



# Generations

*A Family Place Inc.*

Allen Levy MS LPA  
8717 Dimond D Circle  
Anchorage, Alaska 99515

Phone: 907-222-4954  
Fax: 907-222-7862  
[www.levyal.com](http://www.levyal.com)  
e-mail: alyozhik@ak.net

Mailing address:  
PoBox 90941  
Anchorage, Ak 99509

## Tour of Anchorage

*I wish that I could personally take you on this tour of Anchorage. I have lived here most of my life. My family first came here in 1951. Growing up in a place gives one a feel and an intimate knowledge of the place and its history. I am pleased to be able to share it with you. For best results and safety, I suggest you read this before setting out in your car. Do the tour with at least one other person. It is more enjoyable to share the experience; plus, one person can drive while the other navigates and reads the tour out loud. The tour will take you from the mountains to the sea and end with a walking tour from the Hilton around the city center. I originally wrote this tour ten years ago for my wife when she briefly worked as a tour guide for visitors from Russia.*

- ❖ **Welcome to Anchorage, the largest city in Alaska. Anchorage is the cultural and economic center of the state of Alaska. Anchorage has a population of 300,950 (2013). The population of the Alaska is about 736,732 (2014). Anchorage is an international city. People come here to live from all over the world. There are almost 100 different languages spoken in Anchorage schools. Alaska is the largest of the 50 states. Alaska is 1,717,855 [km<sup>2</sup>](#) or 663,300 mi<sup>2</sup>. Anchorage is 5,079.2 [km<sup>2</sup>](#) or 1,969 mi<sup>2</sup>. That is an area bigger than the state of Rhode Island.**
- ❖ **Indians were the first inhabitants of this area. There is an interesting Indian village, museum and grave yard called Eklutna 28 miles north of Anchorage. If you have time you may wish to go there for a visit. Just head north on the Glenn Hiway and take the Eklutna Village exit.**
- ❖ **The first Europeans to this area were the British Explorer Captain Cook and his crew in 1778. He was searching for The Northwest Passage – the fabled route to the Orient that would provide a shortcut for traders. Anchorage sits on a peninsula at the head of Cook Inlet which is named for the famous captain.**
- ❖ **The peninsula on which Anchorage sits divides Cook Inlet into two “arms”. Knik Arm is named for the large Knik River that empties into it. The other arm is named Turnagain Arm. When Captain Cook reached the end of that arm he told his navigator “Turn again.” His map maker recorded that as the name of that body of water.**
- ❖ **The city of Anchorage was established in 1914 as a construction site and headquarters for the Alaska Railroad which was being built at that time. The Federal Government took over two failed railroad companies in order to complete a rail connection between the town of Seward in the south and Fairbanks in the north.**

- ❖ **When the Alaska Railroad planned the town site of Anchorage they drew lines running north and south on a map for streets with letters. They drew other lines running east and west for streets with numbers. That was as much planning as went into the city of Anchorage. As you go around the city you will notice many varieties of style and architecture. Some houses and buildings are beautiful but others are just ugly. The beauty of Anchorage is in the mountains and nature all around but not in its design.**
- ❖ **A good place to start your tour is Glen Alps. This is a very popular park and it will give you a view over all of Anchorage and the area around it. Your tour will take you from the mountains to the sea. You can put “Glen Alps” into Google Maps on your smart phone and it will show you the way. It is easy to find. Head south on the Seward Highway. Take the O’Malley exit and turn left onto O’Malley Road. Follow it all the way up hill until you get to Hillside Drive. Turn right. Continue on Hillside until you get to Upper Huffman and then turn left. From Upper Huffman turn right onto Toilsome Hill Drive. Follow its winding path all the way up. Do not let the breathtaking view distract you to the point that you drive off the road. Keep going until you get to the Glen Alps Parking lot.**
- ❖ **On your way up the mountain to Glen Alps you will pass the Alaska Zoo. Here you will find the opportunity to see many of Alaska’s wild animals up close – polar bear, grizzly bear, black bear, wolves, musk ox and more. You can also see here animals from other parts of the world – Siberian tigers, and asian camels with two humps. If you have time, it is worth spending an afternoon walking through the zoo.**
- ❖ **Glen Alps parking lot. You are now in one of Anchorage’s most popular parks. Above is Flat Top. From the parking lot you can walk to the top in about an hour or two – depending on what kind of shape you are in. If you go the other way and follow the winding path from the parking lot up the hill you will get a view of Anchorage and the surrounding area.**
- ❖ **View Point on Glen Alps: If it is a clear day you can see North America’s tallest peak – Denali (Mt. McKinley to all Ohio patriots). Although the peak of Everest reaches higher into the atmosphere, Denali is the tallest mountain on the planet that rises from its own base. Next to Denali is Mt. Foraker. The most noticeable mountain from here is Mt. Susitna, also called the Sleeping Lady. Some people say it is called the Sleeping Lady because of an Indian myth. But the myth is a myth. The Indians have no such story. The mountain is called Sleeping Lady because it vaguely looks like a woman lying on her back. Far to the southwest are a number of active volcanoes, Mount Augustine and Mount Redoubt and Mount Illiamna. They erupt from time to time sending clouds of ash into the sky. In 1992 a 747 on its way to Anchorage flew through an ash cloud. The ash shut down all four of its engines. Before it fell from the sky the pilot was able to restart the engines and saved the passengers. But the engines were ruined and had to be replaced.**
- ❖ **Below you can see Cook Inlet. To the right is Turnagain Arm. To the left is Knik Arm. Turnagain Arm has very powerful tides, the second highest tides in the world. The highest tides are in the Bay of Fundy in New Foundland. Sometimes the tides in Turnagain Arm pour in as a wall of water more than a meter high that sweeps from shore to shore as it**

paces to the end of the Arm. This is called a “bore tide”. During the summer people will try to surf the bore tide.

- ❖ The shores of Cook Inlet are very dangerous. When the tide is out it looks like you could almost walk across to the other shore. But the ground is dangerous to walk on. A person will quickly get stuck in the mud and will sink deeper and deeper. It is almost impossible to get free from this mud once you are stuck in it. Some people have died from being trapped in the mud and drowned when the tide came in.
- ❖ It is easy to find your way in Anchorage. The mountains are to the east and the ocean is to the west. Stand facing the mountains and north is to the right and south is to the left. It is also easy to find your way out of Anchorage because there are only two roads out of Anchorage. The Seward Highway goes south and the Glenn Highway goes north. The only other way out of Anchorage is by plane or by ship.
- ❖ From here you can see why Anchorage was once called “The Air Crossroads of the world”. Count how many airplanes you can see in the air. There is rarely a moment that the sky above Anchorage is free of airplanes. Below, you can see the Ted Stevens International Airport, the floatplane base at Lake Hood and Lake Spenard, Merrill field, Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson Army commonly called “JBER” each with their own airfields. Plus there are a number of small un-named airfields in Anchorage as well as other lakes on which airplanes take off and land.
- ❖ The whole area below and spreading out around Glen Alps is called “hill side”. Anchorage is running out of room to build houses. More and more people are building homes higher and higher in the mountains here.
- ❖ Coming down from Glen Alps: When you reach the intersection of Upper Huffman and Hillside, turn left onto Hillside Drive. This will turn into Rabbit Creek Road. As you go down the road you will see a variety of houses and get a good view of Cook Inlet and Turnagain Arm.
- ❖ Take the north on-ramp onto the Seward Highway. Just past the Huffman Road exit on your right you can see a giant inflated dome-tent painted with mountains and trees. Inside is a golf driving range. The city required the owner to paint his tent so that it will blend in with the scenery.
- ❖ Take the Dimond Blvd. exit and turn left onto Dimond Boulevard. Dimond is not misspelled. It is named after Anthony J. Dimond who was an important politician in Alaska before it became a state. Many streets, stores, and places are named for him. One of the biggest and most popular shopping centers in Anchorage is the Dimond Center. You can see it on your left as you proceed west on Dimond Blvd after crossing the Old Seward Highway.
- ❖ Dimond Boulevard is a major east-west road in south Anchorage. Continue west on Dimond until you get to the intersection of Dimond and Sand Lake Road. Turn right onto Sand Lake. Years ago this area was a gravel pit. Thousands of tons of gravel were taken

from here to be used in building other parts of Anchorage. As land is becoming scarce, houses are being built in places that were previously considered unsuitable.

- ❖ **Optional side trip to Kincaid Park:** Continuing on Sand Lake Road you will come to the south side of the Ted Stevens International Airport and the intersection of Raspberry Road. If you turn left (if you have time to see everything) you will go through a large forest called Kincaid Park. It is almost 4 miles from Sand Lake Road to the Kincaid Park Chalet. What is now the Chalet was once a missile silo. In the days of the Cold War it was a rocket base. It was closed in the early 1960's. The city of Anchorage took over the land from the military and turned it into a park. Now this former rocket base is very popular. There are kilometers and kilometers of trails – in the summer for bicycles and hikers; in the winter for skiers. Here you can be in a wild forest with moose and bears in the middle of the largest city in Alaska. If you are so inclined you can get out and walk the trails in the woods. Please, be alert for moose and bear. Make plenty of noise as you walk – sing, whistle or talk loudly. This will alert wildlife to your presence. Many bear maulings or moose stompings resulted from unwary hikers quietly coming upon a moose or bear and startling them. Wise hikers in the woods travel in company; carry bear bells and bear spray. Bear spray does not work like mosquito repellent. Do not spray it on yourself. You will not like this. The bears will just consider you well-seasoned. Bear spray is meant to spray at a charging bear. The peppery capsicum acts on the bear like tear gas and drives it away. Spray it on yourself and it is a painful marinade.
- ❖ **Heading east on Raspberry Road:** Whether you choose to visit Kincaid or not, you will need to head east on Raspberry Road from Sand Lake Road in order to continue the tour. Remember, in Anchorage east is always towards the mountains. When you get to Jewel Lake Road turn left. This will take you to the east end of the Ted Stevens International Airport and then into the area called Spenard. When you reach the intersection of Jewel Lake and International Airport Road, go straight. At that point Jewel Lake Road becomes Spenard Road. Spenard is named after Joe Spenard. He was an early Anchorage character. In his day this area was far from the center of town. He had a bus in which he would transport people out to his place where he had gambling, alcohol and prostitutes. The city eventually grew into this area. But for a long time the area had a reputation for gambling, crime and prostitution. The city cleaned up this area. It is now a much quieter and safer place to live and do business.
- ❖ **Busiest Float Plane Base in the World:** From Spenard Road turn right onto Wisconsin Street at the light. About an eighth of a mile on Wisconsin you will see Lakeshore Drive. Turn left onto Lakeshore. Follow it through the gate and around Lake Spenard and Lake Hood. They are connected by a canal. Together these two lakes are the busiest floatplane base in the entire world. Hundreds of planes take off and land here every day. In the winter the pilots change the floats on their planes to skis and this place stays just as busy. Follow Lakeshore Drive around the lakes. Shortly after it leaves Lake Hood, Lakeshore Drive loops around the lake and becomes Aircraft Drive. Continue on until you get to Tom Wardleigh Drive. Turn right and then turn right again onto Postmark Drive.
- ❖ **North Side of Ted Stevens International Airport:** The Ted Stevens International Airport is almost as busy as Lake Hood and Lake Spenard. In the days of the Cold War international

flights could not cross over Soviet Territory. Flights between Asia and Europe came through Anchorage crossing over the North Pole on their way to and from Europe giving Anchorage the name “Air Crossroads of the World”. International flights now freely fly over former Soviet skies but Anchorage’s international airport remains as busy as ever.

- ❖ **Point Woronzof:** At the intersection of Postmark Drive and Northern Lights Boulevard, turn left. You will now go to the farthest western corner of Anchorage – Point Woronzof. Point Woronzof was named in honor of the Russian ambassador Count Simon Romanovitch Woronzof by Lt. Joseph Whidbey, a member of Captain Cook’s 1794 expedition. On the way you may see bikers and joggers on your right enjoying the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. This is one end of the more than 400 kilometers of trails that go throughout Anchorage.
- ❖ **Be careful and stay alert.** You are also likely to encounter moose darting suddenly from the woods right in front of your car. Follow Northern Lights Boulevard around a sharp turn to the left and down a hill. At the bottom of the hill you will see the entrance to the Point Woronzof Parking lot. Turn right and find a place to park. Get out and enjoy the view. From here you can get a feeling for just what a busy city Anchorage is. You can see ships coming and going from the Port of Anchorage, you can see planes landing or taking off right over your head and you will likely see military planes also coming and going. This is another popular spot in Anchorage for walks, picnics and enjoying nature. If you are so inclined, you may walk down to the shore of Cook Inlet. Standing at the top and looking southwest you can see Fire Island. This island is owned by the Cook Inlet Region Inc. (CIRI)– a native corporation. CIRI recently built a wind farm. You may see several wind turbines spinning.
- ❖ **Earthquake Park:** From Point Woronzof, turn left onto Northern Lights Boulevard. Continue until you see Earthquake Park on the left, a little ways past the intersection with Postmark Drive and around a looping turn. Anchorage is fortunate – it has no snakes, no lizards, no poisonous animals like scorpions or tarantulas. It has no tornadoes, no hurricanes and rarely do we see lightning or hear thunder. But Anchorage is not boring. We are a part of the Pacific Ring of Fire. The most active region of volcanoes and earthquakes in the world. Every year we have several earthquakes. Most you can barely feel but sometimes you will get a real burst of adrenalin. In 1964 Alaska had the biggest earthquake ever measured in North America. It scored at 9.5 on the Richter Scale. The earthquake sent tidal waves as far south as California. Crescent City California was almost destroyed by a tsunami from that earthquake. Cities throughout South Central Alaska were damaged or destroyed. The city of Valdez had to be moved five miles and rebuilt. The little town of Portage sank 5 feet and was never rebuilt. The cities of Kodiak and Seward were almost completely destroyed by earthquake, fire and tsunami and later rebuilt. Many parts of Anchorage were damaged or destroyed. One of the newest and richest neighborhoods in Anchorage at that time was called “Turnagain by the Sea”. After the earth quake it was called “Turnagain IN the Sea”. The neighborhood was built on top of Cook Inlet Mud. You will remember how dangerous it is. It is solid until it starts to vibrate then it quickly turns to liquid. Large areas of Turnagain became liquid and slid into the sea during the earthquake that lasted for five minutes. Most earthquakes only last

for a few seconds so you can imagine what this one must have felt like. Earthquake Park was built as a memorial to that earthquake.

- ❖ **Underground House and Atwood Mansion:** From here you will drive through the west Anchorage neighborhood called Turnagain. Not all of it was destroyed in the earthquake and much of it has been rebuilt. Just past the railroad bridge, turn left onto Forest Park Drive. Here is an older and quieter section of Anchorage. This little area has an interesting variety of houses. Shortly after turning onto Forest Park Drive you may see on your left two sky lights sitting on a lawn. This is a house that is built underground. Continue past the underground house to the stop sign at the corner of Hillcrest Drive. You will find Atwood Mansion just to the left when you get to the intersection of Forest Park and Hillcrest Drive. You can't miss it.
- ❖ Robert Atwood was the publisher of one of the largest newspapers in Alaska and a powerful advocate for statehood. His home was destroyed in the earthquake. He was half buried in the ground and was almost killed. After the earthquake he this more impressive home to show his faith in Alaska's ability to rebuild. Robert Atwood was a very influential man in Alaska's history. Using his position and his newspaper he helped Alaska to become the 49<sup>th</sup> state in 1959. He was also a very brave man. An angry reader of his paper once came into his newspaper office with a shotgun to confront him about an editorial the paper had printed. The man fired the gun at the ceiling and then pointed the gun at Robert Atwood and his daughter. Mr. Atwood was then an old man. But he did not hesitate. He acted quickly and took the gun away from the man.
- ❖ From Forest Park Drive turn left onto Hillcrest Drive. On the right side just past Esquire Drive you will see trailer homes. This is the oldest trailer park in Anchorage it dates back to the early 1950's and still has many of the original trailers from that era.
- ❖ **Overlook across from West High:** You will see West High School on the right, just past the trailer park. Here is a good view of Anchorage. Across the street from West High School on the left is a small parking lot. You may want to stop here for a good view. West High is one of Anchorage's largest and oldest High Schools. Its symbol is the eagle. The Senior Class of 1971 painted the Eagle you see on the wall of the auditorium. They wanted to put the year of their class on the picture to show it was their class that did the artwork. But the principal would not let them. So, the students hid the number "71" somewhere on the Eagle. Can you find it?
- ❖ **Ship Creek:** At the intersection of Hillcrest and Spenard, turn left and head downhill. This road becomes I Street on the other side of the small valley. Follow I Street all the way to 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and turn right. Turn left at the corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and H Street. Turning left will put you on Christensen Drive. It will wind its way downhill until it becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue. You will go past the Alaska Railroad Depot.
- ❖ Here is the main station of the Alaska Railroad. Tourists from all over the world come to Alaska by plane or cruise ship and then ride the Alaska Railroad north to Denali Park and Fairbanks.

- ❖ **The little locomotive in the parking lot across from the train depot used to work in the rail yard here. About fifteen years ago some of the mechanics from the Alaska Railroad took this little engine down and tried to rebuild it and make it work. They worked on it for almost a year. But some people complained that they missed seeing the little engine up here. So the Alaska Railroad ordered the workers to put it back before they finished rebuilding it.**
- ❖ **Turn left on North C Street. Cross the railroad tracks and turn into the parking lot on your right. You can get out and walk the shore of Ship Creek along the path. If the tide is out you will see lots of shiny mud. I recommend you don't go walking in the mud. It is very slippery and also very easy to sink into it up to your knees. Ship Creek is the original site of the City of Anchorage. From about 1914 to 1920 Anchorage was a "tent city". There were no permanent buildings. Everybody lived in tents. About 1920 the railroad started offering land for sale in the area that is now downtown Anchorage.**
- ❖ **Every summer salmon come up Ship Creek. Many people come here to catch wild salmon in the center of town. Just up stream from here you can see a dam. The salmon go up the dam by way of a special "fish ladder". From early May until about July, King Salmon or Chinook fight their way upstream. Around the end of July Silver Salmon or Coho arrive and take over from the King Salmon.**
- ❖ **Just up the hill opposite from the city center is Government Hill. This was one of the first neighborhoods developed in the early days of Anchorage. Just beyond Government Hill is JBER, formerly Elmendorf AFB. The base is named after a test pilot who was killed in 1933. The base opened up in 1940. The military has been an important part of the Alaskan economy since World War II.**
- ❖ **America did not experience WW II on its own territory the way most of Europe did. Of course everyone remembers Pearl Harbor; but many do not know that the Japanese invaded and bombed parts of Alaska in World War II. Alaska played an important role in the war. America sent war planes to the Soviet Union as part of the Lend Lease program. The planes flew from the south, to Elmendorf and then on to Fairbanks where Soviet pilots took the planes on the last leg of their journey to the Soviet Union.**
- ❖ **Walking Tour: From the Anchorage Hilton you can take a little walk through downtown Anchorage. Starting from the Hilton, head west on 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue. You will pass many small older houses and the two court houses at the far end of 3<sup>rd</sup>. At 3<sup>rd</sup> and K look to your left and you will see the Whale Building. It gets its name from the large bronze whale sculpture in front. Continue around the corner and you will come to the Captain Cook memorial. Captain Cook's statue stands overlooking the inlet that bears his name. You can get some great views from here.**
- ❖ **Head back towards the mountains on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. You will find many shops and places to eat along the way. Take a walk through the lobby of the Captain Cook Hotel it is worth spending a few minutes there. You will pass the old 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theater – unfortunately closed and in danger of being torn down. At corner of 4<sup>th</sup> and F turn right on 4<sup>th</sup> and go one block to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. You will find the Town Square in front of the Performing Arts Center**

also called the “P A C”. The P A C is the biggest concert hall in the state. It has three different auditoriums. It was built in the 1980’s. It was designed by an architect from California. There is not much ice or snow in California. So the architect didn’t think about ice or snow falling off of the roof onto the heads of people walking by. After the P A C was built the city had to make changes to the roof so that people wouldn’t be buried under sudden avalanches in downtown Anchorage.

- ❖ Anchorage is a young town but it is rich in culture, variety and imagination. Around the city you will find many interesting and amusing sculptures. First, go to the sun. You will find the sun tucked behind the PAC on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue.
- ❖ A few years ago a student got the idea to make a “planet walk”. The student designed a model of the solar system starting in downtown Anchorage and ending at Point Woronzof. Each planet is presented in order and in scale size and distance from the sun along the walk. You can walk from the sun to Mars in just a few minutes along 5<sup>th</sup> avenue.
- ❖ Return to the Hilton by 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Along the way back to your hotel you will pass the old federal court house, the old City Hall, and the visitor center in an old log cabin. At the visitor center you can pick up information and brochures about attractions, tours and activities in Anchorage and throughout the state.
- ❖ I hope you have enjoyed this brief introduction to Anchorage. I hope you enjoy your stay. I would also recommend visiting the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. Next to it is the Russian Orthodox Museum. There is an Aviation History Museum at the airport and the Native Heritage Museum in East Anchorage at the north end of Muldoon Road. There are a variety of bars and nightclubs in Anchorage as well as opportunities to see shows, concerts, and plays.

*Thank you for coming to Anchorage. I hope you enjoy your stay and come again soon.*