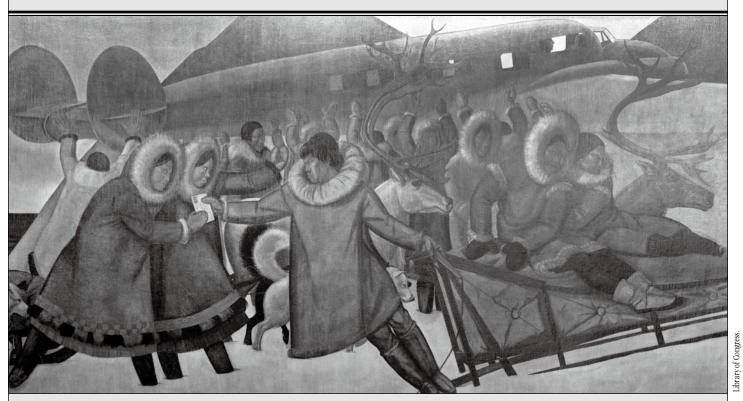
Alaska History News

Volume 43, No. 3 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society Autumn 2015



Mail Service in the Arctic, Rockwell Kent, 1937, Ariel Rios Federal Building, Washington D.C. "In the 1930s, mail still arrived in Alaska's ports by ship from Seattle. From there, airplanes commonly transported letters and goods within the state. At each stop, bags were transferred to dog sleds for delivery to their final destinations. Native Alaskans, who were far more familiar with the land and its navigation than recent immigrants, were often hired to drive the dog sleds. This represented a great economic opportunity for a group of people otherwise facing fierce discrimination. In Mail Service in the Arctic, a group of Native Alaskans bids farewell to the mail plane. In the foreground, an envelope addressed to Rockwell Kent at Au Sable Forks, New York, changes hands between two women dressed in traditional fur-lined parkas and the driver of the sled."

—General Services Adminstration

Message from the Program Chair, Cordova 2015: "...engage with the written word."

he 2015 Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska annual meeting and conference in Cordova is approaching, and the slate of speakers and presentation topics looks exciting. Alaska's Writer Laureate Frank Soos will be delivering a keynote speech examining how we chose topics as non-fiction writers and how we account for our authorial selves in what we write. As an award-winning Alaska writer and professor emeritus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Soos employs broad experience and humor in his pursuit of literary excellence.

Historians, whatever their specialization, all need to communicate with the world through writing. And yet, writing is often a difficult, solitary activity. This conference promises to bring writing into the plain light of day, first with Frank Soos' keynote address and later with two sessions aimed at generating ideas and improving our non-fiction writing skills—one is a panel discussion directed by Soos and me, and the other is Michelle Dent's writers' workshop. Dent is from New York University and for several years in a row she has generously shared her time and expertise to help conference participants engage with the written word.

As usual, the conference papers are intriguing and far-reaching. Alaska's fisheries and canneries have become a major focus of the Alaska Historical Society. One session is devoted to salmon canning and others are on civil rights struggles and unionization related to canneries. The program includes a panel discussion on documenting and preserving Alaska's canneries, part of an AHS-sponsored initiative aimed at saving neglected examples of Alaska's fishing heyday. Also, at the time of this writing, Lt. Governor Mallott is to be at the conference on Friday. If you have not done so already, please register soon (www.cordova2015.org). I look forward to seeing you in Cordova!

-Chris Allan, 2015 Program Chair

TRADE ROUTES AND CROSSROADS IN THE NORTH PACIFIC

Cordova, Alaska September 30-October 3, 2015

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2015

8:30-10:00

Rebecca Poulson, Angela Linn, Cathy Sherman, Conference Welcome Lath Carlson, "The Really Useful Museum"

10:30-12:00

SESSION A: Far North Adventurers

Paul Krejci, "Tracking 'The Greatest Individual Hunter of Material in the North': Joe Bernard and His *Teddy Bear*"
Brian Kassof, "Come Back Again Next Year, You'll Find Moscow': Travel Narratives about the Soviet Arctic in the 1920s and 1930s"
Larry Hibpshman, "In Praise of the Parochial: Alaska's First Person Literature"

SESSION B: Machines, Missiles, and Transportation

Charles Hilton, "Hovering Across Land and Sea: The Use of Hovercraft in Alaska"

Chris Allan, "Wilderness Scheming: The Washington Creek Steam Tractor and Dreams of a Far North Empire"

Karen Brewster, "Armed and Alert: Living and Working at Nike Missile Sites in Alaska"

SESSION C: Panel Discussion: Oral History and Lessons from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill

Alicia Zorzetto Kate Morse

12:00-1:15 - Local Historical Societies Luncheon

1:30-3:00

SESSION A: Imperial Alaska

Katherine Arndt, "Touring the Colonies: Inspection Tours by Alaska's Russian Governors, 1819-1866"

Shana Loshbaugh, "Early Russian Settlements on the Kenai Peninsula: Dramas and Mysteries"

Terrence Cole, "Seward's Three-Acre Folly: The Kostilivtzov Conspiracy and the Denial of the 1867 Alaska Purchase"

SESSION B: Public History and Research Tools

Kathy Peavey, "Shamans, Otter Hunters, and Cannery Workers: Using Census Records to Travel through the History of Prince of Wales Island and Southeast Alaska"

Jacqueline Fernandez, "A Problem of Provenance at the Sheldon Jackson Museum"

3:30-5:00

SESSION A: People Shaping Alaska's History

Hild Peters, "Crossroads of Tradition and Transition: The Life Story of the Reverend Helen Peters of Tanana" Angela Schmidt, "Crossroads in the Far North: The Films of Bud and Connie Helmericks" Zachary Jones, "Yéilnaawú (Dead Raven): Documenting a Tlingit Master Artist and His Work"

SESSION B: Evolving Alaskan Communities

Rebecca Poulson, "Disease, Gunboats, Sawmills and the Origin of the Sitka Mission" **Ruth Knapman**, "The Origins of Creamer's Dairy: The Longest Family-Owned Dairy in Alaska"

Ghert Abbott, "Time for a Cleanup: Ketchikan's Red Light District and the Politics of Publicity and Reform"

SESSION C: Panel Discussion: Exploring the Past with Political Correctness in Mind

Lael Morgan

Ross Coen

Doug Vandegraft

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2015

7:00-8:00 - 150th Anniversary of the Alaska Purchase Planning Roundtable

8:30-10:00 - Frank Soos, "Stories We Tell and the People Who Tell Them"

10:30-12:00

SESSION A: Alaska's Fisheries and Canneries

Ross Coen, "Fresh from the Can: Salmon, Pure Food Laws, and Perceptions of Nature in the Early 20th Century Alaska Fishing Industry"

Bob King, "Salmon Dreamer or Schemer?: Roland Onffroy, Pacific Packing & Navigation, and the Cannery War of 1903" Anjuli Grantham, "Cannery Landscapes on the West Side of Kodiak Island"

SESSION B: Panel Discussion: Charting the Waters of Archival Research

Veronica Denison

Gwen Sieja

12:00-1:15 State of the State Luncheon

Lt. Governor Byron Mallott

Judy Bittner

Linda Thibodeau

1:30-3:00

SESSION A: Politics and Social Justice

Averil Lerman, "The Last Hangings in Alaska: Vengeance or Justice?"

Toby Sullivan, "The 1981 Cannery Murders: The Alaskan Salmon Industry, Discrimination, and the Supreme Court"

Matthew McGrath, "Reds and Red Salmon: Anti-Communism and the Fisherman's Unions of Western Alaska"

SESSION B: Panel Discussion: Talking About Writing

Frank Soos Chris Allan

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2015

7:00-8:00 - Local Historical Societies Roundtable

9:30-11:00

SESSION A: Fisheries, Wildlife Management, and the Pacific Rim

Rachel Mason, "Managing Muskoxen in Alaska: From Ice Age Relic to Subsistence Species, Source of Cash, and Nuisance Animal" Russ VanderLugt, "Nuchek: Gateway to Prince William Sound, Crossroads of the North Pacific"

SESSION B: Panel Discussion: Opportunities, Challenges and Resources for Documenting and Preserving Alaska's

Canneries

Anjuli Grantham

Bob King

Casey Woster

SESSION C: Writers' Workshop

Michelle Lee Dent (limited to 15 participants)



Muskox by Vasily Nikolaevich Berkh, 1821. British Library HMNTS 10460.d.11.

It's Coming:



The sesquicentennial, that is—the 150th anniversary of the Treaty of Cession, transferring Russian possessions in Alaska to the United States of America back in 1867.

This is a tremendous opportunity to share with the world Alaska's history, cultures and people—the original peoples of Alaska, Russian heritage and influence, and the American settlers and the industries that brought them north. It is an opportunity to research a critical and dynamic time when Alaska's Native people confronted American military force and entrepreneurs, and to explore and discuss the meaning and impact of Americanization.

What will be the Alaska Historical Society's role in promoting and planning for this commemoration over the next 15 months? So far ideas include the creation of a web page listing activities and events, with FAQs (frequently asked questions) and historical articles; encouraging communities and organizations to participate; working with the State of Alaska; and getting articles into statewide and national media.

Do you have ideas for the AHS role in the commemoration? Better yet, do you have an idea you would be willing to work on? What will Alaska's communities and historical and cultural groups and institutions do for 2017? How might your community, and organizations you belong to, feature this anniversary in events, exhibits, curriculum, publications? Email me, rebecca_p oulson@hotmail.com. Let's chat at the annual meeting in Cordova, September 30–October 3.

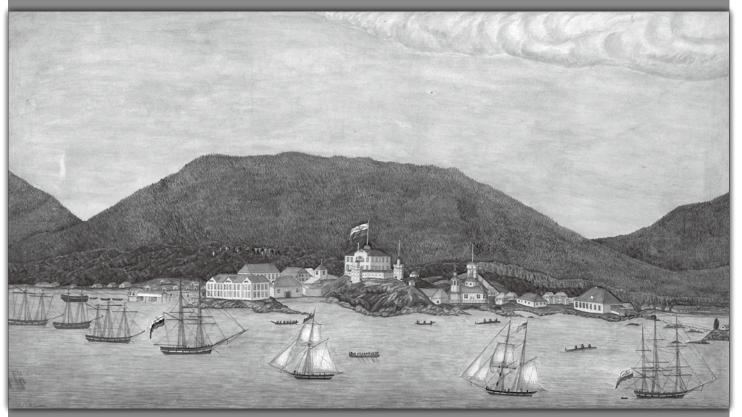
This commemoration is an opportunity for all of us who value history to share it with the public, to engage in research and dialogue, and to encourage cultural tourism. It's all up to our creativity and inspiration--and our planning, right now. The anniversary is coming—let's do it up!

—Rebecca Poulson, President

A Description of the changing of flags, Sitka by T. Abllund, blacksmith

"We had not spent many weeks at Sitka when two large steam ships arrived there, bringing things that belonged to the American crown, and a few days later the new governor also arrived in a ship together with his soldiers. The wooden two-story mansion of the Russian governor stood on a high hill, and in front of it in the yard at the end of a tall spar flew the Russian flag with the doubleheaded eagle in the middle of it. Of course, this flag now had to give way to the flag of the United States, which is full of stripes and stars. On a predetermined day in the afternoon a group of soldiers came from the American ships, led by one who carried the flag. Marching solemnly, but without accompaniment, they came to the governor's mansion, where the Russian troops were already lined up and waiting for the Americans. Now they started to pull the [Russian double-headed] eagle down, but — whatever had gone into its head — it only came down a little bit, and then entangled its claws around the spar so that it could not be pulled down any further. A Russian soldier was therefore ordered to climb up the spar and disentangle it, but it seems that the eagle cast a spell on his hands, too — for he was not able to arrive at where the flag was, but instead slipped down without it. The next one to try was not able to do any better; only the third soldier was able to bring the unwilling eagle down to the ground. While the flag was brought down, music was played and cannons were fired off from the shore; and then while the other flag was hoisted the Americans fired off their cannons from the ships equally many times. After that American soldiers replaced the Russian ones at the gates of the fence surrounding the Kolosh [i.e. Tlingit] village."

—Account published in Finland six years after the event.



Novo Arkangelsk (New Archangel) by the Creole Aleksandr Olgin, July 1837. The "wooden two-story mansion of the Russian governor" is in center. State Archive of the Russian Navy, St. Petersburg.

Notes from around the state



E.W. Merrill Photograph Collection, SITK 3926 Sitka National Historical Park

Last May, the non-profit Merrill Project, Inc. transferred ownership of the Sheldon Jackson College collection of E. W. Merrill glass plate negatives to Sitka National Historical Park. The Merrill Project raised \$20,000 from more than 100 Sitkans to purchase the collection of nearly 1,000 plates from the college, which closed in 2007. Acclaimed photographer E.W. Merrill took the photos in and around Sitka starting in 1899 until his death in 1929. The terms of the transfer will keep the plates permanently in Sitka, where they will be preserved to archival standards and made available to the public in digital format. This collection is unmatched for the high technical and artistic quality of Merrill's work, and for his respectful images of Tlingit people and art. It is a

remarkable record of the people, culture, and natural beauty of this place.

*:

The Hope and Sunrise Historical Society

and its use of electronic intelligence has become the Silicon Valley of Alaska. It notifies us their July newsletter is in color, and if you want your newsletter electronically send your email address to hopehistoricalsociety@gmail.com. There is also information on Quonset huts; and as we might have known, in addition to a short history and nice color pictures of the same, we're invited to web. mst.edu/~rogersda/american&military_history/quonset_huts-revised.pdf

•:•

Always so fun when a society comes up with a terrific idea--one you can file away and save for a difficult time--perhaps midwinter. The **Tongass Historical Museum** is opening an exhibit October 23rd, which will show modern photographs that compare with historic ones, leading to the title *Then and Now*. All you need to do is go to www.KetchikanMuseums.org and see the selection of old photos and then go to the same place and take your modern picture, then compare them. Email tarah@city.ketchikan.ak.us or telephone 907-225-5600 to claim your chosen photo by September 14th.

•••

All summer the **Dorothy G. Page Museum** in Wasilla has been hosting programs on Wednesday evenings to learn more about their town, history, etc. August 5th was the centennial of the Matanuska Experimental Station and duly celebrated.

Kodiak Arts & Culture Camp was a summer triumph for the **Baranov Museum** in Kodiak. A run for young people from the sixth to eighth grades, and camp programs that featured local history and culture. Topics included exploring life in Kodiak before electricity, before the Alaska Purchase, and before Russian contact. Will our great-grandchildren view our 2015 class photograph as us wearing funny old-fashioned clothing? What's a cittaq? balalaika? A throwing board? Lots of teaching about caring for digital files; story time on the porch, collecting oral histories, doing public radio broadcasts, and preparing museum exhibits.

We also received the **Baranov Quarterly** with news of the hardscrabble time in Kodiak during the 1980s; problems with strikes and business failures of canneries. A Belgian man died of botulism from a can of salmon processed in Ketchikan, and the FDA proceeded with the second-largest recall of canned food in history. Two fishermen-owned canneries went bust from the combination of the recall and poor run of salmon.

There also was the murder of the two Nickerson brothers at their Noisy Island setnet site, and to crown the decade's disasters, the terrible *Exxon Valdez* oil tanker accident in Prince William Sound. The spilled oil reached Kodiak and fishing was suspended.

The newsletter also talks about managing digital collections and the West Side Stories radio project at KMXT 100.1.

•

The Cook Inlet Historical Society did not take a summer vacation this year. Instead it had a full slate of programs. In June it hosted a symposium. One day featured presentations on Captain Cook and his voyage to the North Pacific to enrich the museum's summer exhibit Arctic Ambitions. The next day included talks and panels on Anchorage to commemorate its centennial, and on Sunday there was evening the popular annual Solstice cemetery tour, the brainchild of John Bagoy that is such a community favorite there are two more tours later in the summer. The August program was for the 40th anniversary of the creation of the Municipality of Anchorage. Several participants—speakers and members of the audience--recounted the history and how the City of Anchorage and the Greater Anchorage Area Borough reached compromises on several thorny issues. Dennis Wheeler, Municipal Attorney, showcased his office's project to preserve the charter commission's tapes, digitize and transcribe them. A very much appreciated legacy for Anchorage.

News & Information

Our friends at the Yukon Historical and Museums Association sent along all sorts of information about their summer doings. They range from a croquet tournament to Klondike National Historic Site management planning to the Unsung Hero award to Fort Selkirk for erosion studies to a Kluane National Park art installation that startled campers. More on events and training can be found at info@heritageyukon.ca. The newsletter even announced the Antique Alaskana Garage Sale in August, sponsored at least in part by our famous Fairbanks collector Candy Waugaman.

Recently out of Alaska or the Yukon and missing your Northern friends? No need to fret. The Alaska Yukon Pioneers newsletter is just the ticket. Send a check for \$20.00 to AYP, Joyce Penman, Recorder, 27833 85th Dr. NW, Stanwood, WA 98292, telephone 253-709-0158 or 360-629-3554, email - olwomn@wavecable.com. The newsletter has updates from and about old friends, neighbors, and delightful people you hadn't known before and notices of occasional dinners and get-together in the Seattle area. Monthly issues. You are coaxed to contribute. Don't wait!

The **Office of History and Archaeology** is always up to informing Alaskans about historic preservation issues and activities via its monthly electronic newsletter *Heritage*. The office is hosting a historic preservation conference, October 20-22, with a nationally-recognized

speaker, Donovan Rypkema, on the economics of historic preservation. For more information about the workshop email summer.rickman@alaska.gov. You want your own copy with all the news? Send a request to oha@alaska.net or to 550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1310, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501-3565, or telephone 907-269-8721.

>>>

The Cook Inlet Historical Society is inviting applications for its John Reeder and Brian Davies memorial grants established to encourage research and writing about the Cook Inlet area and Alaska. Students, teachers, academic researchers, local historians, and others are encouraged to apply. The deadline for submitting an application is October 21, 2015. Details about the grants and how to apply can be found at http://www.cookinlethistory.org/reeder-davies-grants.html

Visit our website:

www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor:
Dee Longenbaugh
The Observatory, ABAA
299 N. Franklin St. * Juneau, AK 99801
Tel: 907/586-9676 * Fax: 907/586-9606
Email: deelong@alaskan.com

Alaska Historical Society

Board of Directors

Rebecca Poulson, *President*, rebecca_poulson@hotmail.com Sitka

Jim Simard, *Vice-President*, james.simard@alaska.gov *Juneau*

Katie Ringsmuth, *Past President*, katmaikate@aol.com *Eagle River*

Michael Hawfield, Treasurer, mchawfield@kpc.alaska.edu Homer

Rachel Mason, Secretary, rachel_mason@nps.gov Anchorage

Chris Allan, sprucetip105@gmail.com Fairbanks

Karen Brewster, karen.brewster@alaska.edu Fairbanks

James Brooks, james.k.brooks@capweek.com *Juneau*

Tom Bundtzen, bundtzen@mosquitonet.com Fairbanks

John Cloe, jcloe@gci.net Anchorage

Ross Coen, rcoen@uw.edu
Fairbanks

Jeff Dickrell, jdickrell@yahoo.com *Unalaska*

J. Pennelope Goforth, seacat@cybrrcat.com $\begin{tabular}{l} Anchorage \end{tabular}$

Anjuli Grantham, anjuligrantham@gmail.com Kodiak

Aaron Leggett, aleggett@anchoragemuseum.org
Anchorage

Averil Lerman, lermntan@gmail.com
Anchorage

Others:

Jo Antonson, Executive Director, jantonson@gmail.com Jim Ducker, Editor, Alaska History, Jimducker.inak@gmail.com Dee Longenbaugh, Editor, Alaska History News, deelong@alaskan.com Judy Bittner, Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, judy.bittner@alaska.gov

 $\label{limited} Linda\ Thibodeau, \textit{Alaska Libraries, Archives, Museums, Linda.} \\ thibodeau@alaska.gov$

P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299 Tel: 907/276-1596

Email: members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org

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 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.*



Xiuzhen miyao, a gymnastic text of unknown origin. The book records 49 exercises. This illustration depicts Lü zu po qi fa (Ancestor Lü's technique for breaking stagnant Qi), a technique used to rid the body of fatigue and exhaustion. It is practised as follows: Sitting upright with legs crossed, place both fists on the ribcage level with the heart and concentrate, circulating Qi for 24 breaths on the left, then an equal number of breaths on the right.

Non-profit Org. U.S. Postage Paid Permit 69 Anchorage, AK

ot many society newsletters this time. I think everyone is still too busy with tourists and museum work, or perhaps exhausted from the summer, or even, more likely, suffering from a combination of the two. It is very tiring to answer the same questions over and over—How cold does it get in the winter? Do you live here year-round? Is this all of the museum, or do you have another building? I was told there is no road out of here, is that true? You can probably come up with more of your old favs than I can. Just remember—fall (or autumn, as my English friends like to correct me; now who's getting testy?) is coming. There will be time to relax and reminisce about the summer followed by the pleasant winter with projects. Hang in there and remember the pleasant times and the feeling of success you have at times.

More advice? Do let me know if you have some; write deelong@alaskan.com.