



## Notes from around the state



Alaska Steamship Co. menu.  
Juneau-Douglas City Museum Collection.

Summer's here again and as usual we note that while winters seem interminable, somehow summer rushes past as quickly as weeds grow in the garden. While we'd like to complain about the unfairness of it all, we really need to dash to enjoy the long days. Boating, hiking, gardening, painting, or just sitting out in the sun with a good book; any excuse to be outside.

However, as the Victorians liked to say, "stern duty calls". Summer is also when people from around the world show up in Alaska to share our joy. Our museums are swamped and volunteers are necessary. I'm sure particular blessings in the afterlife await those who man the buildings, answer the questions so nicely, even the really dumb questions about Alaska money or just how dark it really gets in the winter. Not sure what form the blessings take, but wouldn't be surprised if February has a tropical flavor.

The **Juneau-Douglas City Museum** spent part of the winter analyzing its collections' strengths and weaknesses. An excellent idea; the publishing of the resulting list can spur donations of just what they need.

The big summer exhibition is *Pleasures and Perils: Juneau's Steamships and Shipwrecks*, covering the heyday of steamer traffic in Alaska. Photographs and artifacts will be featured.

The newsletter also discussed the eight **Douglas Island** cemeteries. Asians, Serbians, and Tlingits had their plots, the fraternal orders had theirs, and the Roman Catholics their area. The City of Douglas had the largest one, although there's no record of a deed being delivered.

Friends of **Elva Scott**, long time **Eagle** historian and community activist as well as a valued long time member of the Alaska Historical Society, are sure she's enjoying herself (likely organizing the history of Heaven). They have added a plaque to the cedar gazebo built in her honor last year, and there are rumors that local

musicians just might gather there regularly over the summer to practice and add a little joy to the season.

The society is highly pleased with the new super-vacuum donated to the museum. Now the place can be properly cleaned. They're also happy with the redesigned Website. Check it out at <http://www.eagleak.org> and enjoy the maps, photographs, and offerings of the museum shop.

Well-known Alaska historian, Pat Roppel, is not only giving Wrangellites and subscribers to her monthly newsletter a great treat, but raising money for the new Nolan Center, which contains the museum. She gives origins of various places around the town, local news, and brief items of Wrangell's history. So far readers have learned of an on-going archaeology project, the ten who formed the first all-women mining corporation in the United States and mined garnets, and the lectures scheduled at the museum. There's also a nice explanation of the Crittenden Creek area, as well as a biography of Crittenden. The photos of paddlewheel steamers on the Sitkine are on display at the **Nolan Center** this summer. If you want to get in on the fun, send \$20.00 to **Friends of the Wrangell Museum** at P.O. Box 1998, Wrangell, Alaska, 99929. Contact [wrgbhistory@hotmail.com](mailto:wrgbhistory@hotmail.com) for more information.

Wandering around Anchorage this summer? Don't forget 420 M Street, home of the **Oscar Anderson House**. It was one of the first wood-framed houses built in Anchorage and is open for guided tours June 1 through September 15. Hours are 12:00-5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, closed weekends. Admission is \$3.00 for adults and \$1.00 for children. Good history on the cheap!

The winter edition of the newsletter of the **Sitka Historical Society** contains an interesting account of the capital move from Sitka to Juneau in 1900. Juneau was a booming mining town, and the Klondike gold rush meant Sitka was off the quick route north. Governor John Brady stalled the move until 1906, when Will Hoggatt, a mining man, was named governor. The original congressional law stated "suitable grounds and buildings" had to be provided. Hoggatt rented two large houses and sent for the records.

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Young steamship excursionist finds a good seat.

Juneau-Douglas City Museum Collection.

Since then Sitka has watched with amusement when Anchorage provides the same arguments Juneau hatched — the main source of population and inconvenient location of the present capital — but always voted to keep Juneau.

At one time it was suggested the capital be moved to the old pulp mill location and a high fence erected between it and town. Another tongue-in-cheek idea, when the ill-fated state ferry, *Wickersham*, was up for sale...well, you get the picture.



The **Valdez Museum** has various clever ways of involving the whole community. For several years it has sponsored the Annual Student Art Show in the spring. Almost any art medium is accepted, and the show is not judged; the idea is to encourage creativity from kindergarten to college age.

*Stitches in Time* is the quilt and fiber art exhibition for the summer and all sewers are welcome. Quilts will be raffled off at the end of the season and the proceeds given to several non-profit groups.

For a look at the exhibits and a general tour of Valdez history, enjoy them through [www.valdez-museum.org](http://www.valdez-museum.org). They also can be reached at 217 Egan Drive, Valdez, Alaska, 99686, or give a call to 907/835-2764.



Photographs and artifacts from Ketchikan's colorful history form the summer exhibition, *Tides of Change*, at the **Tongass Historical Museum**.

One of the most valuable contributions a historical society can give is a history of a local person, family, or business. As time goes on and memories fade, these become a nugget if not a gold mine for the serious researcher. Talbot's Building Supply, in business since 1927 under the same family, is covered in the current newsletter. Kudos for the society.

The museum put together *Funday* at the Museum, a series aimed at children and found it is a smash



Gas boat *Walrus* on the Ketchikan waterfront, 1904.

Photo courtesy Tongass Historical Museum, Harriet Hunt photo.

hit. The first featured five photography learning stations consisting of a camera obscura, a shadow wall, lens exploration, cyanotype printing, and stereoscopes. The 60 attendees left very happy and looking forward to the next demonstration.

Ketchikan has also jazzed up its website. See [city.ketchikan.ak.us/departments/museums/index.html](http://city.ketchikan.ak.us/departments/museums/index.html) and see what you think.



*Seward: The First 100 Years*, the video documentary, won a certificate of excellence from the *Communicator Awards 2004 Video Competition* and is now under consideration for further honors, reports the **Resurrection Bay Historical Society**. DVDs and videos are available for \$19.95 plus \$3.00 postage. The \$3.00 stays the same if multiple copies are ordered. There's a bargain. Order from the society at P.O. Box 55, Seward, Alaska, 99664, or 907/224-3902.



One of the founders of the society in 1962 and its first president, **Seely Hall, Jr.**, died in March in Juneau. Seely and his wife comprised one-fourth of the original eight members. His banking career took him to Anchorage, Seward, Sitka, and Juneau. He was also known as an enthusiastic artist and an organizer of the Juneau Artists' Co-op.



A May tour of the new museum of the **Kasilof Regional Historical Association** is mentioned. Welcome, Kasilof. We're told the movie of a 1936 hunting trip shown as a fund raiser last March, was successful, and the museum is open year-round. Call first at 907/262-2999. Now we'd love to learn more.



Busy times coming for the **Palmer Historical Society**. The 70th reunion of Colonist families will be in mid-June, the Pioneers of Alaska will have their annual meeting in September in Palmer, and the 50th reunion of the Palmer High class of 1955 will take place.

The Palmer newsletter commented tartly on a mid-winter speaker it says "rambled and speculated" on the subject. "As a result, we don't know much more about it than we did." Two theories: 1. Cabin fever. 2. An insider's joke.

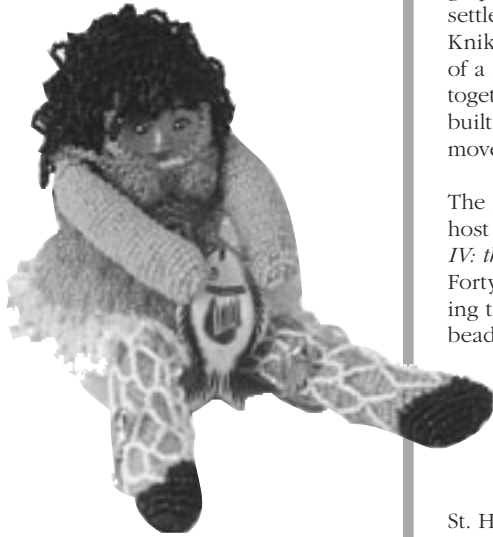
Or, of course, it's always possible the speaker did a terrible job.



Memorial Day weekend saw the annual meeting of the **McCarthy-Kennicott Historical Museum**. Contact 907/554-4408 or [mibunt@aol.com](mailto:mibunt@aol.com) for more information.



## Notes from around the state



*She Wore Fishnet Stockings,*  
beaded art by Cheryl Lacy from  
an exhibit at the Dorothy Page  
Museum in Wasilla.

The **Wasilla-Knik Historical Society** and its partner, the **Dorothy Page Museum**, had a great project for the students of the MidValley High School. They put together a new Wasilla Pioneers exhibition with short biographies and photographs of prominent and just well-known early settlers. They're also mounting a new display of Knik and old Wasilla featuring a miniature replica of a local Knik business. Knik and Wasilla go together — when the Alaska Railroad was being built, the dwindling gold rush camp of Knik moved to the new Wasilla site.

The museum is highly pleased at being chosen to host an international beadwork display, *Beadwork IV: the Beaded Figure*, for much of the summer. Forty-six pieces from around the world, including three from Alaska, will delight devotees of beading.

The society is running its Farmers' Market again this year. Socializing and fresh food; a winning combination.



St. Herman, a mail boat photographer, and humpback whales were the subjects of the spring lecture series at the **Baranov Museum**, the **Kodiak Historical Society** newsletter tells us. There's also an article, first printed in 1912, by the wife of the superintendent of the Kodiak Baptist Orphanage, commenting on, among other things, the fall-out from the Katmai volcano blast. "The ground, covered with nearly a foot of ashes, has the appearance of clay, streaked with gullies caused by the hard rain. The lake in front of the mission is of the same color as the ground."

Even more interesting are the questions Mrs. Learn raises. She doesn't mention her husband. Was he there? What was wrong with little Phillip, who had been in bed for over four months? Tuberculosis? And, strangest of all, why had she left her little girl with friends in Massachusetts? Fear of illness? Frail child? Fear of the unknown? Was this a common practice among missionaries?



Another founding member of a society died recently. **DeWitt Fields** was a charter member of the Kodiak Historical Society in 1954, and moved a Quonset hut to a downtown location to serve as Kodiak's first museum. He was active in many civic organizations.



The society is working on completing its separate endowment account. This is something other groups might want to look into. Check with your local bankers and business owners. With the cuts the governor and legislature have made to Alaska's small towns, financing anything has become very difficult.



The voters of Anchorage agreed to a new property tax to enable the **Anchorage Museum of History and Art** to expand. This type of community approval is not only welcomed for the money; it is an affirmation of the work the museum is doing. Congratulations!

A big summer exhibition this year continues the series on points of view. This is *Point of View VI: Defiant Objects* and compares and contrasts the museum's contemporary art with its ethnographic artifacts. An intriguing idea.

Another major display is *The Shamans: Spirit Guides of Siberia*, on loan from Russia. Clothing, photographs, and paraphernalia show the domain of the shaman.

*Light Motifs: American Impressionist Paintings* from the Metropolitan Museum of Art is a blockbuster loan event present for most of the summer. Of course all the usual lectures on subjects from weaving to woodworking to photography to design are offered. Children are not neglected either. The summer fine arts camp and a year-long exhibition devoted to canine friends, *Spot the Dog*, offer something to Anchorage's younger set. The museum is indeed a very busy place year round. For some sightseeing, go to [www.anchoragemuseum.org](http://www.anchoragemuseum.org), or stop by 121 West Seventh Avenue. Call 907/343-4326 or fax 907/343-6149.



The **Cook Inlet Historical Society**, the parent of the Anchorage museum, is whooping it up on its 50 years of collecting and preserving Anchorage and Alaska history. Although most of its collection is on display, there will be a special exhibition of seldom seen artifacts. Their free Brown Bag Lunch Programs have resumed as well. Curious? Call Jim Barnett at 907/346-2755.



**Kodiak covered in ash from the eruption of the Katmai volcano.**

Alaska and Polar Regions Department, Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

## Notes from around the state



Tenakee Springs hat, ca. 1940s, described as being “color of a rotten peach in February.”

The Kadashan Bay Corporation closed its books, and in the process donated \$10,000 to the **Tenakee Historical Collection** and another \$10,000 to the Chichagof Conservation Council to further their work. Both groups are devoutly grateful. The historical group continues its quest for information on the fish reduction plants and canneries and the people connected with them in Tenakee and the inlet.

An old hat from around 1943 was found in excellent condition. It was imaginatively described then in the local Tenakee paper as “the color of a rotten peach in February” as it’s a soft blush pink with amber brown ribbon trim. For more information contact the editor, Vicki Wisenbaugh, at 907/736-2234 or [wisentenakee@juno.com](mailto:wisentenakee@juno.com), or write P.O. Box 633, Tenakee Springs, Alaska, 99841.



One of the greatest thrills a researcher can have is to find an object not only hitherto unknown but also in excellent condition. A beautiful Aleut spruce root hat from the nineteenth century was discovered intact in an old trunk in Sitka. It was loaned to the **Alaska State Museum**, who cleaned and displayed it. However, when the family that owned it decided to sell, the price, estimated at \$175,000, was far beyond the means of the museum. It was to be sold at auction. Rather than let the hat go to private ownership, likely out of state, the **Alutiiq Museum** formed a partnership with the **Anchorage Museum of History and Art**, and both approached every group and person they thought could help. Money was raised and all that was left was to hope and worry. They did prevail — the hat fetched \$160,250.

Triumphantly, the winners brought it back. The Anchorage museum built a mount for it and then it came home to Kodiak. Ownership and display will be shared between the two museums. To see this beauty, visit [www.alutiiqmuseum.com](http://www.alutiiqmuseum.com).

So much has been lost; we can all rejoice that a piece of Alaska’s heritage has been returned.



Moose research has been occupying the **Kenai Historical Society**. Members have

recalled the Moose Range’s founding in the 1960s and continuing work. A book on the subject by Chuck Schwartz and Al

Franzmann, *Ecology and Management of the North American Moose*, has been published by the Smithsonian Press.

More natural history is covered in noting the absence of the snow geese. They and other migrant birds used to come in mid-April, 10,000 strong, on

the Kenai River flats, but have dwindled to none. Another victim of global warming, it seems; the birds fly over the flats and feed in other areas on their way north.

The society has also noted that of the seven covered bridges in Alaska, three were on the Kenai Peninsula. Sadly, all are gone now. The Schooner Bend Bridge, constructed in 1929, was the most northerly covered bridge in North America. It was said to be a place for lovers to meet and a man once built a boat there. Romantic to the practical, in spite of protests it was removed around 1956.



Once again the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** has devoted much of its newsletter to local history, in this case Telephone Hill in downtown Juneau. This has recently been in the news as the site of the proposed new Capitol Building, itself a source of great contention.

It seems conflicting mining claims in the area (remember, Juneau was founded on mining) by eager stakers, some of whom were motivated more by money from the surface of the townsites than what lay under it, led to many lawsuits and at least one tunnel into the hill.



The communal archaeological digs in Kodiak continue for the seventh year. Volunteers work under the supervision of trained archaeologists and the results couldn’t be better. Not only have they found 76 previously unrecorded sites, but vandalism has been reduced significantly.

They also report the study on the interior of the island has yielded fish camp sites at least 5,000 years old. Work and analysis continue, but it seems earlier settlers used nets and later ones weirs and traps on the lower rivers. A nice note is the cooperation of the bears. When they tear up the spring vegetation, they’re apt to uncover charcoal from old fires.

Work on keeping and teaching the Alutiiq language also continues. If you have the urge to contact them, besides the Website you can write them at 215 Mission Road, Suite 101, Kodiak, Alaska, 99615, or phone 907/486-7004, or fax 907/486-7048. If you need e-mail, try [receptionist@alutiiqmuseum.com](mailto:receptionist@alutiiqmuseum.com).



Every Alaska town has its special people; those who have lots of good stories to tell, many of them true. Tom “Slippery” Slanker, long resident of Eagle River, shared some of his memories with the **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society**. He owned a gas station with one gas pump, and one Sunday wanted to go fishing. He left a sign on the pump, “Pump your gas and pay the next time you come in.” When he returned, he was short \$2.00.



Alutiiq hat recently purchased by Alutiiq Museum and the Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

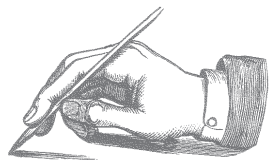
*Message  
from the President*



Like a good percentage of Alaskans, our president has become very, very busy since the long rays and days of summer arrived, and yielded to the editor's suggestion he save his next message for the autumn issue.

He was firm, however, that the editor could not try for the sympathy vote by saying he is battling cholera.

*Dee Longenbaugh for  
Bruce Parham, President*



*We welcome your letters,  
news and pictures. Please  
send them to the editor:*

Dee Longenbaugh  
The Observatory, ABAA  
200 N. Franklin St.,  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Tel: 907/586-9676  
Fax: 586-9606  
Email: deelong@alaska.com

Two months later a man came by and paid up, saying he'd been in the bush and needed to pay his bills.

A local couple who had moved sent along a package of paper memorabilia accumulated over the years. The society was delighted with the old community directories, school bulletins, programs, and papers, and asks others to do likewise. This wish is duplicated by all local historical societies. If you feel you're mailing trash, let them sort through it and decide what needs keeping.



Summer is here and the **Knik Museum Musher's Hall of Fame** is now open for the season. The famous Serum Run to Nome and the Knik Gold Rush era are major attractions this year. Several outdoor events are on tap; if you're going to be in the neighborhood, phone 907/376-7755 for details.



**Koyukuk shaman on the Yukon River, ca. 1882.**  
Photo courtesy Alaska State Library-Historical Collections.

## Obituary



### George A. Hall

There are some historians who turn into institutions. Like universities, it's assumed they'll be

around forever, so it's a real shock when they die. Richard Pierce and Frederica de Laguna were such, and so was George A. Hall, who died April 6 in Anchorage at the age of 81.

After World War II service in the Air Force and a degree from Drake University, he came to Sitka in 1953 and became the first historian at the Sitka National Historic Park. There he worked closely with the Tlingit community, recorded Baranov's Song of the Hunters from one of the last Russian speakers of Sitka, and was adopted into the Kiksadi clan by a house leader, an honor he cherished.

In 1957 Hall was named superintendent of McKinley National Park and Alaska coordinator of national parks. He served as deputy director of the State Division of Parks from 1970 to 1978, when he retired and went into private business.

He helped organize and was active in many Anchorage civic groups. The Walk for Hope to help Hope Cottages, Inc., the Foundation of the Arc of Anchorage, the Cook Inlet Historical Society, the Anchorage Museum of Art and History, American Society of Polar Philatelists, and the Boy Scouts, all benefited from his energy and enthusiasm.

The family says donations in his name can be made to The Arc of Anchorage, 2211 Arca Drive, Anchorage, Alaska, 99508, and Boy Scouts of America, Western Alaska Council, 3117 Patterson Street, Anchorage, Alaska, 99504.

Our group, the Alaska Historical Society, particularly misses George as he was one of the founding members, and served as the executive director from 1967 to 1986. On a personal note, this editor will miss George's occasional informative or encouraging notes. We will all miss not only his knowledge, but his wonderful sense of humor.



Twin covered bridges were built north of Seward in 1928.  
Photo courtesy Alaska State Library-Historical Collections.

## News & Information

### ANCHORAGE HISTORIC PROPERTIES

**Anchorage Historic Properties** not only lost their beloved director last fall, but were then told their grant from the city would be lost unless they were operationally independent by June, 2005. They are trying very hard. The two **Brown's Point Cottages** have been restored and plans are underway to rehabilitate the **Wireless Station** and **Vic Brown House**. These will all be rented out when done. They are seeking sponsors and members, and offer premiums to donors. They are a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and can be contacted at 907/274-3600 or stop by at the office, Cottage 25, 645 West Third Avenue, at the corner of Third and G.

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### CREATING ALASKA— THE ORIGINS OF THE 49TH STATE

A \$250,000 grant has been awarded Creating Alaska — The Origins of the 49th State, a **University of Alaska** Special Project. They have decided to spend it on completing the oral history project and development of special anniversary traveling displays for Alaska's museums.

The group is celebrating the 50th anniversary of Alaska's Constitutional Convention this year, not in Fairbanks, but in Anchorage. Planning the documentary which will be aired in Alaska next February, the steering committee announces KUAC will also produce one-minute Alaska History Nuggets to air around the state this fall.

The advisory board co-chair, Thomas Stewart, has been writing a book on the Alaska Constitutional Convention. As Judge Stewart was the secretary of the convention and laid the groundwork for it, he is certainly the proper person to recall this precursor of statehood. For this and other reasons, he became the first person from Alaska to be given the Herbert Harley Award by the prestigious American Judicature Society for a lifetime of working to improve the court system. This was given to him in person by United States Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor in early May.

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### ALASKA-YUKON PIONEERS

If you remember or enjoy reading news items like the memory of skis in Fairbanks in 1946 that were so sturdy people made fences from them, send \$10.00 to the **Alaska-Yukon Pioneers** for a year's subscription to

their lively newsletters (this is a labor of love). Write 2725 East Fir, Unit 71, Mount Vernon, Washington, 98273, or send an e-mail to [aypvera@isomedia.com](mailto:aypvera@isomedia.com), and get in touch with your old friends and neighbors, (or the friends and neighbors you might have longed to have).

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### HERITAGE SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

*Heritage* is produced by the **Office of History and Archaeology**, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Alaska Department of Natural Resources. Please send your comments, suggestions, and information via e-mail to [joa@dnr.state.ak.us](mailto:joa@dnr.state.ak.us).

All issues are posted to the website at [www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/) and distributed via e-mail. Paper copies can be sent to individuals and organizations that specifically request them.

To be added to the e-mail subscription list, please send an e-mail to [oha@alaska.net](mailto:oha@alaska.net) with *Heritage* subscribe in the subject line.

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### PROPOSED BILL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

National preservation groups, including the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO), Preservation Action, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the American Cultural Resource Association (ACRA), the National Association of Tribal Preservation Officers (NATHPO), the Society for American Archaeology, and the Society for Historical Archaeology sent a joint letter to Representative Devin Nunes, chair of the subcommittee, objecting to sections of a proposed bill that would significantly weaken the **Historic Preservation Fund** programs and the **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**. The Coalition of 9/11 Families, representing more than 4,000 individuals, sent a letter objecting to the changes based on their experience as a consulting party in the Section 106 review of several federally funded undertakings at the World Trade Center site.

Congressman Don Young chairs the full Resources Committee that will review, discuss and act on the subcommittee's bill. It is important for members of Alaska's historic preservation community to contact Representative Young about the bill and let him know the impacts of the proposed changes. Additional information is available at [www.ncshpo.org/HPFPreservation/NHPAAbtm.htm](http://www.ncshpo.org/HPFPreservation/NHPAAbtm.htm) or [www.ncshpo.org/PDFs/NHPAJointLetter.pdf](http://www.ncshpo.org/PDFs/NHPAJointLetter.pdf).

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### BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S FY 06 BUDGET

President Bush's proposed budget for FY 06 recommends level funding for state and tribal historic preservation programs, \$35.5 million for states and \$3.205 million for tribes. The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) as a whole is reduced from last year by \$5.534 million. Funds for Historically Black Colleges and Universities are eliminated and the Save America's Treasures program is cut from \$30 million to \$15 million. The budget adds \$12.5 million for Preserve America projects.

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### AMALIK BAY ARCHEOLOGICAL DISTRICT DESIGNATED A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK

The Secretary of the Interior designed **Amalik Bay Archeological District** in Katmai National Park and Preserve a National Historic Landmark on April 5, 2005. The district includes 28 sites that have yielded and are likely to yield more information important to understanding the initial peopling of Alaska's southern coast and the dynamics of human migrations in the millennia that followed. These include the development of distinct technologies and the emergence of Alutiiq culture. The district has evidence of human occupation back about 7,600 years. The site has provided information about the exchange of ground-slate tools and Norton-style pottery, hallmarks in the development of coastal Eskimo economies. The clustering of sites in the district with such time depth, time range, and diversity is unique in the Alutiiq area. Included in the landmark is the Takli Island Archeological District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. With the entry of Amalik Bay Archeological District, Alaska has 51 National Historic Landmarks.

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### HUMANITIES GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Want to work on a project strongly grounded in the humanities, a broad term that includes history, anthropology, literary, film, and theater studies among others? Contact the **Alaska Humanities Forum** for a possible grant. On the Web at [www.akbf.org](http://www.akbf.org), [grrants@akbf.org](mailto:grrants@akbf.org), or find the human grants officer at 907/272-5341.



City Hall and U.S. Courthouse, Juneau, ca. 1918.  
Alaska State Library-Historical Collections, PCA 87-0882.

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[mike.dunning@uas.alaska.edu](mailto:mike.dunning@uas.alaska.edu)
- Susan Grigg, *Fairbanks*  
[ffslg@uaf.edu](mailto:ffslg@uaf.edu)
- Steve Haycox, *Anchorage*  
[afswl1@uaa.alaska.edu](mailto:afswl1@uaa.alaska.edu)
- Katherine Johnson, *Anchorage*  
[katmaikate@aol.com](mailto:katmaikate@aol.com)
- Jim King, *Juneau*  
[kingfarm@ptialaska.net](mailto:kingfarm@ptialaska.net)
- Marilyn Knapp, *Anchorage*  
[knappmr@muni.org](mailto:knappmr@muni.org)
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[deelong@alaska.com](mailto:deelong@alaska.com)
- Dorothy Moore, *Valdez*  
[dmmore@cvinternet.net](mailto:dmmore@cvinternet.net)
- Frank Norris, *Anchorage*  
[frank\\_norris@nps.gov](mailto:frank_norris@nps.gov)
- Barbara Smith, *Anchorage*  
[barbarassmith@gci.net](mailto:barbarassmith@gci.net)



- Jo Antonson, *Assistant to the President*  
[joa@alaska.com](mailto:joa@alaska.com)
- Judy Bittner, *Office of History and Archaeology*  
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P.O. Box 100299 Anchorage, AK 99510-0299  
Tel: 907/276-1596; E-mail: [akhist@gci.net](mailto:akhist@gci.net)

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It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual *Alaska History*, the quarterly newsletter *Alaska History News*, and discounts on publications.

Right now a number of back issues of *Alaska History* are on sale; \$6.00 each to non-members, \$4.00 to members. As interest and writing on Alaska history seem to be sprouting like fireweed in the spring, a useful and popular feature is the listing of new books and publications found in each issue. Send your application to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299; remember to include your address and occupation or school you're attending.

  
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Women cooking around a campfire at summer camp, ca.1945.  
Iñupiat Heritage Center, Barrow.

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### *Editor's Comments*

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**1964**, fresh from Maryland, was the first time I read of Alaska politics in action. A legislator was pulled off an airplane because he was heading home rather than vote, and the Sergeant-at-Arms had sent the state troopers. That was certainly different from Baltimore. The state budget that year was \$19 million, about the same as Baltimore's. There were around 250,000 people in the whole state. How things have changed.

Some things have remained the same. In good times we have always argued, whined, disagreed, and generally been grouchy with each other. In bad times we have also been incredibly kind, compassionate, and helpful with one another. In times of disaster, such as the Alaska Airlines crashes, we mourn together and comfort one another. In times of joy, such as the first oil pipeline payouts, we rejoice together. In other words, we are neighbors, united, not divided, by our huge land.

For the last twenty years, however, this solidarity has been eroding. There are some who want to set up prosperous and poor neighborhoods in our town. The materially successful will live in the nicer places, those with big yards and lots of trees, and the poor will make do with shacks and rusted machinery in the yard.

I am speaking, of course, of the urban-rural divide.

Rather than spread the money around, the legislature has been complaining about the costs in the Bush and spending more and more money on the major population centers. This year there has been more talk about improving a street intersection in Anchorage than the villages that have been starved of funds to the point their governments are closing down.

Could that possibly be what we Alaskans want?

If this is continued, look at some of the consequences. As with the end of the longevity bonus, the end of revenue sharing to the Bush not only affects the few sources of money, but the ripple effect closes businesses there. This will send the young people to the cities in search of jobs and thus hasten the destruction of a way of life that has endured for thousands of years.

Is that what we want?

Let's get back to uniting our Alaskans, not separating us. Then we can argue and be grouchy and hug and praise as we used to. We are all neighbors after all.

*Dee Longenbaugh*