along smaller rivers may be served by an annual river barge operated during spring or fall high water. All other communities depend nearly entirely upon air transportation for all goods and services. Persons who are considering settling on Alaskan lands are *CAUTIONED* that land available for this purpose may well likely to remote with no surface access. A current highway map may be obtained by writing Alaska Department of Economic Development, Alaska Travel Division, Pouch E, Juneau, Alaska 99801.

2) The notice of location should be made in only one name, preferably the husband.

3) A serial number is assigned upon filing notice of location. This number should ALWAYS be referred to in inquiries. A check is then made by the land office regarding the availability of the land. A mineral report is also requested from the U.S. Geological Survey concerning the mineral character of the particular area.

If the land is unappropriated and not valuable for minerals, a "clearance letter" is sent to the claimant indicating it is okay to proceed. If the U.S. Geological Survey map indicates that the land is valuable for locatable minerals the claim is completely invalid. If oil and gas or other leasable minerals are determined to be on the property the claim is invalid UNLESS waiver of the mineral right is signed by the claimant.

4) Within five years after signing the notice of location, all requirements must be met in order to apply to purchase the land.

How to Describe the Land -- 1) Surveyed land: The description must be an aliquot part of the legal subdivision of the section, township, range and meridian. For example: N 1/2 S 1/2, Section 12, T1N, R3W, FM. BLM can help but cannot write them for you.

2) Unsurveyed land, Metes and Bounds Description: Such a description consists of a definite starting point, called corner number 1, continue a certain distance in a definite direction by true heading (compass gives magnetic heading so be sure to make proper correction) to corner number 2 and then to corner number 3, corner number 4 and back to corner number 1 where you began. Boundaries must be in a straight line unless bordered on one or more sides by a stream or other fixed object. Point number 1 must be described in relation to a survey monument or to a natural feature such as a bridge, stream mouth, etc. The latitude and longitude must be as accurate as possible, if a survey monument is not available. For additional information ask for ASO 1821-1 - How to describe and mark unsurveyed land.

Draw in the claim on a U.S. Geological Survey Topographic map and submit this with the notice of location.

ALL SURVEYS ARE MADE BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT. After residence and improvement requirements have been met you are entitled to a free survey. After the survey has been completed, the plat of survey drawn up and approved in Washington, D.C., it is filed in the land office of the Bureau of Land Management. The applicant is then notified and publication will be authorized. PATENTS CANNOT BE ISSUED UNTIL THE LAND IS SURVEYED AND THE PLAT IS FILED IN THE LAND OFFICE.

Application to Purchase -- After improvements have been completed, and the residence requirements met, an application to purchase (ASO 2233) may be filed with the Bureau of Land Management. But this MUST be done within the five-year statutory life. Two copies are filed if the land is surveyed, three if unsurveyed.

Purchase price is \$2.50 per acre, \$10.00 is the minimum price. A filing fee of \$10.00 is required with the application to purchase, surveyed or unsurveyed land.

Requirements: NON-VETERAN -- The applicant must show at the time the application to purchase is filed that you have lived on the land not less than five months each year in each of three (3) years after residence was established, and that residence was in a HABITABLE HOUSE, which means a dwelling suitable for year-round occupancy. VETERAN -- Veterans of World War II and thereafter may apply their service credit toward a homesite residence requirements as follows:

| HOMESITE | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----|----|----|----|------|---|---|
| No. months in service | 17 or more | 16 | 15 | 14 | 13 | 5-12 | 4 | 3 |
| No. months must reside during first year after residence is established | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| No. months second year | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| No. months third year | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

A year is defined as being 12 months from the date the application was filed (not a calendar or fiscal year).

You are not required to establish residence within the first two years of filing the notice of location (Form 2560-1) but you must perform acts of appropriation in a continuous manner to identify yourself with the land.

Example: Assume a notice of location (Form 2560-1) was filed January 1, 1974. You begin to clear the land, build your home and perform other acts of improvement. You do not actually live on the land during the first year after filing the notice of location. On May 1, 1975 you move to the property. Minimum residence is then computed as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| May 1, 1975 - May 1, 1976 | 1st year residence |
| May 1, 1976 - May 1, 1977 | 2nd year residence |
| May 1, 1977 - May 1, 1978 | 3rd year residence |

Remember you must show residence of five (5) months in each of the three residence years unless veterans credit is claimed. Then you are ready to file application to purchase. 1) Residence must be in a habitable house. 2) Military record (discharge papers) should be filed with the notice of location (Form 2560-1) if not then, with the application to purchase.

After the application to purchase (ASO 2233) has been filed with the land office, a review is made to determine the sufficiency of the application. If application to purchase is in order a Bureau of Land Management field examiner will examine the claim to determine that compliance with the regulations have been met. If requirements have been met and land is unsurveyed, survey of the land will then be scheduled.

After the land is surveyed or if it is already surveyed, the purchase price is paid (\$2.50 per acre or not less than \$10.00) and authorization to publicize in a designated newspaper is granted. Full instructions for publication is sent to the applicant.

After the last date of publication there is a 30-day waiting period. Anyone who feels the requirements have not been met by the applicant has the right to protest. The plat of survey and notice of publication must be posted on the land for the duration of the publication and adverse period. After the publication period the applicant is responsible for filing the affidavit of posting and the newspaper publisher's affidavit of publication in the Bureau of Land Management's office.

Final Certificate and Patent -- After the expiration of the 30 day adverse period, if no contest was filed by the public, and all else is satisfactory, final certificate is prepared and sent to Anchorage, Alaska for issuance of patent. Patent is mailed to the applicant, at which time it must be recorded in the Alaska State Division of Lands, district land office. After patent is issued there are no further dealings with the Bureau of Land Management's office.

For actual regulations concerning Homestead Act, see title 43 of the Code of Federal Regulations, subpart 2503. Status records of Alaska lands are open to the public and the available lands may be determined by checking these records at the Bureau of Land Management's land office, hours 10 - 4 Monday through Friday. An applicant must be 21 years old or the head of a family, a citizen of the United States, or have formally declared intention to become a citizen.

22 DEC 1980

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

HOMESTEADING IN ALASKA??

Perhaps you've heard there's free land in Alaska for homesteaders. You want the glamour of carving your own home from the Alaska wilderness. We would suggest that a prospective homesteader check all information available very carefully and obtain advice from several sources before deciding to throw fate to the winds and come North to homestead. Other sources of information include the Soil Conservation Service, the Agricultural Extension Service, and the State of Alaska.

For most purposes, homesteading in Alaska is a thing of the past. You can't pitch a tent on the outskirts of Anchorage, claim 160 acres, and call it a homestead. The Homestead Law of 1862 allowed farmers to obtain land for a farm at low cost. This law has never been repealed, and to get a homestead you must start a farm. In other words: if you want land for any other purpose but farming, you can't homestead.

What Land is Available?

In the Lower 48, most of the lands suitable for homesteading have been in private ownership for decades. As homesteaders moved farther west into mountainous or arid regions, they met with less and less success. Today, in the Lower 48 or even in Alaska, there are almost no remaining areas of public lands which are suitable for homesteading or farming development.

The only lands now open to homesteading in Alaska are called "unreserved National Resource Lands." As of October 1973, roughly 11 million acres of unreserved National Resource Lands remain in Alaska. In general, this land is remote and inaccessible.

What is the Available Land Like?

The climate is rugged. January temperatures average from -10°F. to +10°F., with July temperatures averaging 40°F. to 60°F. Approximately 16 inches of precipitation falls yearly, with part of it as the 32- to 64-inch yearly snowfall. The amount of precipitation is comparable to semi-arid areas of the West in the Lower 48, so this could be considered an Arctic desert.

Most of the areas open for homesteading are in the continuous permafrost zone. This means that the ground is permanently frozen, although the uppermost inches of soil may thaw in summer. Farming may be handicapped or impossible on permafrost areas. Ground water there is

Non-existent transportation, small population, and distance from markets combine to make marketing of farm products difficult. Some Alaska food products cannot be profitably grown in Alaska because they cost more to grow than the cost of growing them elsewhere and transporting them to Alaska.

The cost of clearing land is expensive, and still higher in remote areas. Freight costs for equipment, fertilizer, and other necessities to areas where land is still available will be high. All freight must go by air to the nearest airstrip. From there, you would need to find other means of transportation to get it to your homestead, as no commercial transportation is available.

What Other Problems Does a Homesteader Face?

You will probably miss such modern facilities as running water, electricity, telephones, television and radio although these are not necessities. Selecting a suitable homestead is not simply finding a good piece of land to farm. You must consider your personal and social needs and those of your family. Isolation from schools, churches, hospitals, post offices, neighbors, and community facilities may make living difficult or dangerous.

What Qualifications Must a Homesteader Have?

To homestead you must be 21 years of age or older, or head of a household. Only U.S. citizens may homestead, and they may claim up to 160 acres of land — 1/4 square mile. A woman may homestead, but a husband and wife may claim only one homestead.

In general, to get a deed to the land you claim, you must:

1. Pay a \$10 filing fee to the U.S. Government
 2. Build a habitable house on the land
 3. Cultivate 1/8 of the land
 4. Reside on the land for at least 7 months a year for 3 years, with certain credits given for prior military service
 5. Pay a \$50 final proof fee to U.S. Government.
- For the specific regulations, which are too lengthy to explain here, contact the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage Land Office.

How Successful Have Other Homesteaders in Alaska Been?

Roughly 2/3 of the persons who applied for home-

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Most of the areas open for homesteading are in the continuous permafrost zone. This means that the ground is permanently frozen, although the uppermost inches of soil may thaw in summer. Farming may be handicapped or impossible on permafrost areas. Ground water there is often brackish or salty, and much of this land has no water available for domestic uses. Much of the available land is marsh, tundra, muskeg, or barren. Small forests of spruce or birch may be present but are not of commercial quality, and the land is largely ungrazed. Even in areas with the best summer climate, the long winter presents its own special problems.

What Crops Could Be Grown?

Wide differences in climate in Alaska determine what crops or livestock can be grown, but we know of no successful farms in the areas now open to homesteading. You won't find corn, cotton, or orchards in Alaska even near Anchorage because these crops are not adapted to northern climates. Beef cattle are usually unprofitable because they must be fed for seven winter months when there is no grazing. The open lands have a short 60- to 90-day growing season which would make early planting imperative — if you can find a crop which will adapt to infertile soil, poor runoff, small amounts of rainfall, and the harsh northern climate.

How Much Would It Cost to Homestead?

No definite figures can be quoted for the cost of developing a homestead into a profitable full-time farm. If it were possible at all in the areas where lands are available (and it may not be possible), costs would be extremely high. In addition to the initial costs for starting a farm, a homesteader must have enough capital to sustain his family for 5 to 10 years or until the farm begins to yield a regular income. Many people who come to Alaska with high hopes and little money have little knowledge of the problems involved. The cost of clearing a homestead, constructing buildings, and equipping a new farm may run from \$50,000 to \$200,000 or greater.

Alaska has almost no transportation to the areas where homesteading land is still available. There are no roads, no public transportation, no boats, and no railroads to the available land. To reach this land, you must fly to the nearest airstrip or lake and then go to the land on foot.

Non-existent transportation, small population, and distance from markets combine to make marketing of farm products difficult. Some Alaska food products cannot be profitably grown in Alaska because they cost more to grow than the cost of growing them elsewhere and transporting them to Alaska.

The cost of clearing land is expensive, and still higher in remote areas. Freight costs for equipment, fertilizer, and other necessities to areas where land is still available will be high. All freight must go by air to the nearest airstrip. From there, you would need to find other means of transportation to get it to your homestead, as no commercial transportation is available.

What Other Problems Does a Homesteader Face?

You will probably miss such modern facilities as running water, electricity, telephones, television and radio although these are not necessities. Selecting a suitable homestead is not simply finding a good piece of land to farm. You must consider your personal and social needs and those of your family. Isolation from schools, churches, hospitals, post offices, neighbors, and community facilities may make living difficult or dangerous.

What Qualifications Must a Homesteader Have?

To homestead you must be 21 years of age or older, or head of a household. Only U.S. citizens may homestead, and they may claim up to 160 acres of land — 1/4 square mile. A woman may homestead, but a husband and wife may claim only one homestead.

In general, to get a deed to the land you claim, you must:

1. Pay a \$10 filing fee to the U.S. Government
2. Build a habitable house on the land
3. Cultivate 1/8 of the land
4. Reside on the land for at least 7 months a year for 3 years, with certain credits given for prior military service
5. Pay a \$50 final proof fee to U.S. Government.

For the specific regulations, which are too lengthy to explain here, contact the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage Land Office.

How Successful Have Other Homesteaders in Alaska Been?

Roughly 2/3 of the persons who applied for homesteads in Alaska have been unable to fulfill the requirements and get a deed of ownership to the land. Most of these people attempted to homestead lands far more suitable than the 11 million acres presently open for homesteading. In recent years, the number of successful homesteads has fallen.

It is illegal to homestead on lands closed to homesteading. Homesteads staked on withdrawn lands are of no value to the person who homesteaded, as the homestead is not valid. In addition to losing any investments or improvements made on the land, the homesteader risks fines and court action. It is the potential homesteader's responsibility to check BLM land office records to see where homesteading is legally permitted.

There are less expensive ways to acquire lands in Alaska. Compared with the costs of homesteading, it may be cheaper to buy land from private owners, the State of Alaska, or the Federal Government at land sales or auctions. All Federal lands which may be sold at auctions can be bought at appraised fair market value or greater — so you might get land cheaper from a private Alaskan with whom you can "make a deal." No lands are presently for sale by the Federal Government, and we cannot anticipate at this time when or if any sales will be planned.

If you still feel that you want to try homesteading in Alaska, profit from others' experience. See what kinds of farms have succeeded in Alaska. Talk to the farmers. Inspect the land carefully in the summer. Find out about supplies and equipment, potential markets, access, soils, permafrost, transportation, and other factors which should influence your decision.

Some people will be challenged by the difficulties, but try to face realistically both problems and hardships. Before you move to Alaska to homestead, first come here as a tourist with a round-trip ticket, and take an honest look at today's major problems with homesteading on Federal lands in Alaska.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING
AS "FREE" LAND!

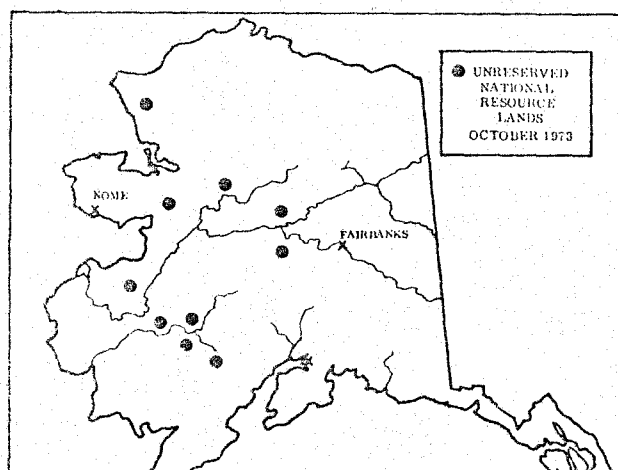
LAND STATUS IN ALASKA NOW: VERY COMPLICATED

WHAT IS "LAND STATUS?" Basically it means the status of the land -- who owns it, and what the owner will allow you to do on the land.

Presently the U.S. Government owns most of the land in Alaska. One of the things which the U.S. Government will not allow its citizens to do is to go anywhere they please in Alaska and build a cabin or try to start a farm.

WHERE IS HOMESTEADING LEGAL? U.S. citizens have the right to homestead on Federal lands which have not been set aside for other uses. About 97% of the land in Alaska is set aside for other uses.

The map below shows the approximate location of lands that are "unreserved"--not set aside for specific uses. X's mark major towns, and squiggly lines represent major rivers. Compare this map to a larger map that shows topographic features, such as one in an atlas, to get a better idea of approximately where the "unreserved" lands are located. For specific locations, you would need to come in person to a Bureau of Land Management land office in Anchorage or Fairbanks and consult BLM land status records.



WHERE IS HOMESTEADING ILLEGAL? On about 97% of the land in Alaska, homesteading is illegal. These lands have been set aside or "withdrawn" for other purposes. These purposes, and some tentative acreage figures, may explain to you why so little land is open to homesteading:

EXISTING WITHDRAWALS -- 95 MILLION ACRES
These reserves include all the land which the U.S. Government withdrew for special purposes before 1972. Included are Mt. McKinley National Park, two National Forests, numerous wildlife refuges and wildlife ranges, lands for military bases, Naval Petroleum Reserve Number 4, Katmai National Monument, the Kenai National Moose Range, and thousands of other similar, though smaller, withdrawals.

NATIONAL INTEREST STUDY AREAS -- 80 MILLION ACRES
These lands are under study for possible addition to or for creation of units in the national parks, forests, wildlife refuge, or wild and scenic river systems. Congress will have until December 1978 to act on any lands the Secretary of the Interior recommends for inclusion in these systems.

CLASSIFICATION AND PUBLIC INTEREST AREAS -- 40 MILLION ACRES

These lands are being studied to see what future management should be. In the meantime, no homesteading is allowed since it might conflict with needs of Federal land management policies on this land in the future.

LAND FOR ALASKA'S STATE GOVERNMENT -- 104 MILLION ACRES

Under the Alaska Statehood Act, the State of Alaska may select 104 million acres. It has until 1984 to make all of its selections, but it is now in the process of selecting its lands.

LAND FOR ALASKA'S NATIVE PEOPLES -- 40 MILLION ACRES TO BE SELECTED FROM 95 MILLION ACRES WHICH HAVE BEEN SET ASIDE

Under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, Alaska Natives relinquished their many claims to land in Alaska in return for 40 million acres and almost \$1 billion. They have until December 1975 to select which 40 million acres they want. Some 95 million acres have been set aside from which they are now making their selections.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

THE SPECIFIC REGULATIONS RELATING TO HOMESTEADING IN ALASKA (43 CFR 2567), AND HOW TO FILE A HOMESTEAD; ALSO, LAND STATUS DATA:

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Anchorage Land Office | Fairbanks District Office |
| Bureau of Land Management | Bureau of Land Management |
| 555 Cordova Street | 1028 Aurora Drive |
| Anchorage, Alaska 99501 | Fairbanks, Alaska 99707 |

TOURIST INFORMATION:

Tourist Information Center
Fourth Avenue and F Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE INFORMATION:

Alaska State Chamber of Commerce
P. O. Box 1661
Juneau, Alaska 99801

(There are also Chambers of Commerce in:

| | | |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Anchorage | Haines | Kodiak |
| Bethel | Seward | Nenana |
| Cordova | Homer | Soldotna |
| Seldovia | Juneau | Nome |
| Valdez | Kenai | Palmer |
| Dillingham | Sitka | Petersburg |
| Fairbanks | Ketchikan | Skagway |
| | Wrangell | |

TYPES OF CROPS SUITABLE FOR CULTIVATION:

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Extension Service | State of Alaska |
| University of Alaska | Division of Agriculture |
| College, Alaska 99735 | P. O. Box 800 |
| | Palmer, Alaska 99645 |

INFORMATION AND MAPS CONCERNING SOIL TYPES:

Soil Conservation Service
P. O. Box "F"
Palmer, Alaska 99645

TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS OF ALASKA:

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Geological Survey | Alaska Distribution Unit |
| 508 West Second Avenue | Geological Survey |
| Anchorage, Alaska 99501 | 310 First Avenue |
| | Fairbanks, Alaska 99701 |

INFORMATION ON STATE LANDS:

Alaska State Division of Lands
323 East Fourth Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

"Alaska Land Lines," a free monthly publication of the State Division of Lands, gives informative and complete current information on lands owned by the State of Alaska.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
ALASKA STATE OFFICE (931)
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