

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS & REPATRIATION

Anastasia's story is not an isolated case. She was among the tens of thousands of Native children taken from their families and communities in a federal effort to strip Indigenous children of their Nativeness through education. There were more than 400 residential schools across the country.

The conditions at these schools were dreadful. Children suffered hunger, forced labor, punishment, disease, and denigration. Many died and their bodies were never returned to their families. They disappeared.

Across the country, tribal and government representatives are now working to find graves, identify student remains, and return lost children to their communities.



C. Bunnell with students (Anastasia circled) from Kodiak and Woody Island on their arrival at the Carlisle School, June 1901.
Courtesy of the National Archives, NAA 73342.

To Sugpiaq/Alutiiq people, the burning oil lamp represents the light of heritage and culture passed down from generation to generation.

The lamp is a symbol of pride and perseverance. Like our ancestors, we light stone lamps at gatherings to illuminate our heritage, and to shine the light of culture far into the future.

An oil lamp made by an Ashouwak family member was lit at the ceremony for Anastasia's disinterment, and again at her memorial services in Kodiak and Old Harbor.



PROJECT PARTNERS:

The Ashouwak Family



Kodiak Residential School Repatriation Working Group

The Repatriation of Anastasia Ashouwak

1887-1904

In 1901, a 13 year old Sugpiaq/Alutiiq girl was taken from Kodiak, Alaska to attend the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania. After three years of living in harsh conditions, she died of Tuberculosis. After 118 years, Anastasia's remains were returned to her family and homeland for reburial in Old Harbor in 2022.



1887-1904

ANASTASIA'S STORY

Anastasia was born Dec. 9th, 1887 to Iakim Akvak (Ashouwak) and Pelageia Vologdina (later Perrin) who died in 1896 and 1897, respectively. Anastasia appears to have been enrolled in the Woody Island Baptist Mission orphanage after her mother's death. In 1901, she was one of eleven children from Kodiak who traveled to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania to see the world and receive an education. She never returned.

The records of Anastasia's years in Pennsylvania are sparse. Records say she was studying "housework," and she received high marks in 1902 for scholarship, industry, health, and conduct. Like other students, she was loaned to a local farm during the summer as a servant. While enrolled at Carlisle, she caught Tuberculosis, which was rampant at Native residential schools.

Anastasia passed away from Tuberculosis on June 19th, 1904 at age 16. She was buried on school grounds, where her remains rested until her repatriation in 2022.



July 1st-5th, 2022

CARLISLE, PA DISINTERMENT

Records from the Carlisle School indicate that two Sugpiaq/Alutiiq girls were among the 186 students buried on the former school grounds. Their names are recorded as Anastasia Achwack and Pariscovia Friendoff. Alutiiq Museum staff recognized the modernized spelling of Anastasia's last name as Ashouwak and reached out to her relatives. Pariscovia is believed to be connected to the Fadaoff family of Woody Island, but researchers have had difficulty finding official confirmation.

On Kodiak, a group of family members, community members, Native leaders, and clergy began working on plans to bring the girls home for burial in their traditional lands. Anastasia's family claimed her remains in 2022. Pariscovia's remains will be repatriated in 2023.

In July 2022, members of the Ashouwak family, a Russian Orthodox priest, and Alutiiq Museum representatives gathered in Carlisle, Pennsylvania for the disinterment of Anastasia's remains and to offer culturally-appropriate care. With the help of the US Army, which administers the former school site, her remains were repatriated to Kodiak.

July 9th, 2022

KODIAK MEMORIAL & OLD HARBOR REBURIAL

Relatives, tribal members, and friends gathered to welcome Anastasia back to Kodiak. A memorial service was held at the Holy Resurrection Orthodox cathedral, followed by an Alutiiq cultural ceremony at the Alutiiq Museum. By the light of a traditional oil lamp, the community prayed and offered traditional dances to honor the girl who died so far from home and spent a century waiting to be reunited with her people.

Next, Anastasia's remains traveled to the Ashouwak family home in Old Harbor. Here she was laid to rest in the village cemetery after a final Orthodox Panikhida service. Community members commemorated the event with Alutiiq dance and a village potluck to celebrate her homecoming.