

Trilingual city of Kodiak: past and present

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History: important dates

- 1740s - first visits of Russians to Alaska
- 1792 - St. Paul's Harbor (presently: **Kodiak**) was established as the capital of Russian America
- 1799 - establishment of Russian American Company, a mixed governmental-entrepreneurial formation
- **1840s** - **Ninilchik**, **Afognak** and **Ouzinkie** settlements for RAC retirees are established
- 1867 - Alaska sold to the US
- **1900s** - **fishing industry in Kodiak archipelago**
- 1920s - beginning of massive Americanization of Alaska
- **1941** - **Kodiak city becomes center for the Navy in Alaska**

Why Kodiak

- Kodiak was a place of socioeconomic activities of the Russian American Company
- Also, missionary and educational activities of the Russian Orthodox Church,
- Both activities created and promoted existence of a special ethnolinguistic group of Creoles.
- This group of initially bilingual and later trilingual people considered Alaskan Russian their first language
- This was true long after Alaska stopped being part of the Russian Empire
 - It became part of the US much later

What is 'town'/'city' in the context of Russian America

- Features of an 'urban space' in Alaska
- Population: hundreds, not hundreds of thousands

US Census data	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930 (29)	1940 (39)	1950
Kodiak district	495		-	1465	1729	2094	6264
Kodiak village	341	495	438	374	442	864	1710

- Census information provided and analyzed by [Marina Raskladkina](#)

Alaskan Russian (AR)

- Variety of Russian that developed in Alaska at the time of Russian America
 - mid-18th - beginning of 21st century
- Different from any variety of "Continental Russian"
- Locations:
 - Ninilchik Russian (NR) ~ Kenai Peninsula Russian
 - Kodiak Town Russian (KTR) ~ Kodiak (Afognak, Ouzinkie) Russian
 - *Kenai Town Russian
 - *Pribilof Russian
 - *Aleutians Russian
 - *Sitka Russian
 - ? Interior Alaska Russian
 - ? Nanwalek/Seldovia Russian

Alaskan Russian: places



Ethnic groups in Kodiak

- Based on US Census (1900 vs. 1940)

	White	Indian*	Mixed/Aleut**	Negro
Kodiak settlement (village) 1900	39	27	275	0
	11%	8%	80%	0
Kodiak town (3 rd category) 1940	394	25	441	4
	46%	3%	51%	0%

- * 1900 - Indian (all 'Alutiiq' + 1 'Tlingit') - called *aleut* and *sitka*
- * 1940 - Indian (?? Athabaskan or Tlingit)
- ** 1900 - Mixed (Creoles)
- ** 1940 - Aleut (Creoles or Alutiiq);
 - Census information provided and analyzed by **Marina Rasklađkina**

Kodiak Town Russian

- Minor differences from NR
- Special articulatory setting
- Special phonetic realization of palatalized consonants
 - Especially /r/, /w/, /n/
- Variation within an individual idiolect
 - [v] ~ [w], [h] ~ [x], [r] ~ [R]
- In KTR
 - Phonetic realization of /s/ and /r/ in front of /e/ is softer than in NR.
 - Phonetic realization of /d'/ and /n'/ in front of /e/ is harder than in NR
- In KTR the labialized copula *bul* has an optional pronunciation as *b'il*.
- Also optional is the retention of unstressed /o/.



Kodiak Town Russian



- New lexical items
 - *sól'its*, cf. *сольца*
 - *l'it'éts* and *l'itúchka*- clear 20th century neologisms for 'airplane'
 - *chayknút'* - rare dialectal relict
- Alutiiq words not attested in NR
 - *tamúk* 'yukola', *pag'íl'k'i* 'driftwood'
- Grammar:
 - Polite 2PI forms and patronymics
 - The case system is reduced to a higher degree than in NR
 - *Ya hachú parézhit' éta dóska.*
 - The same is true of gender agreement and tenses
 - To the contrary, verbal aspect differences are more articulated.



Vassily (Bill) Hartman (1930-2020): The last speaker of Kodiak Town AR



- Born (1930) and raised in Kodiak
- His mother only spoke Russian to him
- Did not know English before school
- **The last speaker of Kodiak Town Russian**
- Remarkable person and talented consultant



Kodiak Town Russian: Other speakers ?

- Iver Malutin (1931-2014) -recordings by E. V. Golovko (2009)
- From Iver's interview in 2009: "I was born at Kodiak, Alaska, on June 30, 1931. My mother's name was Pelegay A. (Lehktonin) Malutin. She was born at Afognak, Alaska, in 1892. Her grandfather was Jacob Lehktonin, manager for the Russian American company. He was in charge of all sea otter hunters.
My dad was Senafowt Malutin, born at Afognak in 1890. His grandfather was from Kiev, Russia. His grandfather and his grandfather's brother came with Baranof in 1794. Both Lehktonin and Malutin married native women from Afognak.
My dad was reading and writing the Aleut language fluently in 1931 (according to Dr. Lydia Black). His only schooling was at Afognak Russian School.
My dad, mother and three children moved to Kodiak in 1917 to work with the Russian Church of which my dad was a choir director and robed reader."
 - Kodiak Daily Mirror (AK) - Wednesday, July 16, 2014



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■ A BH 

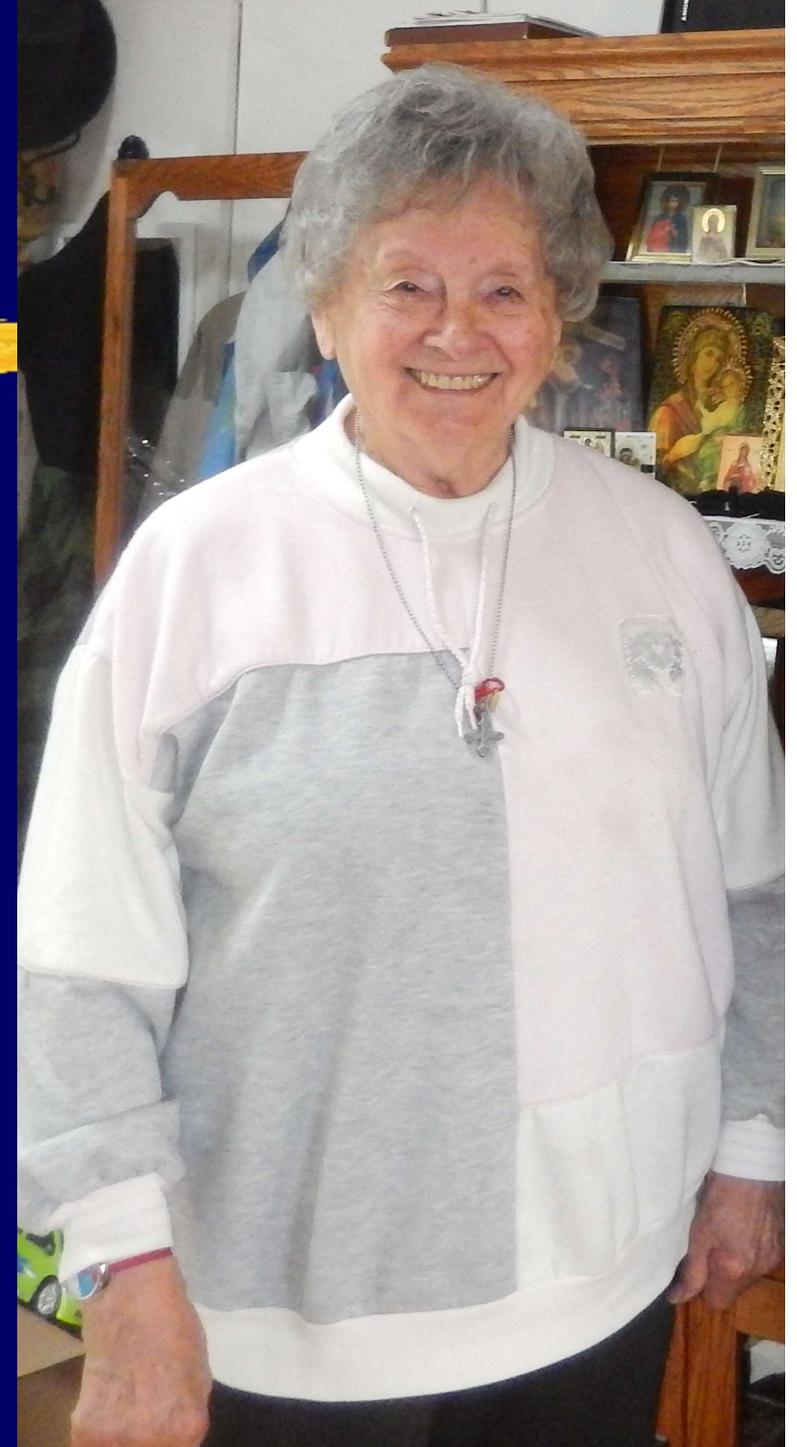
■ B IM 

■ C SC 



Raisa Baldwin

- Born (1931) and raised in Kodiak
- Rememberer of Kodiak Town Russian
- Enlightened person with interest in language



Raisa Baldwin



- Kodiak Town Russian words
 - *arábak* 'black person' - also Iver Malutin
 - *chúchila* 'monument'
- Surprisingly exact and specific knowledge of preserved formulaic expressions
 - *a pusháy*
 - *s bógam*

Conclusions

- AR is a unique postcolonial variety of Russian
 - In fact, several varieties with minor differences
- Kodiak Town Russian is a distinct and new (cf. Krauss 1996) dialect
 - The majority of population was speaking Russian as their first language in 1867 and up to 1920s (Daly, October 1985 report, Malutin 2009)
 - 1940 Census also shows that majority (at least 51%) was AR speakers
- KTR has features of more profound creolization.
- At the same time, it had a relatively long history of use in the urban setting, where AR was spoken in a broader set of functional domains compared to the Ninilchik village.
 - Creoles, residents of Kodiak town, were bilingual, or even trilingual in Alaskan Russian, Alutiiq, and eventually, English, and could write in these languages (Oleksa 1990).
- Factors that sped up its loss
 - Fishing industry, WWII, 1964 earthquake
 - Competition with Alutiiq, at least for some families, starting in 170-ies

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Thank you for your
attention!