

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT
AND THE ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

ALASKA HIGHWAY ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL SUMMER 2025

The Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 brought the U.S. into WWII spurring the development of the Alaska-Canada Highway (ALCAN). Amongst the battalions deployed, African American soldiers of the 97th Regiment United States Army Corp of Engineers began construction of the Alaska portion of the ALCAN in the Spring of 1942. After the construction came to completion in late October 1942, the 97th regiment received orders to remain behind to ensure the bridges and roads were kept clear from snow and ice during the winter. With temperatures below -40 degrees Fahrenheit the 97th somehow endured with inadequate tents, unsuitable clothing and ration shortages during one of the harshest winters on record. Collaborators from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the University of Alaska Fairbanks Anthropology Department are currently investigating the military winter encampment.

The RPA certified 2025 Alaska Highway Archaeological Field School will focus on the excavation of construction camps built in 1942 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as they built what would become the Alaska Highway. Due to the remoteness of the sites, along the ALCAN between Delta Junction and Tok, students will live in a temporary camp near the excavation site. Food, water, tools, and equipment will be provided, but students will need to supply their own tents, sleeping gear, and personal supplies. Participants will learn the fundamental skills of archaeological fieldwork while excavating and documenting historic structures and artifacts. They will examine artifacts, botanicals, sediments, and faunal materials to learn analytical techniques while providing insight into the lives of the soldiers and officers of this short-lived historic community. Application deadline April 1, 2025.

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2025 Summer Session I - May 19th- June 27th

ANTH: F490 Archaeological Field School (6 credits)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 1st, 2025

