



Alaska History News

Volume 37, No. 4 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society Winter 2009

Message from the President

Preserving Fish Stories:

Robert Magnus Thorstenson Sr., 1931-2009

In September, Alaska Historical Society members ventured to Unalaska from many corners of the state and country for this year's annual meeting, *Encounters: Where East Meets West*. The community offered a sweeping glance at Alaska history, including an enduring Native culture, remnants of Russian America, and World War II's stoic Aleutian Campaign. We were blessed by good weather, which provided us breathtaking views of the autumn-tinged, tundra covered vistas.

One aspect of our trip that struck me is the magnitude of which the commercial fishing industry at Dutch Harbor has played in shaping our state. This year we lost a giant of that industry—Robert Magnus Thorstenson, Sr.—who not only advocated for and preserved fishing history, he made it.

As fishing historian Bob King writes it: "Bob Thorstenson arrived to Alaska just after statehood, at a time when the fishing industry had crashed to new lows. Raised in Washington and of Icelandic heritage, Bob Sr. grew up on the water. In 1959 he was offered a job as an assistant cannery superintendent in Petersburg, and quickly became manager of statewide operations for Pacific American Fisheries.

With the fishing industry in freefall, Bob Thorstenson bet on Alaska's future. He and a group of Petersburg residents bought the local PAF cannery and had a different way of doing business. In an industry dominated by absentee landlords, Petersburg Fisheries was locally-controlled and employee-owned. In an era of mass production, it placed an emphasis on quality. In an era of industry decline, it was aggressive: seeking new markets, new species, new products.

With Thorstenson as CEO and chairman of the board, Petersburg Fisheries survived the early years and as salmon runs rebuilt, the company grew. Renamed Icicle Seafoods, it expanded across Alaska and into new fisheries like king crab and Pollock.

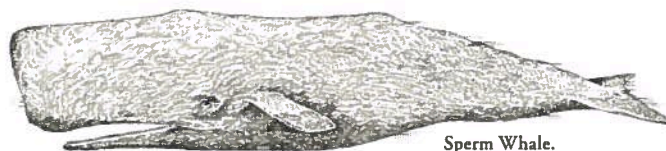
Bob Thorstenson led Icicle Seafoods for its first 15 years and remained on the board for the decades that followed. When the company was sold in 2007, Icicle ranked among the largest in Alaska. Its employees owned over 60% of the company stock.

Suffering from Parkinson's disease, it became increasingly difficult for him to talk, but Thorstenson found a strong voice by producing a series of video documentaries in which industry pioneers recounted the stories of Petersburg Fisheries, PAF, the Alaska Packers Association, fish traps and pirates, and more. He also commissioned a book that chronicled the history and people of Icicle Seafoods."

While visiting Dutch Harbor I was reminded that Alaska's rich heritage in seafood is poorly documented. As Bob King concluded, "Bob Thorstenson Sr. lived that history, shaped it and, in the end, left a record so future generations will remember it." Hopefully, Bob Thorstenson's dedication to Alaska history will inspire others to write down those fish stories. Because if we don't, pioneers of the industry like Bob will sadly get away and the stories will be forgotten.

Red salmon, breeding male. In: "The Fishes of Alaska." Bulletin of the Bureau of Fisheries, Vol. XXVI, 1906. P. 360, Plate XXXIV.
Image courtesy the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Montage by Archgraphics.

CONGRATULATIONS AHS 2009 AWARD RECIPIENTS



Sperm Whale.

At the annual meeting held September 18 in Unalaska, Bruce Merrell, Awards Chair, announced the Alaska Historical Society 2009 awards recognizing individuals, historical societies, and public institutions for outstanding research, writing, and promotion of Alaska's history.

William E. Davis, who just this year moved to Sitka, received the **Evangeline Atwood Award** recognizing significant long-term contributions to Alaska state or local history. The award is named for one of the founders of the Alaska Historical Society, who also researched, wrote, and encouraged preservation of Alaska's past. Bill recently retired as secretary of the Cook Inlet Historical Society in Anchorage after more than three decades of service, including serving as president for six years. Although he always volunteered his time, he worked like a paid employee coordinating the society's activities. He spearheaded a series of distinguished publications, organized programs, and wrote the guide to the Alaska history gallery at the Anchorage Museum. An educator by training, Bill is Professor Emeritus of Alaska Methodist University. He is working on a project concerning the early history of Cook Inlet.

President Katie Ringsmuth honored **Katie Oliver** with the **President's Award**, a beaver log. Katie O. is the director of the Baranov Museum and in the past two years has written successful grants for archaeological investigations around the foundation of the building that dates to the Russian settlement, for restoration work on the building, and for curation of several fragile artifacts. She has served as secretary of the Alaska Historical Society, revised its web site, and organized sessions to bring the local historical societies around the state together. Katie was recognized for her hard work and dedication done with ease and grace.



Katie Oliver.
Photograph courtesy Ron Inouye.

Willie Hensley of Anchorage received the **Alaska Historian of the Year Award** for his book *Fifty Miles from Tomorrow: A Memoir of Alaska and the Real People*. This award is given to an Alaska resident for publication of notable new material about Alaska history during the past year. One of the key players in the drive for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971, Hensley was tireless in seeking compensation and greater autonomy for Alaska's indigenous people. His book is eloquent in telling of his personal journey from his birthplace in Kotzebue to the halls of Congress. Through a lifetime spent educating and influencing those in power, he has brought national attention to Alaskan Native issues and cultural values.

John R. Bockstoe of South Dartmouth, Massachusetts received the **Contributions to Alaska History Award**. In his long career John has researched and published much of what we know about whaling and trading patterns off the shores of northern Alaska. He was the Curator of Ethnology for the New Bedford Whaling Museum for many years and is the author of *Whales, Ice and Men: The History of Commercial Whaling in the Western Arctic*. This title was recognized by the Alaska Historical Society in *The Alaska 67: A Guide to Alaska's Best History Books*. Yale University has just published his latest book,

Furs and Frontiers in the Far North: The Contest Among Native and Foreign Nations for the Bering Strait Fur Trade.

The **Eagle Historical Society** received the **Esther Billman Award of Excellence**, given to a local historical society, museum, government agency, or other organization for projects contributing to the preservation and understanding of Alaska history. This award is named for the longtime curator at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka. When the Yukon River broke up last May, Old Eagle Village and the town of Eagle were inundated with flood waters carrying enormous ice floes. Twenty-five structures were destroyed, half the residents left homeless, and the historic Customs House was badly damaged. When ice chunks pushed the Customs House off its foundation and it looked like the whole building might be lost down the river, community members rallied, broke a window and saved the historical records and artifacts in the building. Through this award we want to honor **Jean Turner**, the museum director, and the other Eagle Historical Society volunteers, some of whom lost their own homes.

The **Hope and Sunrise Historical Society** received the **Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Newsletter Award**, given for the best newsletter published by a local historical society over the past several years. The award is named for Elva Scott, the tireless editor of the *Eagle Wireless* for the Eagle Historical Society for more than 25 years. From the tiny gold rush community on the shores of Turnagain Arm, the members of the Hope and Sunrise Historical Society produce a newsletter that keeps people in touch with the activities and collections of the historical and mining museum.

Toby Sullivan of the Kodiak Maritime Museum and **Ryan Jones** of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, received **Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards** to help them attend and participate in the Alaska Historical Society annual meeting. Both gave presentations at the meeting.

The **Museum of the Aleutians** staff, board of directors, and members, particularly **Zoya Johnson**, museum director, received the thanks of Alaska Historical Society for hosting the 2009 annual conference. AHS members attending the meeting enjoyed tours, great food, and interesting and insightful conversations with friendly and hospitable local people. The work of the conference organizers is greatly appreciated.



Laresa Syverson, one of the Unalaska dancers who entertained conference attendees at the awards banquet.
Photograph courtesy Michael Hawfield.

Notes from around the state



Russian American Company Magazin/
Erskine House under restoration.
Photograph courtesy Baranov Museum.



Mrs. Gaither holding up Burgess W.
Gaither Jr., Eagle, Alaska.
Alaska and Polar Regions Collections, Elmer E.
Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks.
Dr. Ernest A. Cook Photograph Collection. UAF-
'003-109-181.

So why is the **Kodiak Historical Society** carrying on so about paint—how thrilled they are, how exultant, etc.? The answer is simple. After several years of planning and coordinating among architects, archaeologists, carpenters and restoration experts, the museum building—the historic Russian American Company Magazin/Erskine House—is now restored and ready for painting. The history of the building's two hundred years has been documented, with stories such as the one about the disgruntled fur hunter who shot through a window and killed the Alaska Commercial Company agent in 1886.

The society has a long history of encouraging youngsters to help with archaeological digs on the island; not only helping but learning the value of these efforts. This past summer they trained children in the methods of archaeology then turned them loose on a prepared tract. Afterwards the students cleaned the artifacts and prepared museum exhibits. Anything like that could be done in your area?

Two famous bear guides from Kodiak, Pinnell and Talifson, are given space in the society's recent newsletter. They accurately are known as the Last of the Great Brown Bear Guides.

The **Alaska State Museum** has used a grant from the City of Juneau to hold family festivals for eleven years now. "Yu'pik Traditions" was the first of the planned four this year. Dance, songs, kayaks, harpoon and atlatl throwing, fish preparation and various other crafts provided entertainment and learning opportunities taught by a Yu'pik guest artist.

Bob Banghart is the new Chief Curator of the museum. He worked at the Alaska State Museum in 1974-75 as an exhibit designer before establishing his own company. He returned to the museum in 2007 as curator of exhibits. **Glenn Cook** is the new Deputy Director of the Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums. He has been the State Archivist for the past two years.

Classes in the Native Arts Studies program are underway at the **Totem Heritage Center**. Carving, cedar bark weaving, and introduction to design and carving are only some of the classes offered. If you want more information, set your browser to www.ketchikanmuseums.org.

Live or did live in the Chugiak or Eagle River area? Need a 2010 calendar? How about one with lots of local historical photographs? The **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society** has just the deal for you. Write them at Post Office Box 670573, Chugiak, Alaska, 99567 or phone 907-688-4706.

The **Tanana-Yukon Historical Society** collaborated with the University of Alaska Press to get James Wickersham's book, *Old Yukon Tales, Trails, and Trials* reprinted. It has a new introduction written by Terrence Cole. In November, the society had a program with an impersonation of the judge by Steve Mitchell and a discussion of early Fairbanks and Wickersham's part in Alaska history by Dermot Cole. This being Fairbanks, the program notices indicated the program would be cancelled if the temperature was -20F or colder.. Perhaps it was outdoors?

The **Kenai Historical Society** members are busy. Recently they arranged to have five old cabins moved onto city property, and in the spring a boardwalk will be built and the cabins opened to the public. The members also showed the good Alaskan spirit when they learned of Eagle's devastation this spring. Two trucks full of donated supplies drove to Eagle where they were warmly received. At Eagle, 150 homeless people are facing winter, but the newsletter reports that volunteers are building FEMA cabins, trucked in from Tok, to tide them over. (Visit www.eagleak.org, or eaglefloodinfo@gmail.com if you'd like to see the progress or donate.)

Notes from around the state



Alaska Packers Association Cannery in Wrangell, Alaska, with *Star of Bengal* at dock.

Alaska State Library - Historical Collections
Photographs, ca. 1896 to 1913, ASL P122-17.

Canneries around southeast Alaska, particularly near Wrangell, take precedence in recent issues of Pat Roppel's **Wrangell History** newsletter. Beautifully researched and entertainingly written, Roppel also writes about various local coves and bays, and even ventures into the Hudson's Bay blankets and Chinese tea chests. For \$20.00 you can receive 12 issues per year. The money goes to the Wrangell Museum, and the pleasure to you. To subscribe, write the museum at Post Office Box 2019, Wrangell, Alaska 99929.



It was a very busy summer and fall at the **Cooper Landing Historical Society and Museum**. The folks are compiling a cookbook and would appreciate recipes. They are planning an open house and a hand-crafted items sale in December. They also



Lateral view of the skull of a Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*).

were happy to loan a picture of their *Dead Bear Walking* (okay, articulated Brown Bear skeleton) to Scholastic, Inc. for a new book on brown and polar bears.



The theme of the **Cook Inlet Historical Society** lecture series for 2009-2010 is *Life in Territorial Alaska, 1912-1959*. The monthly talks will address the Alaska Railroad, U.S. District Court, the Matanuska colonists, and Alaska medical care among the topics. The lectures are held at the Anchorage Museum and are free. More information and membership information can be had by writing the society at the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center, 625 C Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

The multiple award-winning **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society** made black cod the star of its annual Alaska Day celebration, October 18th. Hot food and drinks were served to take the chill off from the weather. There's an old Sitka joke that Russia picked October for the transfer ceremony as they well knew there would be parades, activities and feasting during the fall rains and wind. The Russians' Revenge, it's called.

The society just received word that Alaska's own Rasmuson Foundation awarded them \$25,000 to complete the architectural and engineering design work to rehabilitate the Japonski Island Boathouse. The funds help match a \$91,000 grant from the National Scenic Byways program. The generous Rasmuson grant means the society has only \$14,000 left to raise for complete, bid-ready design documents. It's exciting to have a dream come closer to reality. If you'd like to see what else the society has going on, plus view the architectural drawings and photographs of the boathouse project, visit www.sitkamaritime.org.



News from the *Seward Gateway* of long ago often enlivens the newsletter of the **Resurrection Bay Historical Society**. Recent issues noted the miraculous survival of a stowaway who spent eight and a half days trapped in the cargo hold of the *Admiral Evans* on its voyage from Seattle to Seward. Hospitalized, he was doing well, if still thirsty, the April 23, 1915 issue reported. On February 3, 1934, an editorial addressed the soothing benefits of music; "A nation refined by music cannot be far off the beaten track of moral perfection." What Depression? Moving on to 2009, the society was disappointed with the results of the local proposition to funding construction of a new museum/library. It passed handily, but is contingent on bonds for funding. A sales tax increase to pay for the bonds was defeated, but the society has not lost heart.



Matanuska colonists Mrs. Elvi Kerttula with daughter Esther disembarking from train on arrival at Palmer, May 10th, 1935.
Alaska State Library - Historical Collections
Collection, ASL-P270-124.

Notes from around the state



"Caribou Bill and Missouri Kid leaving Valdez, Alaska for Seattle, Wash., overland, Dec. 9, 1908." Mary Whalen Photograph Collection. UAF-1975-84-283.



Eldred Rock Lighthouse with five keepers. Alaska State Library Place File. Photographs, ca. 1896 to 1913, ASL-EldredRock-Lighthouse-1.

The **Palmer Historical Society** reported a very exciting discovery behind the wall of a homesteader's house of one of only three original 1916 survey plats of the Palmer area. Not just any survey plat; this one shows homestead entries including corrections; trails, roads, cabins and gardens. The members had a wonderful evening viewing the plat and reminiscing. If you send \$10.00 to Post Office Box 99645-1935 for a year's membership, you can also ask for the chicken enchilada and fresh cranberry salad recipes.

Ketchikan's **Tongass Historical Museum** has had an exhibit, *Northern Lights: Lighthouses of Alaska*, celebrating **Joe Leahy's** collection that was recently donated to the museum. Joe, long time AHS member, died last year. His fascination with the state's lighthouses began when he arrived in 1976 as a chief journalist for the Coast Guard. He spent the rest of his long career as director of museums in Juneau and Valdez, never forgetting his love of the history of lighthouses.

Museum winter caretakers are not unheard of. It is a bit unusual, however, to have one who installs a woodstove and will use the outhouse. It's a bit of relief to find she has electricity. The place is Smokey's Cabin at the **Hope & Sunrise Historical and Mining Museum**. A prized display in the museum is the 1951 Hope's Methodist Church Traveling Organ; perhaps the caretaker can take up music.

The **Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center** will have a major winter exhibit opening in 2010, *Star Wars: Where Science Meets Imagination*. The exhibit will have genuine Star Wars costumes and props and real space science. The new Imaginarium Discovery Center, Thomas Planetarium, and Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center are to be constructed and open in 2010. Check www.anchoragemuseum.org for details.

Juneau was not the only Alaska community to take part in the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition. The **Valdez Museum and Historical Archive** reports Valdez had at least three exhibits and "Caribou Bill" from Nome allegedly mushed his dog team from Valdez to Seattle. At least the banner on his sled proclaimed that. The museum board surely felt like producing a banner with the news that new grants enable them to finish the designs for a major *Exxon/Valdez Oil Spill Exhibit*.

If there's one thing satisfying to a historian, it is listening to or reading the account of a former resident of your town who has a way with words and a good memory. Lucky Juneau; the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** reprints an article written in 1967 for the *Alaska Sportsman* by A. H. Humphries who lived there from 1912 to around 1920. They have included some photographs to add zest.

The newsletter also has articles on famed murderer Edward Krause, the Juneau families reunion last summer, and the town's award at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle in 1909. If you've always wondered about Seattle's first world's fair, march your frisky fingers to <http://cdm200301.cdmhost.com/index.php> and <http://content.lib.washington.edu/aypweb/index.html>.

Alaskans are traditionally very, very talented at dreaming up winter social activities. Homer continued this tradition when the **Pratt Museum** held a *Fabulous 50's* Glamorous Evening with Art and Adventure Auctions. Lavish hors d'oeuvres and cocktails were included in the \$75.00 admission. Gregory Peck, Ava Gardner, Marilyn Monroe; the memories surely came rolling in, and let's hope the bidding was high. The museum has more to celebrate. The just received grant funding to support Phase 2 of their Master Exhibition Plan, *Kachemak Bay: An Exploration of People and Place*. **Diane Converse** is the new museum director. She completed her EdD degree at Seattle University, has worked for public land partner organizations and small arts organizations, and is a fiber artist.

Visit our website:
www.alaskahistoricalociety.org



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

DEAR ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

I am hoping that some of your members might be willing to help me. I am the new State Coordinator for the Alaska GenWeb Project (part of the USGenWeb Project). The Alaska site is in tatters and I really need some help.

Most of your members are probably aware of the USGenWeb Project but if not, this project is devoted to placing historical and genealogical resources online for researchers to use for no charge. The USGenWeb Project began in Kentucky and the goal was to get volunteers to "adopt" each Borough/County/Parish in the US. The volunteers attempt to gather records, such as a list of cemeteries, census transcriptions, Clerk and Recorder address, and important things for their Borough or County to aid researchers. The quality of the individual Boroughs/Counties varies based upon the materials available and the diligence of the particular host. The USGenWeb Project has been a marvelous success in most states, but not Alaska! When I took over as the Temporary State Coordinator last month, only 4 Boroughs had been adopted: Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Sitka and Juneau. I have been the volunteer of Anchorage, Kenai and Sitka for the last 5 years.

Vikki Gray (akgenweb@yahoo.com)

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THE ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM at the University of Alaska Fairbanks launched **The Unalaska Communities of Memory Project Jukebox** available online at <http://jukebox.uaf.edu>. This project, funded by the Alaska Humanities Forum, highlights the Communities of Memory storytelling session held at Unalaska April 26-27, 1996. People shared their personal stories about coming to Unalaska, the school, World War II, living on Skibowl Hill, the Amchitka Blast, and the Russian Orthodox Church. The website features Ray Hudson, Augie Kochuten, Harriet Berikoff, Benjamin Golodoff, Sharon O'Malley, Emil Berikoff, Bob Allen, Maria Turnpaugh, Rufina Shaishnikoff, Leonty Merculieff, Milt and Cora Holmes, Margaret Lekanoff, and Michaela Phillips. You can simultaneously listen to people's stories, read the transcripts, and see historic photos and film clips relating to the subjects discussed. The site is a great place to learn more about Unalaska and what it means to people who live there.

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WARREN G. HARDING was the first U.S. president to visit Alaska. In 1923 he came to drive the golden spike that marked completion of the Alaska Railroad. His train car is at Pioneer Park in Fairbanks. Sadly, the roof developed a leak and water damaged the interior. While restoration funds are being sought, the old Alaska solution of a blue tarp cover has been employed. A protective structure has been built around the cover recently.

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FORMERLY LIVED IN ALASKA OR THE YUKON OR STILL DO? Miss old friends and neighbors? For \$12.00 a year you can get twelve issues of the **Alaska Yukon Pioneers** newsletter. The editor is Ethel La Rose, ethellarose@hotmail.com, phone 206-523-6574, address 9512 1st. Avenue

NE #204, Seattle, Washington 98115-2018. They want your news, comments, and reminiscences. To subscribe write Joyce Penman, 27833 85th Drive NW, Stanwood, Washington 98292, call 253-709-0158 or 360-629-3554, or e-mail olwomn@wavecable.com.

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A LETTER accompanied a return of an AHS election ballot last summer. **Richard Montague**, one of the founding members of the Alaska Historical Society, wrote from Bavaria and sent greetings to the group and anyone who remembers him. He is active in outdoor pursuits, especially enjoying Scandinavia. He also discusses the *trifinium* (*trifinia*?), places where three countries intersect. Highly unusual. It's where Russia, Norway, and Finland come together and has three time zones.

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MICHAEL DOBRIN is writing his memoirs about growing up in Alaska in the 1940s. He is seeking his family's address in Anchorage during 1944 and 1945. If anyone has a phone book from years with an address for Jay Dobrin, Justus Dobrin, or J. Dobrin, please contact him at mdobrin@mdpr.com or 1050 Marina Village Pkwy., No. 101, Alameda, California, 94501.

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MONSTER MOVES conjures up a picture of Frankenstein's monster, but it's also a television series that documents the change of location for historic buildings and structures. Nothing small; the bigger the better. In a letter to our society, the producers ask if we know of any such projected moves of Alaska buildings and structures. The more challenges, such as getting under bridges or over hills, the better. If your town is considering moving the local skyscraper or such, let them know through www.windfallfilms.com or e-mail at lee@windfallfilms.com. Your building or structure could be in the movies.

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LONGTIME ALASKAN PHYLLIS DEMUTH MOVIOUS has authored a new book, *A Place of Belonging* about five early Fairbanks women of note. The University of Alaska Press published it, and the paperback retails for \$17.95. The press's website, www.uaf.edu/uapress, has ordering information and information about other recent publications on Alaska history.

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ANOTHER RECENTLY PUBLISHED AUTHOR IS MEMBER MARY BREU. Alaska Northwest Books just published her book about her great-aunt and great-uncle, Etta and Foster Jones, *Last Letters from Attu*. The couple was living and working at Attu when the Japanese invaded the island in 1942. Etta was taken to Japan where she was a prisoner-of-war for the duration of the war. Using Etta's unpublished manuscript and

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letters to her family, Breu tells the story of this remarkable and most resilient woman. Ray Hudson wrote the Afterword. More information is at www.lastlettersfromatttu.com. Mary wrote an abbreviated version of Etta's story that appeared in the Spring/Fall 2003 issue of *Alaska History*.

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PERHAPS WE CAN'T SEE RUSSIA FROM HERE unless we're on Little Diomede, but Alaskans and Russians have been interested in each other since at least 1648. Academics and others interested in the *Leaps Forward and Backward of Academic Cooperation* are urged to submit papers for the Russian American Links conference to be held the latter part of October 2010, in St. Petersburg. Contact Dr. Yuri Tretyakov, Chair, Conference Organizing Committee, St. Petersburg Department of Modern Languages, St. Petersburg University of the Russian Academy of Sciences. For speed, e-mail yuri@eu.spb.ru.

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THE ALASKA OFFICE OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY has a monthly electronic newsletter with news about historic preservation, grant and loan programs, and a calendar. To subscribe e-mail oha@alaska.net, write to 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310, Anchorage, 99501-3565, or pick up Mr. Bell's handy invention and dial 907-269-8721.

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FOR THE FIRST TIME the Smithsonian Institution's "Museum on Main Street" concentrates on celebrating the roots of American music. The exhibit includes Alutiiq music. The idea is to present exhibits small museums can use; this time the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, Sheldon Museum in Haines, Page Museum in Wasilla, and the Pratt Museum in Homer. These all have Web sites; give them a look to find when the exhibit will be at each.

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TRENDY? ALASKANS? Not likely; remember "we don't care how they do it down south." On the other hand, it is fun to push raising vegetables locally and selling them at local farmers' markets. It's true, dare we say, local Alaska farmers' markets are very small potatoes, but you might be amazed. Check out www.sitkalocalfoodsnetwork.org/ for information there and around the state.

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A NEW WAY TO GIVE:

The Alaska Historical Society is pleased to be a participant in Pick.Click.Give, the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) Charitable Contributions Program. **Pick.Click.Give.** enables Alaskans to donate all or part of their annual PFD to non-profit organizations serving our state. In its inaugural year, more than 5,500 people contributed \$545,000 to causes they care about. The Alaska Historical Society received \$350 in contributions from eight individuals. The donations are essential to help the Society pursue new programs, demonstrate wide-ranging support, and leverage funding from other sources. These donations offer us the most flexibility in promoting a greater understanding of Alaska history, and the preservation and interpretation of our

historic resources. To all our donors, and especially those who signed up to make an additional donation through Pick.Click.Give—thank you!

Pick.Click.Give.

In January, Alaskans will once again have the opportunity to support the Alaska Historical Society with a donation from their PFD. When completing your online application, look for the option to "Pick.Click.Give" and follow the instructions to make a gift. Please consider providing your contact information to us to allow us to acknowledge and recognize your generous support. You can learn more about the program by visiting www.pickclickgive.org, or send us an email with your questions to akhist@gci.net.

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As interest and writing on Alaska history seem to be sprouting like fireweed in the spring, a useful and popular book is the society's *The Alaska 67* with annotated recommendations of good books on Alaska history.

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.



"An Alaskan courtship," ca. 1920-1929
John Urban Collection AMRC b64-1-800.

Editor's Comments

I will let you in on a big reason I take off for Europe every year when mid-October rolls around. Yes, the summer season is over so it's a good time to leave Alaska, but a major prod is the vile seasonal temper of Alaskans. Summer is gone and all sorts of things did not get done, plus the happy outdoor days are over for another year. Boating, gardening, hiking and all in the long days (which, of course, we always remember as sunny even if it poured); over now. The equinoctial storms are also raging and the dark is increasing every day.

Therefore Alaskans gripe and protest. Loudly. Just bad temper all the way around.

So I depart for a month, knowing that on my return all will be quiet. Thanksgiving is coming, followed by Christmas and Alaskans have cheered up. Skiing, ice-skating, or just out enjoying the snow on a pretty day are awaiting us.

Those who are heading for warmth and sun have made their plans or already left and the rest of us have realized just how cozy it is to come in out of the dark and the cold and turn the heat up or get the fire going. The book or the television beckons, the curtains are drawn and the sound of the storm outside is muted. We smell food cooking, and look forward to the evening. All sorts of projects get underway, from wood-working to quilting to painting.

And don't forget the social times. Meetings, planning, or just a fun time with friends. Perfect weather for all those.

So I send you all greetings and very best wishes for a wonderful winter and no reasons to complain about life in Alaska, at least until next October.

D. L.



World War II-era postcard.
Image courtesy Archgraphics.