

Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative

DOCUMENTING AND PRESERVING
ALASKA'S SEAFOOD PROCESSING HISTORY



Cannery interior showing workers at the feeding machine, Yakutat, Alaska.

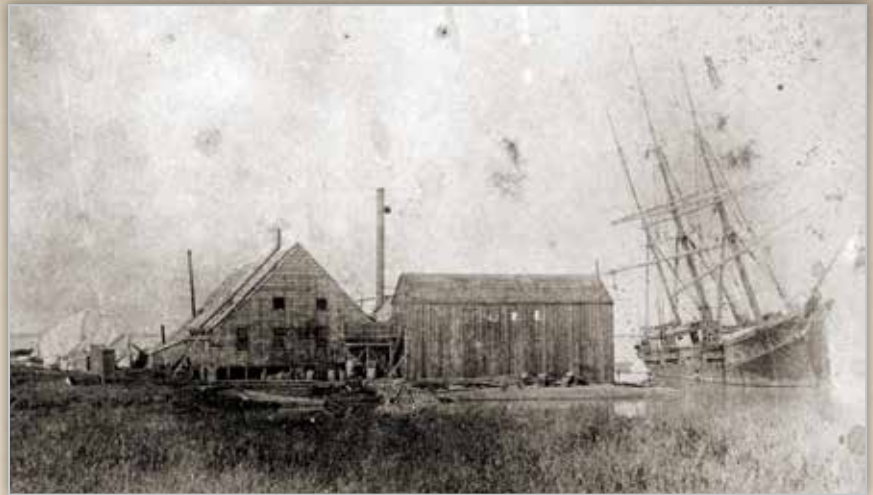
Fhoki Kayamori, Photographs, circa
1912-1941, ASI-P55-305.

Alaska Historical Society's Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative



F In the past, hundreds of canneries and processors dotted Alaska's coast, serving as economic engines and social hubs for communities around the state. Today, our commercial fishing industry continues to thrive, but changes in the industry mean that many of these historic places are at risk of disappearing from the landscape before their stories are captured. These places matter to the history, the economy, the landscape and the environment of Alaska. ~

The Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative seeks to document, preserve, and celebrate the history of Alaska's commercial seafood processors. This includes places—salmon canneries, herring reduction plants, floating processors, cold storage facilities, cod salteries—and people—slime line worker, fishermen, tenders, superintendants, and marketers. This grassroots initiative hopes to inspire projects around the state that will document the legacy of Alaska's canneries for future generations.



Photograph courtesy Elizabeth Nicholson Butkovich.

Arctic Packing Company cannery at Kanulik, mouth of Nushagak River, circa 1885.

This grassroots project is based on the efforts of individuals, organizations, and communities to conduct projects that document local cannery histories. It can be as simple as donating photos of Alaska canneries to a local historical society or organizing a storytelling event about an old herring reduction plant. Or, a project can be larger, such as nominating a cannery to the National Register of Historic Places, creating a preservation plan, executing an oral history project, or working with students to research local cannery sites. Whatever the size of an individual project, all fit within the initiative's goal: documenting these places and personalities that matter to so many Alaskans.

Vision: This initiative will inspire projects that document, preserve, and educate about Alaska's seafood processing heritage. —



Label courtesy Karen Hofstad.



Alaska Packers Cannery, Chignik, Alaska, 1915.



Documentation

- Collect archival, photographic, and object collections for museums
- Conduct oral histories and interviews
- Write essays, articles, stories and books related to the history of commercial fishing and processing
- Take and share photos of historic cannery sites
- Nominate canneries to the National Register of Historic Places
- Conduct archaeological investigations
- Conduct historic resource surveys; historic structure reports

Preservation

- Prepare preservation plans for historic cannery buildings
- Explore options for adaptive re-use of canneries
- Stabilize structures and vessels
- Explore tax credit programs and easements for preservation purposes
- Begin monitoring programs of historic fish processing sites

Education

- Museum exhibits
- Films
- Interpretive signs and plaques
- Lecture series or storytelling events
- Radio programming
- Cannery history websites and Wikipedia entries
- Community celebrations
- Curriculum for schools



Photograph courtesy Al Andree 1997-48-21.

Bristol Bay double-ender under sail.



Photograph courtesy Anjuli Grantham.

How you can help:

- Start a project! Let AHCI folks know about your project so that we can share your work with other cannery history buffs around the state. Have you already finished a project? Let us know about it so we can share your efforts with others.
- Share your cannery history knowledge by contributing a blogpost to Alaska's Historic Canneries blog. Photos, stories, artwork and historical information are all welcome.
- Become an initiative sponsor or donor. Your sponsorship of the initiative will spread the impact and help us to capture more history.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information and to share your cannery project, please e-mail canneryhistory@gmail.com or visit the Alaska Historical Society website at www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org.



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Salmon Cannery, Georgia Inlet, Ketchikan, Alaska,
August 31, 2009. Photograph by Len Turner.

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