



## Overview:

In this lesson, students read about the village of Chenega, Alaska, and the community's tragic outcome as a result of the 1964 Alaska earthquake and tsunami.

## Targeted Alaska Grade Level Expectations:

### *Science*

[9] SA1.1 The student demonstrates an understanding of the processes of science by asking questions, predicting, observing, describing, measuring, classifying, making generalizations, inferring, and communicating.

[10-11] SA1.1 The student demonstrates an understanding of the processes of science by asking questions, predicting, observing, describing, measuring, classifying, making generalizations, analyzing data, developing models, inferring, and communicating.

### *Reading*

[9-10] 4.2.1 The student restates/summarizes and connects information by restating and summarizing main ideas or events in correct sequence after reading a text (e.g., paraphrasing, constructing a topic outline, charting or mapping main ideas or events) or identifying accurate restatements and summaries of main ideas or events or generalizations of a text

## Targeted Alaska Cultural Standards:

A3 Culturally-knowledgeable students are well grounded in the cultural heritage and traditions of their community. Students who meet this cultural standard are able to acquire and pass on the traditions of their community through oral and written history.

## Objectives:

The student will:

- read personal accounts of the 1964 earthquake and tsunami by community members of Chenega, Alaska; and
- summarize what life was like before, during, and after the tsunami.

## Materials:

- Smelcer, J. E. (2006). *The day that cries forever: stories of the destruction of Chenega during the 1964 Alaska Earthquake*. Anchorage, Alaska: Chenega Future.
- STUDENT WORKSHEET: "The Day That Cries Forever"
- VISUAL AID: Chenega after Good Friday, 1964

## Whole Picture:

The 1964 Earthquake and tsunami caused enormous tragedy for the people of Chenega, Alaska. Chenega was a Sugpiaq village in Prince William Sound. This singular event significantly impacted the lives of survivors. Twenty-six people of Chenega died on that fateful day. The following information is from the NOAA/WDC Historical Tsunami Database at NGDC ([www.ngdc.noaa.gov](http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov)):

Only one house and the school survived of the 8 to 10 homes, the store, and the church that comprised the community. Twenty-three of its inhabitants were lost including many of the church elders who had taken refuge in the church, and three others who were on a nearby island. The houses were either washed to sea or carried in to the forest and broken. All but

three boats were lost. About 60 to 90 seconds after the beginning of the earthquake a small wave rose half way up the rocky beach, but rapidly receded exposing the whole cove bottom for a distance of 300 yards from shore. The returning wave arrived in about four minutes, and before the shaking had ceased. It was about 35 feet high and breaking. It surged up to the reinforced concrete school's foundation, at 70 feet above post-earthquake mean sea-level. The wave was of local origin, given the short time after the beginning of the shock to its appearance. It probably was the result of submarine landsliding into Knight Passage where the water depth reaches over 100 feet within a mile of shore. However, fathometer surveys did not find any evidence of major submarine landsliding. The survivors eventually relocated to a site 20 miles away above Crab Bay at a site now called Chenega Bay. (Lander, 1996, p.155)

### Activity Procedure:

1. Explain students will learn about Chenega, Alaska and that community's devastating experience during the 1964 earthquake and tsunami.
2. Display VISUAL AID: "Chenega after Good Friday, 1964." Share the information from Science Basics, then distribute copies of the book, *The Day that Cries Forever: Stories of the destruction of Chenega during the 1964 Alaska Earthquake*. As a class, read the introduction on pages viii to xvii.
3. Distribute STUDENT WORKSHEET: "The Day That Cries Forever." Explain students will read two or more personal accounts from the text, then summarize what life was like in Chenega before the 1964 Earthquake and tsunami, what unfolded during the earthquake and tsunami, and how it changed the lives of survivors. Explain summarizing means pulling the essential ideas from the text and expressing them in your own words. Well-written summaries are often the result of writers who continually reread texts to compare their expression of understanding main ideas. Poor summaries are often the result of reading quickly and writing immediately. Emphasize, and write on the board, that students should: read, reread, jot down key words and ideas, express those ideas in their own words, and compare their writing to the text.
4. You may want to assign sections to students or allow them to choose on their own. Some students may need to read more than two sections to gain a better understanding of life before, during, and after the earthquake and tsunami.
5. After students have completed the worksheet, guide students in sharing and comparing summaries. Also call on students to share particular passages or images that held their attention.

### Extension Idea:

View an excerpt from the motion picture, *The Great Land*, by C. Keen that includes footage of Chenega soon after the 1964 earthquake and tsunami. This may be viewed by accessing the Alaska Digital Archives at [vilda.alaska.edu](http://vilda.alaska.edu)

### Answers:

1. Answers will vary but may include some of the following ideas: subsistence activities, playing outside, visiting, the calmness prior to the event, attending school in other communities, community centered around the church, unity and sharing.
2. Answers will vary but may include some of the following ideas: shaking for four to five minutes, ocean receding, bubbling and boiling of the ocean, loud noises, people carrying children, running uphill, staying in houses, floating among debris, people lost in the wave.
3. Answers will vary but may include some of the following ideas: huddling around a campfire on top of the hill, grief from loss of loved ones, community members moving to various other communities, relocating village in Chenega Bay, damage to animals and habitats, less subsistence.
4. Answers will vary.

## Lesson Information Sources:

- Keen, C. 1964 Good Friday Earthquake, Chenega. [Motion picture excerpt] *The Great Land*. Dean Phillips Film Collection (AAF-6713). Alaska Film Archives, University of Alaska, Fairbanks. Retrieved April 7, 2008 from Alaska Digital Archives at [vilda.alaska.edu](http://vilda.alaska.edu)
- Lander, J. F. (1996). *Tsunamis Affecting Alaska 1737-1996*, KGRD No. 31, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Geophysical Data Center, Boulder, Colorado, USA, September, 155 p.
- NOAA/WDC Historical Tsunami Database at NGDC. ([www.ngdc.noaa.gov](http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov))
- Santa, C. M., Havens, L. T., & Valdes, B. J. (2004). *Project CRISS: Creating independence through student-owned strategies*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt.
- Smelcer, J. E. (2006). *The day that cries forever: Stories of the destruction of Chenega during the 1964 Alaska earthquake*. Anchorage, Alaska: Chenega Future.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grades

9-12

# The Day that Cries Forever

## Student Worksheet



The 1964 earthquake and tsunami caused enormous tragedy for the Sugpiaq people of Chenega, Alaska. This singular event significantly impacted the lives of survivors. Twenty-six people of Chenega died on that fateful day.

**Directions:** Read two or more personal accounts from *The Day that Cries Forever* by John E. Smelcer, then complete the following.

1. Describe life in Chenega prior to the 1964 earthquake and tsunami.

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2. Describe what happened during the 1964 earthquake and tsunami.

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3. For the survivors, how was life changed?

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4. Select a passage that you found moving, or that grabbed your attention. State or describe the passage, then explain why you chose it.

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