

Message from the President: "...looking at evidence and applying knowledge and reason is essential to democracy."

he Alaska Historical Society recently endorsed the History Relevance Campaign's seven-point statement of the Value of History, which can be found on line at HistoryRelevance.com. The "seven ways it is essential" are to ourselves, as a source of personal identity, and for teaching critical skills; to our communities, for creating vital places to live and work and as a catalyst for economic growth; to our future, for engaging citizens, inspiring leaders, and for preserving the legacy of American democracy.

Recently I have read or listened to pieces purporting to be history that were not quite accurate. This is irritating because it takes time and effort to check facts, and here folks are getting away with being sloppy. Then I realized that that little matter of accuracy is what makes history so essential.

History is the pursuit of truth, a fundamental American value. We don't study history just because of the good stories or just because we might discover a remarkable ancestor, but because we believe there is something to be gained in striving to understand our actual world. Pursuing the truth, even when it is uncomfortable, even when we see our ancestors behaving badly, is the difference between history and nostalgia. (Not that there is anything wrong with nostalgia!)

As we pursue the truth about what happened in the past and what it means, we debate interpretations, and which facts are most significant, and the various, sometimes competing, narratives arising from one place and time. These debates define who we are now. It would all be pointless without evaluating evidence and applying reason.

History also depends on insights from the humanities and into human nature. In turn, history is essential for understanding society, politics, conflict, economics, even our physical impact on the planet.

And of course, the habit of looking at evidence and applying knowledge and reason is essential to democracy. So let's not be shy about promoting the importance of history to our lives. History is cool. And it is a lot of fun.

Rebecca Poulson

# Time to Submit Nominations for AHS Awards



**GREAT PROJECTS AND EFFORTS SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED.** An Alaska Historical Society award does that! Please nominate individuals and groups which have notably contributed to knowing, preserving, and understanding Alaska or local history the past year for an award. Categories are:

- Esther Billman Award of Excellence. For a state or local society, museum, government agency, or other organization which has completed a project or series of projects contributing to preserving and understanding Alaska history during the past year.
- <u>Evangeline Atwood Award</u>. For an individual in recognition of significant long-term contributions to Alaska or local history. The individual might have studied and published on Alaska history, or organized and operated historical societies, or undertaken preservation and promotion of Alaska or local history.
- <u>Historian of the Year Award</u>. For an *Alaska resident* for publication of significant new material about Alaska's past in the previous 18 months. *Nominations must include a copy of the publication for committee review*.
- <u>Pathfinder Award</u>. For an individual or several individuals who have indexed or prepared guides to make Alaska historical material accessible. *Nominations must include sample pages of the index or guide*.
- <u>Elva Scott Local Historical Society Award</u>. For a local program that has completed a special project or reached a significant goal the past year. The nomination must address how the group helped make the history of the state or community better known.
- Contributions to Alaska History Award. For an individual or individuals who have made a singular and significant recent contribution to Alaska history.

Nominations must be made by **Friday**, **August 21**, **2015**, and should be sent to Michael Hawfield, Chair, Awards Committee, Alaska Historical Society, e-mail mchawfield@kpc.alaska.edu, mail P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299. The awards will be announced October 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska annual meetings and conference in Cordova.

Help Wanted

The Alaska Historical Society membership elects the 15 people to oversee the programs, special projects, and affairs of the organization. Board terms are for three years, and five people annually stand for election. Are you interested, or do you know someone who might be interested in serving? The Board of Directors meets in person in the fall through the annual meeting and conference, and quarterly by audio conference other times of the year. Four board members serve as the society's officers. Each board member typically chairs a committee and serves on several others. Society standing committees

include membership, financial affairs, advocacy, website, awards, education, and conference program. Current special

projects include the cannery preservation initiative and a 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alaska purchase planning group. Ross Coen, Chair of the Nominating Committee (rcoen@uw.edu) is soliciting for people interested in becoming more involved with the society. He needs to compile the 2015 election ballot by mid-August.

#### ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUMS ALASKA

ANNUAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCE CORDOVA, ALASKA SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 3, 2015

(Registration information will be available byJuly)

More than 25 papers have been proposed to explore this year's AHS theme, *Trade Routes and Crossroads in the North Pacific* 

Museums Alaska session will explore the theme *Joining Forces:*Museums, Communities & Collaboration

# Notes from around the state

### The Internet is a telephone system that's gotten uppity.

—Clifford Stoll, astronomer and author of The Cuckoo's Egg, 1989.



Haun Collection 2010.039.001 Nathan White's Bear Sled on Hope's Main Street, 1917.

https://sites.google.com/site/hopehistoricalsite2/

Everyone is going to the internet these days. The **Hope and Sunrise Historical Society** newsletter begins with the note their electronic newsletter for April is in color and if you want it, send your email address to hopehistoricalsociety@ gmail.com and they have a website www. hopeandsunrisehistoricalsociety.org And if you are interested in the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm Corridor communities,

go to www.kmtacorridor.org. This is ridiculous! How do tiny little Hope and comatose Sunrise with 18 residents in the 2000 census have these neat sites, with glorious photographs of the Turnagain Arm area? she sputtered. The society has a busy schedule outlined through fall. The newsletter includes a photograph and news that the Moosemeat John Hedberg cabin in Hope is in their National Register of Historic Places district. If you don't want to join the internet generation, you can write the society at P.O. Box 88, Hope, AK, 99605, with your quill pen, of course.

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If you live in Fairbanks, you can be a lucky attendee at the **Tanana-Yukon Historical Society** lectures. Recent ones include rail stories presented by the **Friends of the Tanana Valley Railroad** at the TVRR Museum, "Murder Tale of the

Water Delivery Man," and "The Tanana Chiefs & Wickersham: A Centenary" about July 1915 when fourteen Athabascan leaders--from the mouth of the Salcha down to Tanana village—met in Fairbanks with Congressional Delegate James Wickersham, other government officials, and representatives of the Episcopal Church to discuss their concerns about the influx of gold seekers and the impact upon traditional culture. The Native leaders began to seek ways of preserving lands they traditionally occupied against settlement by the newcomers.

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The Gastineau Channel Historical Society celebrated in early May with a cruise out to Sentinel Island, a tour of the lighthouse there, an exploration of the island, and a yummy picnic lunch. The Juneau-Douglas City Museum stayed home and hosted lectures on local history, opened the summer exhibits on local photography, touted their summer walking tours, and solicited applications for a Juneau History Grant (due June 30, 2015). More information? Check at the museum or email marjorie. hamburger@juneau.org.

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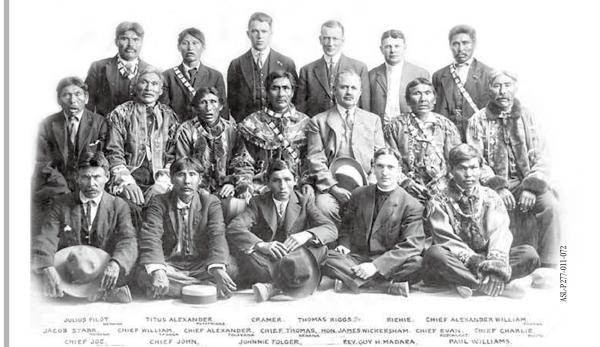
The **Alutiiq Museum** in Kodiak decided to be corporate friendly, or something like that recently, and hosted *Business After Hours*, a chance to meet

Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks, Alaska, July 5th & 6th, 1915.

BACK ROW: (left to right): Julius Pilot of Nenana; Alexander Titus, Hot Springs; G.F. Cramer; Thomas Riggs, Jr.; C.W. Ritchie; Chief Alexander William,

MIDDLE ROW (left to right): Jacob Star of Tanana; Chief William, Tanana; Chief Alexander, Tolovana; Chief Thomas, Nenana; James Wickersham; Chief Ivan of Coschaket; Chief Charlie [Charlley] of Munto [Minto].

FRONT ROW: (left to right): Chief Joe, Salchaket; Chief John of Chena; John Folger of Tenana; Rev. Guy H. Madara; Paul Williams of Tanana, Interpreter.



—Yogi Berra

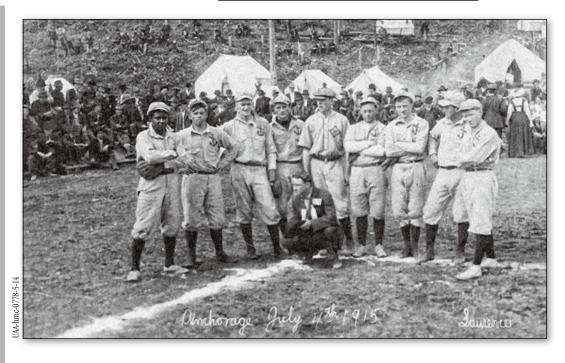
Up for extra innings? See the exhibit "Home Field Advantage: Baseball in the Far North" at the Anchorage Museum, May 1 - November 1, 2015.

"View of baseball players lined up for a group photo in Anchorage, Alaska, with tents and spectators on the edge of the ballfield. In the background tree stumps of recently cleared land can be seen." July 4, 1915. Photographer: Sydney Laurence.



Imagining Anchorage
Symposium
June 18-20, 2015
Sponsored by the Cook Inlet
Historical Society
Anchorage Museum

www.cookinlethistory.org



community members, visit with the museum staff, and explore exhibits and the archaeology research laboratory. The event also had refreshments, door prizes, a split-the-pot raffle (that sounds intriguing, doesn't it?) and discounts on some merchandise in the shop. They have just received prints and paintings by Sarah Squartsoff, raised in Port Lions by commercial fishing parents. First Friday in April featured Hanna Sholl, traditional artist and panoramic photographer, during the Kodiak Art Walk. Facebook.com/ alutiqmuseum has more news about it. On May 13 the museum celebrated its 20th anniversary with games, food, dancers, and much more. And, want to earn school credit in July working on the community archaeology program? Email brian@ alutiiqmuseum.org or write Brian Fraley, 215 Mission Road, Kodiak, Alaska, 99615.

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Long future planning is the emphasis of the Cook Inlet Historical Society this year. The list goes from supporting the Anchorage Centennial in the town and schools, to awarding grants, to electing directors. Eager for more information? Go to www.CookInletHistorySociety.org (caution - if you put in www.cihs, you'll get the California Institute of Human Science, not to mention several schools). The next two months include a lecture on baseball in Alaska, the annual Summer Solstice Cemetery Tour, and a symposium to compliment the Captain Cook exhibit at the museum.

When you think of Ketchikan, do you think rain and oceanfront? The spring and summer exhibit at the **Tongass Historical Museum** *Grown on the Rock* goes into the history of farming, so to speak, in the area. Goats and vegetables were grown in spite of the challenge of weather and rocky soil. In the latter half of the twentieth century and the improvement of barging, much was forgotten. Now Ketchikan is joining the nationwide *Locavore* movement's emphasis on locals raising food; it's healthier, often cheaper, and brings communities closer together. From the photographs in the newsletter, the exhibit will be charming and informative.

Ketchikan's **Totem Heritage Center** hosted sixty local high school students this past winter; each chose one artifact to sketch and research. Its Native Arts Studies Program continued into the spring with Ravenstail weaving classes.

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The newsletter of the **Kodiak Historical Society** & **Baranov Museum** has a "wish list" for items such as a manual typewriter and Kodiak salmon cans and labels for its collection. Hmmm. Has your museum prepared a list to publicize? They also had a recent *Slow Art* event; time devoted to spending quality time really observing art. Sounds fun! The museum had a series of speakers on Kodiak history this spring. Hohum; but here is the clever twist: not only was there free admission and refreshments, parents were encouraged to bring children ages 3 to

# Notes from around the state

"Tenakee folk in front of new bathhouse, about 1929." http://www.tenakeehistoricalcollection.org/



6 and activities were provided for them. Have any questions? 907-486-5920 if you're old-fashioned, or education@baranovmuseum.org

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Jujiro Wada is well known in Seward as a dog musher who helped pioneer today's Iditarod National Historic Trail in 1909. In late April, forty cast members with a television crew from Japan performed in Seward and Anchorage their musical that translates as *Chasing the Aurora: The Samurai Musher: The Tale of Jujiro Wada from Japan*.



A spring potluck was just the thing for the Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society.

Besides eating, they showed "really old, really scratchy films of Chugiak High activity, 1968-1969." Gardening was a theme of the newsletter in 1960. Still planting? The newsletter included a reminiscence by a woman from Peters Creek who attended Anchorage (now West) High School in 1957. Apparently that part was fine; the difficulty lay in the length of time on the only bus on a bad road. The school was crowded and on double shift. To attend he morning shift her first year meant she had to

the morning shift her first year meant she had to leave home at 4:30 a.m. Then came the afternoon shift and the restful 10:30 a.m. boarding, but she did not get home until 7:30 p.m., especially bad in the cold, dark winters. You'll admit the schedules would leave lasting memories. Want to contribute your stories? The society's email is info@cerhs. com and website is cerhs.com.

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The cost of maintaining a website had bothered the editor of the *Store Door* newsletter of the **Tenakee Historical Collection** as it wasn't getting many hits. Upon reflection, she thought of the elderly man who came out to visit, bringing photographs and telling a story of himself and a friend as teenagers going out to fish in a rickety boat and finding a man fallen on the beach and rescuing him. There were people delighted to find

old photographs, and the group decided to keep the website.

They also are looking forward to opening the Tenakee Museum in a former hotel this summer. After the hotel closed, the folks found all sorts of things upstairs, including iron bedsteads, radios, etc. The bedsteads fetched some nice funds for the museum. The newsletter has a piece on mysterious Laddie Kyle. Need to know more? tenakeehistoricalcollections.org/

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Enjoying and celebrating the past is an avocation of Seward's Resurrection Bay Historical **Society**. It settled the vexing question of what family-owned business marks its centennial this year. The newsletter reprinted the 1915 news that Seward paid about \$8,000 in War Taxes. (Fascinating - World War I had War Taxes?) In 1916 the Women's Club announced its plans to establish a playground to keep the children from playing in the streets. The site needed clearing, and several folks had volunteered to remove stumps. In March 1965, Senator Gruening visited and addressed diverse topics; and a real estate advertisement stated the building was "on high ground." After the devastation of 1964, that would have been a real selling point! In March this year, a photo competition by the Friends of the Jesse Lee Home solicited for entries that add value to the community and also were personally important.

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The Sitka Photo Shop Studio: Picturing Our Past is the Sitka Historical Society & Museum's "last exhibit before closing for our new museum's construction." The exhibit has photographs from the 1890s to the 1970s and a film documentary. While we will miss having exhibits and occasions to visit the museum, a new home is exciting. May there still be lectures and other programs for folks to get together to talk and learn about Sitka's past.



Jujiro Walda. https://northernlightmedia.files.wordpress. com/2013/10/jujirosnowshoes.jpg

## News & Information



The **ASM** (Alaska Museum Bulletin) has some great advice on artifact conservation in answer to a question about wearing an ancient Uncle Sam costume in a 4th of July parade. It's well worth reading. Also good is a short discussion about *Preservation Assistance Grants for Smaller Institutions* and grants in aid in general. Don't overlook the *Professional Time Wasting on the Web* section. All in all, the newsletter has a fresh and often humorous look. There are also nice definitions of what the museum, archives, and library do in addition to the usual thoughts.

The **Office of History and Archaeology's** monthly *Heritage* newsletter has information on federal legislation and funding for historic preservation, notes on the Alaska Historical Commission, program activities, preservation grants and programs, and a calendar of grant deadlines, conference dates, and training opportunities. To receive the monthly email newsletter contact jo.antonson@alaska. gov or write 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501.

The Alaska Historical Society's journal, *Alaska History* has a new feature: looking at old books with new eyes called "Revisiting a Classic." Its purpose is to provide a

fresh, present-day perspective on a classic text in the field. Articles in the series should be longer and more expansive than a standard book review, which will allow the author to delve more deeply into the book's contemporaneous impact and present relevance to historians. Articles may address any or all of the following topics:

- circumstances of how the book came to be written
- historiographical or methodological approach used by the author
- reasons the book was necessary / important at the time it was published
- how the book relates / contrasts with the author's other works
- relevance to Alaska historiography today.

Books about some aspect of Alaska history are most appropriate for the series, but articles that examine memoir, fiction, and other genres in a historical context are welcome. Articles should be 3000-5000 words in length. Two classics have been revisited: Ross Coen looked at Edna Ferber's *Ice Palace* and Mary Ehrlander looked at Hudson Stuck's *A Winter Circuit of Our Arctic Coast*. Manuscripts should be sent to series editor Bruce Merrell, merrellbruce@gmail.com.

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The recent bulletin of the Yukon Historical & Museums Association described the Whitehorse sustainability plan. The plan sees their old buildings enriching the city in four areas: culturally, socially, economically, and environmentally. Curious? info@heritageyukon.ca can give you details. In other news from Alaska's neighbor, who could have resisted Dawson's *Thaw di Gras* in early March to celebrate the end of winter? An axe toss, dog team race, and find a coin in a haystack; they had something for everyone. Make a note for next year.

When you think of Fort Ross, the Russian outpost in California, do you think of counting seals? Outings to count harbor seals and Steller sea lions are regular summer activities. The park has a new marine ecology program and hosted an *Edible & Medicinal Plants of Sonoma County* workshop this spring. Other recent programs have been about buildings of the compound like St. Nicholas Holy Chapel, and Alaska Native Day honoring Aleut and Alutiiq people. info@fortross.org for details and photographs.

We always note the **Alaska Yukon Pioneers Newsletter** because it has news of old-timers and lets people know of occasional gatherings in Seattle. \$20.00 per year brings

## News & Information

the monthly newsletter to your mailbox. The recorder is Joyce Penman at 27833 85th Drive, NW, Stanwood, Washington, 98292 or cell phone is 253-709-0158.

"The time threatens when all the world will speak two or three great languages, when all the little tongues will be extinct and all the little peoples swallowed up, when all costume will be reduced to a dead level of blue jeans and shoddy and all strange customs abolished. The world will be a much less interesting world then... The advance of civilization would be a great thing to work for if we were quite sure what we meant by it and what its goal is."

—Hudson Stuck Alaska Missionary



#### 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

P.O. Box 100299 Anchorage, AK 99510-0299

**Become a member...** or if you're already a member, sign up a friend or relative. Join the hundreds who want to stay in touch with historic Alaska by sending \$35.00 for individual membership (\$25.00 for students; \$45.00 for family; \$100.00 for a patron; \$600.00 for a life membership.)

It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual *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.* 



Brooker Collection, DENA 5462, Denali National Park and Preserve Museum Collect Women 's History Series, No. 2; National Park Service Denali National Park and Pre Resources Program.

Fannie Quigley with gold nuggets (forefront) at her Friday Creek/ Kantishna cabin in the mid-1920s.

pring is a changeable season in Alaska. We have snow mixed with rain mixed with clouds mixed with sun. There's a small breeze that can change in a minute to wind to a howler then back to total quiet.

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If we're speaking of friends, we say "erratic" instead of changeable, but the effect is the same, although the time of year isn't that important as a rule. You could make the argument that late winter makes most of us erratic; "cabin fever" is a very old and honest term. I haven't heard of anyone building a wall down the middle of the house lately, however, so perhaps they just take off for Hawaii. Or grump their way through until spring. But now we're heading towards summer.

I have long had mixed emotions when friends come to visit Alaska the first time. If the weather is rainy, they give pitying looks and wonder when I'm coming back to the South 48, and that's irritating. I recall an aunt and uncle from Iowa being very cheerful while being taken out on our boat in Sitka. Everything was just wonderful during the ten day trip. The last night they were in town, I mentioned something about the mountains that ring Sitka. They hadn't seen any. On the other hand, if the weather is sunny, it is annoying to hear "I thought you said the weather is often bad. This is lovely!" Now I'm labeled a whiner or worse. But whatever the weather now, summer will soon be here, along with mosquitoes and tourists. Try to ignore the flying menaces and the grouchier type of tourist. They both leave in the fall. Enjoy the sun and the people who find Alaska even lovelier than they expected.

Happy Summer!

D.L.