The raw material of history resides in archives, and these are difficult days for one in particular—the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives. The University of Alaska Fairbanks has been hit hard by budget cuts and the archives staff has dwindled. The hours of operation have been suspended, researchers can work only by appointment, and without appropriate staffing, the archives cannot follow its mission to acquire and process new collections. The Alaska and Polar Regions Department includes not only a world-class archives but also collections of historical film and oral history recordings. In addition, it supports the online oral histories of Project Jukebox and contributes photographs and other historical materials to Alaska’s Digital Archives. Without access to these remarkable resources much history work will not be possible.

Archives may not be flashy, especially in times of economic distress, but I view the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives as the beating heart of Alaska and circumpolar studies. And I am not alone—researchers come from across Alaska, the United States, and the world to use these collections. During this, the sesquicentennial of Alaska Purchase and the centennial of the founding of the University of Alaska system, please join in the effort to support archives and defend a tradition of strong Alaskan scholarship.

—Chris Allan
“Time you enjoy wasting is not wasted time.”
—Marthe Troly-Curtin

TIME TO NOMINATE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS FOR THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S AWARDS

The Alaska Historical Society annually recognizes the excellent work done by individuals and groups to knowing, preserving, and understanding Alaskan history during the past year. The awards include:

- The Esther Billman Award of Excellence given to a state or local society, museum, government agency, or other organization which completed a project contributing to the preservation and understanding of Alaskan history during the past year.

- The Evangeline Atwood Award for Excellence given to an individual for significant long-term contributions to Alaska state or local history.

- The James H. Ducker Historian of the Year Award given to an Alaska resident for publication of significant new material about Alaska’s past during the past 18 months.

- The Barbara S. Smith Pathfinder Award given to the discovery and description of Alaska historical material that has not been accessible.

- The Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Award given to a group for its newsletter, a publication, programs, or attaining a notable benchmark.

- Contributions to Alaska History Award that is special recognition of an individual or group for a singular and significant recent contribution to understanding or promoting Alaska history.

Applications can be by letter or email, but must document the individual’s or group’s significant contribution. Nominations must be received by August 17, 2017. Applications should be submitted electronically to Michael Hawfield, Chair, AHS Awards Committee, mchawfield@alaska.edu or mailed to AHS at P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510.

AHS MEMBERSHIP

THANK YOU to all who renewed your Alaska Historical Society membership after our second dues notice went out! Since our last newsletter, we welcome new members: Brian & Estela Holst, Lisa Weissier, and Ann Gifford of Juneau, James Allan, who received a gift membership from his son Chris, Carol Kleckner, Jeanne Creamer-Dalton, and Carolyn Kozak of Fairbanks; Teresa Carns, Mark Rice, and Terry Smith of Anchorage; Alvin Hershberger of Soldotna; Anthony Sisto of Eagle River; Sean McGrane of Anchor Point; Andrew Parks of Washington, DC; Shannon Sinclair of Kerr, WA; Juan Carolos Nogueres Wilson of Spain and Katarina Bulat of Sweden. Yes, we’ve gone international! We hope you enjoy this newsletter, and the spring issue of Alaska History, which will be mailed soon.

Also, a thank you to several individuals who renewed as patron members: Donna Matthews and Susan Cloe, and those who included donations with their membership renewal: Shana Loshbaugh, Ray Hudson, Jean Murray, Patience Frederiksen, Verbeck Smith, Rosalie L’Ecuyer, Allegra Hamer, Bonnie Erickson, Gillian Smythe, James Barnett and Linda Trienschield. All donations are greatly appreciated!

―Ruth Jolly Knapman, Membership Chair

Are you interested in serving on the AHS Board of Directors?

ANNUALLY, one-third of the 15 members of the AHS Board of Directors are up for election or re-election. Terms are for 3 years and an individual can serve two consecutive terms. The board meets face-to-face during the annual meeting and conference in the fall, and quarterly by teleconference. Board members are asked to chair one of the society’s committees and serve on at least one other. The society seeks board members from around the state, and would like to have more Alaska Native people involved. If interested, or if you have a suggestion of an individual, please let Ross Coen, Chair of the Nominating Committee (rcoen@uw.edu) know before August 1st. The Alaska Historical Society relies on the folks who step up to make it an effective and strong organization.
MORE HISTORICAL ANNIVERSARIES TO BE CELEBRATED

WHAT A YEAR to belong to Alaska Historical Society! Alaska History News, Vol. 45, No. 1, listed many events around the state this year to commemorate anniversaries. Here are a few more to take advantage of if you have the opportunity to do so.

In Fairbanks, Pioneer Park was created to observe the 100th anniversary of the purchase of Alaska from Russia, and that summer was called A 67. A ribbon cutting was held May 27th to observe the 50th anniversary of the park. The park, with no gate and no admission fee, will be open daily through Labor Day weekend. There are histories posted on each of the historical buildings that were moved to the park for preservation. These cabins are rented and open daily with displays or items for sale. The first Presbyterian Church in Fairbanks is there. It is heated, and used year-round for services, weddings, and other events. Museums at the park include the Air Museum, Kitty Hensley House, Wickersham House, Pioneers of Alaska Museum and Stampede Show, Railroad Museum. The historic train engine is up and running! This is also the 50th anniversary of the August 1967 Fairbanks flood. There is a special photo display at the park, as well as markers around town showing how high the floodwaters came into our fair city.

Delta Junction Pioneer Igloos # 35 and 19 will be celebrating the 75th Anniversary of the completion of the Alaska Highway, from Dawson Creek to Delta Junction and on to Ladd Field in Fairbanks. The barbecue dinner held at Delta on June 1st included buffalo sandwiches, and Northern Lights ice cream, a tribute to Lintelman’s Northern Lights Dairy, a locally-run family business, which is closing operations after many, many years in Delta Junction.

Leonard Larkins, one of two still-living members of the 93rd Engineer Regiment—one of three black regiments that worked constructing the Alaska Highway—was in Alaska for 75th anniversary commemoration activities. Larkins worked on the road in the Yukon near Carcross, and later was assigned in the Aleutians. He now lives in New Orleans, and in an article published in the Fairbanks News-Miner remembered the cold and the bugs.

I asked the waiter, "Is this milk fresh?" He said, "Lady, three hours ago it was grass."
—Phyllis Diller

Speaking of dairies in interior Alaska, Creamer’s Dairy closed 50 years ago, at which time the property was turned into Creamer’s Bird Refuge. Thus they are celebrating a 50th anniversary too! The grounds are open all the time for viewing birds and hiking the many trails. A popular trail is the one-mile Boreal Forest trail on board walk. There also is wheelchair accessible trail! The dairy buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Walking tours are offered Monday-Saturday at 10 a.m., and Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. during the summer.

Notes from around the state

Each year the Clausen Memorial Museum in Petersburg hosts the Little Norway Art Show during the town’s Norwegian Independence celebration to show off artwork by local residents. The art show opens the day Mayfest begins, which is the Thursday closest to May 17th each year. Petersburg’s celebration has many names including Mayfest, Little Norway, or the Seventeenth. On May 17, 1814 Norway signed a new constitution in an effort to break away from Swedish governance. Sweden didn’t recognize Norway as an independent nation until October 1905. Many Petersburg residents continue to have strong ties to the “Old Country” and carry on traditions passed down through the generations.

The B-29 Kee Bird, is a Boeing “Superfortress” plane—the most advanced and fearsome plane of World War II. Its namesake is the mythological arctic bird that solely subsists on glacial worms. The 46th Reconnaissance Squadron based at Ladd Army Airfield in Fairbanks had a Kee Bird. Its last mission was to look for evidence of Soviet action in the northern regions of the Arctic Circle. The plane took off February 21, 1947 and never completed its mission. Low on fuel and disoriented by bad weather, the pilot with a crew of eleven, were forced to land on a frozen lake. Three days later, they were discovered in Greenland, 250 miles north of Thule Air Force Base. The crew was rescued but the plane left behind. The Fairbanks Pioneer Air Museum tells the story at www.pioneerairmuseum.org/blog

The Treadwell Society held a miners’ ball in April at Juneau’s Baranof Hotel. There were mining-themed appetizers (which I would like to know more about). The guests, many dressed in vintage attire, danced to the sounds of SuSu and the Prophets. A silent auction was held to help with the society’s historic preservation projects at the mine site in Douglas. For more information about the group, visit www.TreadwellSociety.com
The Boat Company in Sitka hosted benefit dinner cruises for the Cape Decision Lighthouse Society. Events were held simultaneously aboard the Liseron and Mist Cave in Sitka and Juneau that raised several thousand dollars to support refurbishing and maintaining one of Alaska's historic lighthouses. The Cape Decision lighthouse was first lit in 1932, and until the 1970s was tended by a 3-man crew. The last AHS newsletter reported Karen Lucas was involved with the lighthouse society for 10 years and it should have said 17 years. The editor thanks Karen for her many, many years of service and apologizes for the error.

Toby Sullivan, Director of the Kodiak Maritime Museum, presented an interesting talk about the renowned captain, Michael Healy, of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Bear. Healy was a talented mariner who ably represented the U.S. Government from Southeast Alaska to the high Arctic. He was known as “Hell Roaring Mike” because of his hot temper and a predilection for drinking. Born before the Civil War, son of a Georgia planter and a mixed race slave, Healy’s story is ever of interest!

Seward’s Resurrection Bay Historical Society is busy throughout the year. This spring, they group sponsored a luncheon at the Breeze Inn for the Chamber of Commerce member to become more aware of the society and its projects….a great idea! The museum has a new temporary exhibit Seward and the First World War: 1917-1918 showing different ways the war affected Seward residents, from the Army draft to local fundraising efforts. The exhibit includes historic newspaper articles, photographs, and objects, including items on loan from Doug Capra. This exhibit will be on display throughout the summer. Lee Poleske and Sue McClure hosted the annual Summer Solstice Cemetery Tour on June 21 at 10:30 p.m. It was a nice walk through the Seward cemeteries and the opportunity to learn about local history at the same time! A recent newsletter included an excerpt from audio interviews with Roy Selig who described his work aboard the SS Starr for the Alaska Steamship Company between 1929 and the 1960s: “It was a rugged little job and it was a rugged run. The Aleutian Chain was rough any time of the year. There were 27 ports of call—every place with a post office. We had a railway mail clerk on board with his own mailroom. Some places we had 2-3 tons of cargo; other places 5-6 tons.” The RBHS received the tapes from Roy’s daughter Joy Selig McNulty along with photographs.

Nice to hear from the Cooper Landing Historical Society and Museum. Their “bare bones news” notes several of their docents moved away and they are seeking volunteers to staff the museum during the summer season. Last October they hosted the Kenai Peninsula Historical Association meeting and Charlie Lean told family stories from 100 years in Cooper Landing.

This year, the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase, is also the 50th anniversary of the Baranov Museum, which opened during the Alaska Purchase Centennial in 1967. The museum is in the oldest standing building in Alaska. The Kodiak Historical Society and friends saved it from demolition following the 1964 earthquake and tsunami. Marian Johnson, museum director from 1971-1996, spoke at the museum in May about the early days of the society and museum to start the golden anniversary celebrations. Other celebration activities included an open house and concert by the Kodiak Russian balalaika players.

The Baranov Museum’s Summer Film Intensive program for middle and high school students will be held in August. This year’s theme is Kodiak as an International Crossroads. The program offers young people a chance to learn audio and video techniques, explore their community’s history, and upon completing the course earn a high school elective credit.

The last History Night programs of the Palmer Historical Society included a talk by Dr. Stephen Brown, Agriculture/Horticulture agent for the Mat-Su/Copper River District, and slide show by MatSu Dirtfishers Association’s President Douglas Cruthers and co-host Allen Nichols on the world of metal detecting. Moving into the summer season, the society held its tent city market on June 10th. Folks had opportunities to bid on a rare copy of The First Summer about the Matanuska Colony and other Palmer memorabilia. The Colony House Museum is open for the season.

The Chugia Eagle River Historical Society held their annual spring potluck. Members are great food while being entertained by the Mirror Lake Middle School Jazz Band.

Gastineau Channel Historical Society said a big goodbye to Mike Blackwell with a huge thank you for his many contributions to the group. Mike began his association with the GCHS in 1999. The society’s great newsletter is now featuring Some Names...
—Ray Bradbury

Over time, the chemical breakdown of the compounds within paper produces the distinctive sweet smell we associate with an old book. The cocktail of aromatic alcohols produced includes benzaldehyde (almonds); vanillin (vanilla); ethyl hexanol (floral); and ethyl benzene and toluene (both sweet). In addition, the amount of the compound furfural can help date a book’s age: those volumes published after the mid-1800s emit more of the compound than older publications which were composed of cotton or linen paper.

Around Juneau compiled by W.D. DeArmond using his father’s popular book of the same title. Anyone with information to supplement what is in the book, or about new names, is invited to send it to wdearmond@mac.com.

Alaska’s neighbor, the Yukon Historical and Museums Association in Whitehorse, mentions an interesting study published in the open access journal Heritage Science. It is about a “Historic Book Odour Wheel” that has been developed to document and archive the aroma associated with old books. Researchers at UCL Institute for Sustainable Heritage created the wheel as part of an experiment in which they asked visitors to St. Paul’s Cathedral’s Dean and Chapter Library in London to characterize its smell. Cecilia Bembibre, co-author of the study concluded: “Our odour wheel provides an example of how scientists and historians could begin to identify, analyze and document smells that have cultural significance, such as the aroma of old books in historic libraries. The role of smells in how we perceive heritage has not been systematically explored until now.” [Editor’s note: I always thought the odor was from mold or dead bugs.]

Just the name Hope and Sunrise Historical Society invokes a smile. The group has a number of events this summer, and information can be found about them on their website www.hopeandsunrisehistoricalsociety.org. There are new plaques on significant buildings in the historic district and one can watch video clips on Kenai Peninsula history at the Quonset hut theater. On June 24th there was a talk about hiking the Hope Ridge by Art Copoulos, and on July 16th the annual Wagon Trail 5K run. At the museum one can read a copy of the long out-of-print Alaska’s Turnagain Arm and the Road to Hope: The Guide by John Koman to learn about the area. Koman recently donated all the remaining copies of his art print, Broken Bow and Arrow, to help support the society’s work.

The Sitka Historical Society is preparing to move back into Harrigan Centennial Hall now that renovations started in 2015 are nearing completion. It has been a huge undertaking for the society, and they are still actively raising funds. HealyKoler Design of Washington, DC designed their new exhibit space, Baranov Builders is doing the construction, and Superior Exhibits and Design of Chicago is fabricating the exhibits. The museum staff are pleased the new space will have a temporary gallery, and the first exhibit there will address Sitka’s role in World War II in the Pacific. Staff spent a lot of time with their collections the past two years, improving their digital collection catalog with updates on 1,552 items and adding 7,635 new entries.

Ketchikan’s Tongass Historical Society is actively pursuing the preservation of the information and items intimate with southern Southeast Alaska. The society works closely with the Tongass Historical Museum that recently reopened after a six-month renovation. The first featured exhibition, Upholding Balance celebrates 40 years of the Native Arts Studies Program, and explores modern Northwest Coast design from 1900 to present. In other news, the museum thanks the Rasmuson Foundation’s Art Acquisition Fund and Tongass Historical Society for financial assistance to acquire a pair of baskets by Kathryn Rouss and a Ravenstail apron woven by Tiffany Vanderhoop.

Anita Maxwell has been selected to be the new director. The past year she was the Senior Curator of Programs as well as Interim Director, leading the museum through the renovation. Anita has a B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Montana and moved to Ketchikan in 2008. She started working with Ketchikan Museums in 2014. Congratulations!

The Wasilla Museum has been hosting Night at the Museum programs this summer. In June, Dan Renshaw of the Gold Cord Mine in Hatcher Pass shared his memories of life in the Matanuska Valley. The museum also hosts programs for kids and for families.

The Eagle Historical Society and Museums did spring cleaning then started giving summer tours of its buildings. The tour includes Wickersham’s courthouse, Fort Egbert’s mule barn, one of the town’s early church buildings, and more. The society thanks NPS and BLM for assisting with the tours. One summer project is continuing renovation of the historic Custom’s House that was damaged several years ago when the Yukon River flooded the town and Eagle Village.

If you are in Whitehorse this summer, the Hougen Heritage Gallery, Arts Underground has an exhibit 75 Years – Alaska Highway 1942-2017: The Archival Record. The Friends of the Yukon Archives Society prepared the exhibit and it will be on display until October 28, 2017.
In May it was announced the Alaska State Museums was one of ten recipients of the 2017 National Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation’s highest honor to museums and libraries for service to the community from the Institute for Museum and Library Services. The award has been given for 23 years to institutions that respond in innovative ways to society. After the award ceremony in Washington, DC, this summer, StoryCorps will visit the Alaska State Museum and Sheldon Jackson Museum and document stories. Each conversation is preserved at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress; some are featured on NPR’s Morning Edition program. Congratulations to Patience Frederiksen, Director, and her talented, hard-working staff!

The National Park Service has a Maritime Heritage Program. For centuries, Americans have used the nation’s waterways for commerce, transportation, defense, and recreation. The Maritime Heritage Program works to advance awareness and understanding of the role of maritime affairs in the history of the United States. Through leadership, assistance, and expertise in maritime history, preservation, and archeology it interprets and preserves America’s maritime heritage. The program has inventories of historic U.S. maritime properties, provides preservation assistance through publications and consultation, educates the public about maritime heritage through a website, sponsors conferences and workshops, and funds maritime heritage projects when grant assistance is available. Applications for 2017 Maritime Heritage Grants are being accepted until August 4, 2017. Information about the grants can be found at www.nps.gov/maritime/grants/apply.htm.

Coleen Mielke of Wasilla has transcribed O.G. Herning’s diaries from 1898-1947 when he operated stores in Knik and Wasilla. She has generously put them on her web page for others to use in their research, just asking that she be acknowledged as transcriber when used. With “best wishes and happy researching” the link is http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~coleen/south_central_alaska.html. The web site has many other great materials for researchers of southcentral Alaska’s history. Wow, and thanks Coleen!

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation has announced its 2017 list of Alaska’s Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties. The properties include the 4th Avenue Theatre in Anchorage, <NN> Cannery in South Naknek, Eldred Rock Lighthouse in northern Lynn Canal, the Chase-Chapman Building in Aniak, the 3 German Bachelors Cabin in Talkeetna, the Wireless Transmitter Site in Anchorage, the Meiers Lake Church at Mile 170 of the Richardson Highway, the Polaris Building in Fairbanks, the Pratt Museum in Homer, and Coastal Archaeological Sites statewide. For more information visit their website at www.aahp-online.net.

As we are in the year of the 150th Anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession, let’s recall that the Alaska Historical Commission awarded $247,308 for 25 projects to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession. The purpose of the program is not only to commemorate the treaty but also to contribute to better understanding it and Alaska at the time. A list of the grants and other initiatives of the commemoration are at http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha.

AHS President Chris Allan found a humorous oddment in the Marysville Daily Appeal, Marysville, California. May 19, 1867: Use for Russian America.—The New York Times has actually discovered a use for Gov. Seward’s Esquimaux bargain? It says: We fancy that our Fourth of July orators would almost be willing to pay out of their pockets the seven millions that Russian America costs, for the new and splendid opportunity it gives them for rhetorical emblazement. With what new energy they can dilate on the vastness of our country? How they can descend upon the tropical groves of Florida, and the ice-fields of the Arctic, and show that universal Yankee lords it over all. The glory of such a prospect cannot be exaggerated, and in view of it, we must say that Sitka is cheap.”

The Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative has had quite an impact on Dillingham-raised Mary Dinon, now of Craig. While reading through the AHCI informational flier Mary noticed
the Arctic Packing Company cannery photo at Kanulik, at the mouth of the Nushagak River, circa 1885. While in Juneau, Dinon was introduced to Anastasia Tarmann from the Alaska State Library and Historical Collections by AHS member Kathy Peavey. Anastasia interviewed Mary and copied all her father’s fishing, cannery and general life photos, and they are now available on the Alaska Digital Archives. Dijon, who had previously met Anjali Grantham, the initiative’s project director, showed her the photos. Readers interested in sharing cannery history photos are invited to email Anjuli at canneryhistory@gmail.com.

Petersburg historian Karen Hofstad will accompany historian and writer Anjuli Grantham to Craig this summer to interview Fred Hamilton Sr. Hamilton is the great grandson of George Hamilton who sold his saltery to the North Pacific Trading and Packing Company which later became the first cannery in Alaska that opened in Klawock in 1878. Karen and Anjuli are working on a book about southeast Alaska’s canneries, adding to work Pat Roppel did before her death.

TIME TO MAKE YOUR TRAVEL PLANS and register for the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska annual conference to be held in Anchorage, September 27-30, 2017. A schedule of papers and events and a link to the registration site will be on the Alaska Historical Society website the first week of August. Willie Hensley, the AHS keynote speaker, will talk Friday morning as part of the society’s program, Exploring the Legacy of the Alaska Purchase. The opening reception will be at the Anchorage Museum, our conference host, and attendees will be treated to viewing the remodeled Alaska Exhibition and the new addition for the Art of the North Galleries. Other evenings, events will be at the Alaska Native Heritage Center and the Alaska Aviation Museum.

Visit our website:
www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org

We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to us at one of the addresses above.
Graduation photograph, Georgianna "Georg" Harwood (née Lincoln, born 1943), businesswoman, indigenous leader and politician. Lincoln served fourteen years in the Alaska Legislature and was the first Alaska Native woman to serve in the Alaska Senate.

Become a member... or if you're already a member, sign up a friend or relative. Join the hundreds who want to stay in touch with historic Alaska by sending $35.00 for individual membership ($50.00 for organizations; $45.00 for family; $100.00 for a patron; $600.00 for a life membership.)

It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual journal Alaska History, the quarterly newsletter Alaska History News, and discounts on publications. A useful and popular book is the society's The Alaska 67 with annotated recommendations of good books on Alaska history. Order it through the website!

Send your application for membership to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299; or join through the website: www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org.

THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is encouraging organizations and individuals to plan events and activities to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession. The Society has created a calendar of events on its website. If you are planning or know of an event please send information about it to members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org.