Alaska History News

Volume 43, No. 4 Quarterly cthe Alaska Historical Society December 2015



Message from the President: "...the need to investigate the past..."

he vibrant community of Cordova, their dreamy new convention center, the Museums Alaska theme of collaboration, and excellent historical talks around our theme of Trade Routes and Crossroads in the North Pacific made the 2015 Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska joint annual conference a winner in every way.

Over the conference a theme emerged: the need to investigate the past, with, in the words of our keynote speaker, Alaska Writer Laureate Frank Soos, "ironic self-awareness." He dismantled the binding of history and myth with recollections of his love for his Virginia history textbook glorifying the Confederacy, and of how he saw--but did not recognize--his African-American peers suffering under racist segregation.

History is not always pretty, and many presenters addressed this head-on, with research documenting past injustice. But this was done not in a spirit of grievance or blame, but in a spirit of inquiry, that illuminated themes and issues very much alive today.

The elephant in the room in the upcoming 150th commemoration of the Alaka Treaty of Cession is the experience of Alaska Natives. How can we recognize this history, without blaming, or rewriting what happened? Much written history glosses over the Native experience, or is racist. Recently there have also been attempts to rewrite history to mythologize Native people, which is unfortunately just as false. Lt. Governor Byron Mallott put it best in his speech to the conference: "an increased understanding, and the dialogue around historical research, will strengthen relationships among Alaskans." The work of historians is key so that there is something to reach back to: a search for truth.

In this coming year, through the Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative and promotion of the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Cession, we hope to encourage exactly this spirit of honest investigation and conversations, through presentations, exhibits and events, and especially, work in schools.

We have important work to do, in schools and in the public sphere: to create new narratives, and to forge our identity as Alaskans, in a way that incorporates difficult history--and what human history is not difficult?

—Rebecca Poulson, President

Alaska Historical Society Announces its 2015 Awards

THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNOUNCED ITS 2015 AWARDS AT THE CORDOVA CONFERENCE ON OCTOBER 2, 2015. THE INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS RECOGNIZED WITH AWARDS MADE OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STUDY, UNDERSTANDING, AND SHARING OF ALASKA'S HISTORY THIS PAST YEAR. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OF THE RECIPIENTS.

- The *Evangeline Atwood Award* was presented to Lael Morgan for her significant long-term contributions to Alaska history. For over 50 years, Lael has been writing, editing, publishing, teaching, and promoting Alaska's history. Many know her books on Howard Rock, Ray Mala, and the Good Time Girls of the Alaska gold rush. Others remember her visiting Alaska Native villages in the 1960s and writing about them or her working as a reporter for *The Tundra Times* or as editor of *The Alaska Journal*. Lael taught journalism at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and still teaches for the University of Texas Arlington.
- The *Historian of the Year Award* was given to Charles Caldwell Hawley for *A Kennecott Story: Three Mines, Four Men, and One Hundred Years—1897-1997.* Chuck wrote about the company that was the largest copper producer during the last half of the 20th century. He profiles four mining engineers responsible for the company's success, and compares and contrasts the company's operations in Alaska, Utah, and Chile. He provides context for the first half of the 20th century, including political realities, and addresses the corporate organization. Also, he stresses the importance of technological developments, particularly the smelting process that contributed to Kennecott's success and domination of the industry. Chuck, trained as a geologist, has written and presented many papers on mining in Alaska, and in 1997 was a founder of the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation. *A Kennecott Story* is an important contribution to mining history, the history of the American West, economic history, as well as to Alaska history.
- The Alaska Historical Society's Board of Directors voted to change the name of the *Historian of the Year* award to the *James H. Ducker Historian of the Year Award* on the occasion of Jim's retirement as editor for 30 years of the Society's journal, *Alaska History*. Further, the award will include a cash prize. It is hardly enough to thank Jim for his tremendous volunteer service to the Alaska Historical Society and his contribution to the understanding of the state's history.
- The *Esther Billman Certificate of Excellence* went to the Friends of Nike Site Summit, with special recognition of James F. Renkert, for reaching a milestone in its efforts to save the significant Cold War missile site in Anchorage. When the Army announced plans to demolish the buildings at the missile site in 2007, the group organized. They worked with U.S. Army Fort Richardson staff and the State Historic Preservation Officer to craft an agreement in 2009 to keep critical buildings at the site. The FONSS agreed to stabilize five buildings, including the large Launch Control and Missile Maintenance Building. After being abandoned for more than 30 years, the buildings on the 4,000-foot mountain, subject to heavy snows and fierce winds, were in poor condition. The Friends rallied and raised a lot of money, writing grants to foundations, appealing to civic groups, and going to the legislature and municipality. Starting in 2011, FONSS volunteers have put in over 4,000 hours of labor. This year the roof on the Launch Control Building was completed. In addition, the group conducts tours of the site, and has planned and executed two Nike Veterans reunions and a Cold War conference. Jim Renkert is specially acknowledged for his vision and leadership to preserve this site significant not just to Anchorage, not just to Alaska, but also to the nation.



"The children of the Baby Boom were not, as their fathers who defeated Germany and Japan had imagined, destined to grow up in a non-threatening world. At home their parents built backyard fallout shelters. During air raid drills, schoolchildren left their classrooms to huddle in darkened hallways. The Cold War had arrived, bringing with it the threat of undreamed horrors. It was to last nearly half a century, and for the greater part of the struggle, antiaircraft artillerymen were to serve as front-line soldiers."

-Stephen P. Moeller

- Anchorage's Cook Inlet Historical Society was selected to receive the Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Award for leadership and for
 programs to commemorate Anchorage's centennial. The society's annual monthly lecture series the last two years investigated important
 themes and times in the community's history. In June, the society held a symposium, Imagining Anchorage: Captain Cook and the
 Anchorage Centennial. Speakers from around the world talked about Captain Cook to complement the Anchorage Museum's exhibit on
 Cook in Alaska and his search for the Northwest Passage. The conference also featured presentations on Anchorage by historians, former
 mayors, and Anchorage leaders.
- Mary Ehrlander was awarded the *Barbara S. Smith Pathfinder Award* for editing and translating Albin Johnson's *Seventeen Years in Alaska: A Depiction of Life Among the Indians of Yakutat.* The University of Alaska Press recently published the book. Mary is director of the Northern Studies Department at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Her introduction to Johnson's memoirs adds considerably to understanding the roles missionaries played in Alaska Native communities.
- Chris Allan was selected by the editorial advisory board members of the Society's journal to receive the Alaska History Award, 2013-2014 for his article "Mighty Tall Hustling: The North Star Oil Syndicate and the Race to Claim Alaska's Arctic Petroleum Seeps." Morgan and Jeanne Sherwood endowed this award, and the recipient receives \$500. Chris is a historian with the National Park Service. He is a member of the Alaska Historical Society's Board of Directors and this year was the conference program chair.
- Katherine J. "Katie" Ringsmuth was recognized with a *Contributions to Alaska History Award* for her innovative Anchorage centennial project, From Tents to Towers: A Century of Maps of Alaska's Largest City. Katie found over 300 maps that tell the story of Anchorage's development from Dena'ina country, to a railroad camp and town of tents, to the urban center it is today. Her project examines how maps can show how the town has been shaped culturally and economically. A selection of the maps was in the Anchorage Museum's centennial exhibit, and another selection was provided to the Anchorage School District to enhance its Alaska history curriculum.
- The Alaska Historical Society also recognized the **49 Writers** of Anchorage with a *Contributions to Alaska History Award*. This group seized the opportunity the Anchorage centennial afforded to conduct workshops to help Anchorage residents write their memories of the community. They solicited for entries for a book, *Anchorage Remembers: A Century of Tales*, an anthology of Alaska writers that was published earlier this year. They also established a blog with other stories.
- Charles Hilton, a graduate student in Northern Studies at the University of Alaska Fairbanks who also works in the Alaska and Polar Regions Department at the Rasmuson Library, and Kathy Peavey who is working to establish the Craig Historical Society to preserve the history of Prince of Wales Island, were selected to receive the Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards to attend the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska annual conference. Both gave presentations at the meeting.
- President Rebecca Poulson presented the Beaver Log, aka the President's Award, to Anjuli Grantham for her efforts to call attention to the
 need to preserve Alaska's historic canneries, culminating in undertaking leadership of a special initiative for the Society. Anjuli also chaired
 the Society's advocacy committee the past two years leading the successful efforts of the cultural resources community to get the final
 funding for the new State Library Archives and Museum building.





THE ALASKA HISTORIC CANNERIES INITIATIVE, a project of the Alaska Historical Society, has started a minigrant program to help with projects related to historic Alaska fisheries and processors. The grants will be up to \$1,000. Proposals are invited for projects that could be to help conduct historical research, collect archival materials, obtain photographs and film, preserve historic properties, prepare interpretive and education materials, or start planning a larger project.

Students, professional historians, those with a passion for history, organizations and businesses interested in the history of Alaska's fishing industry--all except federal and state agencies—are eligible for the grants. The projects are to be completed by the end of December 2016. The application deadline is January 1, 2016 and the awards will be announced by the end of the month. The application is available on the Alaska Historical Society's website, www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org.

Notes from around the state

Summer was over and it was time to celebrate Alaska Day. The **Wasilla-Knik Historical Society** put on their annual Dinner and Famous Dessert Auction. Guest speaker was archaeologist Robert King, Bureau of Land Management; his talk was "Tales of Long-Distance Dog Mushing from Alaska in the Early 1900s".

The Sitka Historical Society and Museum

had to close its doors after 47 years. Not to worry; they will reopen when the Alice Harrigan Centennial Hall major renovation is completed in early 2017. In the meantime, the artifacts are properly stored and the office is open in the locally called White House of the Forest Service (formerly the Geodetic Survey House). The Society's Board of Directors gave \$66,000 to the City and Borough of Sitka to increase the size of the new museum. The funds came from years of fund-raising and donations to the museum. The renovation hiatus also allows the largest collections audit ever of the museum to be done. The Artifact of the Month was a hat belonging to Ted Kettleson, an Alaskan legislator and first superintendent of the Pioneers Home in Alaska, located in Sitka. He and his wife donated time and money to the town; the Sitka public library is named in his honor. A good idea—a local radio station airs a "Sitka History Minute" twice a week, supplied by the SHS. Check with your radio station?

Another new museum is being built, this one in Homer for the **Pratt Museum**. It will include more headroom for the gray whale at the entrance to the main gallery where a rock-like structure will house the interactive camera that focuses on Gull Island and a tide pool touch tank will have local sea life. Clever people!

The Seward-based **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** announces the update and installation of the Earthquake Exhibit. They had a highly successful Founders' Day dinner last August to celebrate the 112th anniversary of Seward. President Obama made a quick foray into the town, and bought locally made sweets. With the arrival of autumn, the popular Fourth Thursdays are History have resumed.

Cooperation and friendship between Judge James Wickersham, delegate to Congress from Alaska, and William Louis Paul, the first Native lawyer and major figure in the Alaska Native Brotherhood during the years 1921 to 1929 is the sixth part on the Judge in the **Gastineau Heritage News**. Both men lived in Juneau during this time and were fighting for damages from the taking of Indian land in Southeast by the U.S. Government without compensation. Wickersham made a two-hour speech on the subject to the annual meeting of the ANB in November 1921 and Paul served in the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives

RSVP

A carpenter friend working last fall on an old home in downtown Juneau, one block from the state capitol, found a small envelope wedged behind a living room radiator. It was a RSVP card for the 1967 inauguration of Gov. Walter J. Hickel and Secretary of State Keith Miller.

The "Centennial Inaugural Committee" probably sent the RSVP in December of 1966, after Hickel took office. The Centennial name fitted since the inaugural dinner and ball were planned for January 15, 1967, in the 100th year after Alaska's purchase from Russia.

They asked attendees for their times of arrival and departure, and whether they would arrive via commercial airline, private plane, or military plane. They asked the same about vessels: commercial, private, or military. The military remains hugely important to Alaska but the 1967 RSVP reference (continued \$\mathbb{G}\mathbb{T}\)

Notes from around the state

highlights the heightened importance of the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and National Guard in the Cold War, pre-Prudhoe Bay era.

The committee worried about housing all the attendees. "We need this information to insure (sic) that everyone attending the ceremonies has the proper reservations and will be adequately housed." Hotel space in Juneau was limited then to the Baranof, built in 1939, the Alaskan Hotel (1913), and the Silverbow Inn (1914). And there was always the Bergman.

But in Alaska tradition, the committee offered to help find places in private homes: "If it is your intention to stay with personal friends ... please advise us of the details. Some housing will, of necessity, have to be provided in homes throughout the community. For this there will be a nominal charge."

The RSVP card was not filled out or returned. Of course, a Juneau resident wouldn't need housing. Maybe, like two of three Juneau voters, they voted for incumbent Bill Egan. Even so, they would have probably attended the ball anyway.

Inaugural events are a ceremonial opportunity to put aside the differences of a contested campaign and reunite as Alaskans for the work ahead. To some that may seem a quaint sentiment given today's heightened partisanship and perpetual campaigning.

Or maybe, which is undeniable, the card was never returned because it fell behind a radiator, where it was safely preserved, with a few water stains, for 48 years.

—Bob King, Juneau

1923-1928. Together they accomplished much for the Tlingits and other Alaska Natives. The next newsletter will continue the very interesting story.

Hanging Out at the Wineck Barn has a lot of meaning if you are from the Palmer Historical Society, particularly during the Alaska State Fair season every year. Apparently the Senior Joke and Storytelling Contest held in the Wineck Barn is very popular. Their History Nights on authors and books are the third Wednesday, September through May, so if you happen to be in Palmer then, head for the library at 7:00 p.m.

Things are really heating up in Ketcikan, both at the Tongass Historical Museum and the Totem Heritage Center. Although located in different buildings, the aims of both are similar. The museum's Then and Now exhibit shows the change and continuance of Ketchikan as a community. Members were urged to look through historic photographs at the museum and submit modern pictures of themselves doing the same things. As an example, a 1950s Plumbing Ladies Bowling Team is flanked by a similarly dressed 2015 Museum Ladies Bowling Team. This is the fallwinter exhibit. Patricia Roppel, longtime Alaskan historian, researcher, and author, has been honored by the museum with a memorial scholarship for an Alaskan college or graduate student majoring in history. Contact the museum for details.

In the meantime, autumn is off to a good start at the Totem Heritage Center where classes in basic skills such as power tools, how to forge and sharpen blades, and weaving with cedar bark and making traditional masks are underway. Experienced blacksmiths and instructors will be available all year. The classes in design and cedar bark weaving for youth ages 10 to 18 will be held during spring break.

The Eagle Historical Society and Museums

held a memorial for the Beck family last summer and filled their autumn newsletter with donated photographs of them. They already are reporting the first snowfall of the season, along with a fine crop of wild berries. The newsletter also tells that caribou were seen along the road for about fortyeight miles on their annual migration.

The **Anchorage Museum** was busy in September and October with exhibits ranging from cedar bark indigenous carvings, traditional tattoos,

Vincent Van Gogh, to an exhibit of recent acquisitions. The museum announced that in 2017 a new 25,000 square foot Rasmuson Wing for display space for its permanent art collection will open.

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The Cook Inlet Historical Society sends notice their program theme for 2015-2016 is Alaska journalism. The speakers for the programs held the third Thursday evening during the fall, winter and spring are journalists themselves, not historians talking about them and their work.

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Around three volunteers are badly needed by the **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society**. They're calling it a TIME-SHARE plan. They'll give you the TIME and you SHARE your interests, muscles, and ideas. They need to organize their office, so are setting up a minilibrary, sorting and cataloging books, and going through old newspapers and cutting out and filing items of local interest. A tech person is badly needed, although they do ask for no 10-12 year olds who would just embarrass the older folks. They urge all to check out their web site for more information and the chance to read 1958-1973 issues of the *Knik Arm Courier*.

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Kodiak is an amazing place. Not only do they tout their net-covered Mason jars (they'll show you how), but they're very fond of their West Side Stories. They are also proud of free concerts from Under the Moose, which sounds heavy to outsiders. To expound a bit—the West Side refers to Kodiak geography and, as you have likely guessed, the Moose is a restaurant. The **Baranof Museum** is housed in the old Russian *magazin*, the military storehouse. Built circa 1808, it is the oldest building in Alaska and one of four Russian era buildings standing in the state.

The Tanana-Yukon Historical Society presented the films of Bud and Constance Helmericks from the 1940s and '50s. We Live in the Arctic was shot with 16mm color film from their home on the North Slope. It is amazing to watch the film today, as it depicts that area in pre-statehood and pre-oil pipeline days. The films were shown in late October, but if you missed seeing them, the good news is they have been preserved and are located at the Alaska Film Archives of the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Contact them if you would like a glimpse of the true Last Frontier.

News & Information

An Alaska Historical Society member has been recognized this year with one of the Contributions to Literary in Alaska awards given by the Alaska Center for the Book. Last year Ron Inouye was honored, and this year Dee Longenbaugh of Juneau, our newsletter editor, was selected. Dee started and has owned and operated Observatory Books, an Alaskana rare and used bookstore, since 1977. She teaches docents at the Alaska State Museum, students at Juneau's elementary schools, and reviews Alaska history books for Southeast Alaska's public radio stations. The store is known for its historical map collection and Dee is the only certified book appraiser in the state. Dee is most deserving!

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Another Alaska Historical Society member, **Damon Stuebner** of Juneau received an award this year from the All Coast Guard Ships Veterans' Association and the Alaska/Bering Sea Patrol Veterans' Association. These groups honored Damon with an Award of Recognition and a bronze medallion for his work to preserve Coast Guard History. Damon has produced Storis: The Galloping Ghost of the Alaska Coast, a 100-minute documentary on the nearly 65-year history of a ship that saw service in World War II, Alaska, and the Arctic. The ship earned the title "The Galloping Ghost of the Alaskan Coast" for the seizure of two Russian factory trawlers illegally fishing in the Bering Sea, but it did so much more—crossing the Northwest Passage and doing search and rescue operations in some of the coldest, wildest waters of the planet. By the way, the film will be shown at the Anchorage Museum on December 6.

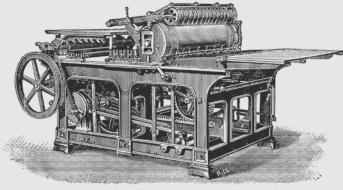
The new SLAM (State Library, Archives, and Museum) being built in Juneau has been named in honor of founder and first curator of the State Museum and Library, Father Andrew P. Kashevaroff. Descended from a Russian Creole family that came to Alaska in 1816, he was born in Kodiak in 1863 and educated in San Francisco where he was ordained a priest in the Russian Orthodox Church. From 1912 until his death in 1940, he traveled around Alaska by kayak, dog sled, boat or airplane, the Friends of the Alaska State Library, Archives, and Museum reported in their fall newsletter. He married Martha Bolshanin, a Kiks.adi Tlingit in Sitka, and they had a son and five daughters, and then moved to Juneau to the church there in 1913. He was an avid student of Alaskan history, the Tlingit people, Sitka's oldest buildings, and praised local efforts to save Sitka's cemetery. He visited hospitals, talked to children about Eskimos and was a featured speaker at many Alaskan events. A fitting and wise choice for the name of the new building.



News & Information

And, of course, if you are curious about Alaska historic preservation issues and activities, the **Office of History and Archaeology** covers it monthly with their electronic newsletter *Heritage*. So how do you subscribe? Just contact oha@alaska. net or send to 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, or telephone 907-269-8721. Then you too can casually discuss the items at your next society meeting.

The Yukon Historical & Museums Association has produced an entirely new problem to your editor. Did they send only a truncated report? No. Is the newsletter poorly done? No, the printing and photo reproductions are of the usual high quality. The problem is the size. The Spring-Summer 2015 8-page, typing-paper sized newsletter is quite nice. So are the five e-bulletins of the same size and sent between August 21 and October 2. The newsletter itself has a charming story of the Second Annual Charity Croquet Tournament, accompanied by photos of women attendees in 1890s clothing, complete with some hats and parasols. Would like to know more? Their website is www.heritageyukon.ca



1888 Wharfedale stop-cylinder printing press. http://typoretum.co.uk/woodentypes/the-printing-press/

The current president of the Alaska-Yukon Pioneers was wondering about the future of the newsletter in the September issue. In this world of the Internet, is paper the way to go? The next issue he was reminiscing about some people he knew in Ketchikan, so apparently no decisions have been made. You still send your \$20.00 yearly subscription to Joyce Penman, Recorder, 27833 85th Dr. NW, Stanwood, WA 98292, or email her at oldwomn@wavecable.com, or telephone 360-629-3554. Lots going on in the Seattle area for old friends from Alaska and the Yukon.

Visit our website:

www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor: Dee Longenbaugh
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A great gift for a friend, relative, local school or library is a year's membership in the Alaska Historical Society. Your gift includes the newsletter and journal Alaska History, and supports important activities and programs. It's easy...go to the AHS website, www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org and then click on "membership and giving."

ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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. Order it through the website!

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



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f you have seasonal mental complaints, join the crowd. There is just something so discouraging about Southeastern Alaska's autumns. Beautiful colors as the leaves change? Yes, but often the wind blows them off the trees before they have time to really glow. Wonderful sunrises and sunsets? Most of the time we don't know, as the rain obscures them. How about that first snow that brings white purity and a new look to our fences, houses, and lawns? Maybe while it's falling, but it's also frequently turning into cold water and dripping from the gutters.

What to do to repair the gruntles in your disgruntled mind? Well, you can become a snowbird, but that's not for me. Too much travel time and the weather's not that great most places.

The secret, good friends, is to find something new to do. Something that takes your mind off the weather and provides mental stimulation. If you volunteer at the local museum, after you pat yourself on the back, think of something different to do there. You say you can't think of anything? Help is waiting. Read through the activities listed by the museums in this newsletter. Lots of clever ideas, and no one says they have patented them, so you can use them too.

Best of luck and remember, you will be cheerful again, if not by Thanksgiving, definitely by late December.

D.L.