

Alaska History News

Volume 44, No. 4 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society Fall 2016



Alaska Girl Fishing, Ketchikan, 1950.
Elisabeth Meyer, Preus Museum of Photography, Norway.

Message from the President "...it does not matter who you are but rather what you have to offer."

What drew me to the Alaska Historical Society were the conferences. I wanted to meet people who did work similar to my own and who cared about the vibrant tapestry of Alaska history. And once a year, an intentional community took shape—if only for four days—of historians, archivists, librarians, book publishers, Alaskan collectors, oral history practitioners, museum experts, local history aficionados, and other fellow travelers. I knew right away they understood me. Not only was I able to share my ideas (and work to overcome public speaking jitters), but I came to understand that I was part of something important.

One of the strengths of AHS is its inclusiveness. The organization was created 1967 "as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information about Alaska's past" and, when it comes to participating in AHS endeavors, it does not matter who you are but rather what you have to offer. Another of its strengths is the alliance with Museums Alaska that allows for joint conferences, doubling the attendance and promoting the goals of both organizations. And perhaps the greatest strength is its focus on local communities. As the conference moves from town to town, it stokes interest in local museums and historical societies, it encourages research into local topics, and offers a boost to local economies at the end of summer.

Yet there is still work to be done. We can expand our membership by seeking not just historian types but also people who investigate the past from unexpected angles or who don't yet know they are fans of Alaska history. Through advocacy we hope to ensure funding for the Alaska Office of History and Archeology and Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums, and for history and historic preservation projects. In addition, as the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Purchase approaches, AHS welcomes new discussion of Alaska Native history and indigenous perspectives. I thank the AHS Board of Directors for giving me the opportunity to help this organization endure and grow.

—Chris Allan

Awards

"To refuse awards is another way of accepting them with more noise than is normal."

—Mark Twain

THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUALLY RECOGNIZES INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR OUTSTANDING WORK THAT FURTHERS THE STUDY AND UNDERSTANDING OF ALASKA HISTORY AND AGAIN THIS YEAR THERE WERE MORE-THAN-WORTHY RECIPIENTS. MICHAEL HAWFIELD, CHAIR OF THE AWARDS COMMITTEE, ANNOUNCED THE 2016 RECIPIENTS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING BANQUET IN JUNEAU ON SEPTEMBER 23RD.

JOHN B. BRANSON of Port Alsworth received the *Evangeline Atwood Award for Excellence*. For over 30 years John has been writing, publishing, and promoting Lake Clark and Bristol Bay history. He has written books on Richard Proenneke, John W. Clark, and Bristol Bay canneries, communities, and families. The historian for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve since the 1980s, John has led projects to restore a Bristol Bay double ender, a Dena'ina cache, and a number of cabins. He has collected photographs, conducted interviews with residents and others associated with southwest Alaska, made many presentations and worked with students. The nomination concluded that "John is well respected and even beloved by the people of the region for his knowledge and his continuing curiosity about every individual's story."



STEPHEN HAYCOX received the *James H. Ducker Alaska Historian of the Year Award* for his new book *Battleground Alaska: Fighting Federal Power in America's Last Wilderness*. Steve is the first recipient of the award after it was named last year in recognition of Jim Ducker, editor of the Society's journal *Alaska History* for 30 years. In his book, Steve explores the complex relationship between a state dependent on economic development and a federal government committed to protecting some of the country's last untrammelled land. He uses contemporary issues which have not been previously discussed in a full historical context and applies historical analysis to them. Steve, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Alaska Anchorage, has written many columns for newspapers, served many organizations including the Alaska Historical Society, organized conferences, and mentored many students. His new book, along with his other books and articles, make significant contributions to the history of the American West, environmental history, and Alaska history.



RICHARD A. WOOD of Juneau initiated a Facebook page "40 Years of Alaska History, 1847-1887" and was selected to receive the *Barbara S. Smith Pathfinder Award* for sharing treasures from his collections and his wealth of knowledge about Alaska using social media. An avid long-time collector of Alaskana, particularly lantern slides and stereoviews, and owner of a bookstore, Wood has shared items from his extensive personal collection on Facebook, that have gotten conversations going and have been indirectly promoting the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession that will be in 2017. The nominator wrote "Dick is willing to share what he knows with those who ask, and generously loans items to Alaska museums for exhibits."



The **CALISTA ELDERS COUNCIL**, now part of Calista Education and Culture, Inc., was selected for the *Esther Billman Award for Excellence*. The Council has promoted and participated in the production of publications over the past 20 years that "have illuminated and even revived Yup'ik culture and history." Individuals who collaborated on the projects include Ann Fienup-Riordan, Marie Meade, Alice Rearden, Paul John, Theresa John, and Frank Andrew. The Elders not only promoted the studies, they shared their knowledge to assist in preserving their heritage. Notably, the publications are bilingual.

Detail: St. Nicholas Church,
Sand Point.
Nancy Taylor Stonington.

<http://www.nancystonington.com/artistsproof.htm>

THE **PIONEER AIR MUSEUM** in Fairbanks received the *Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Award*. Special recognition was given to **Peter Haggland**, Museum Curator, for pursuing professionalism at the museum and for starting a summer Space and Aviation Junior Camp. Two times a week in the summer dozens of kids from Fairbanks learn about astronauts, the Hubble telescope, the international space station, and get tours of the museum. In 2011, Haggland applied for an archives assessment of the museum's materials. Since, he has been working to improve collection documentation and care and to improve the museum's public programs. The museum has hired interns to help catalog materials, create exhibit labels, and write articles for a blog.



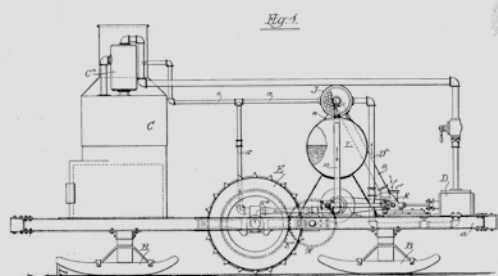
The Alaska Historical Society annually gives *Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards* to help individuals attend and participate in the Alaska Historical Society/Museums Alaska annual meetings. This year the student award recipient is **ALEXANDER HERBERT**, a Ph.D. student at the University of Chicago. His master's thesis was titled "Environment and Empire in Russia's North Pacific 1750-1867." He is interested in understanding how Russia settled Alaska and what role the colony played in the larger European colonial context.



The editorial advisory board members of the Society's journal *Alaska History* make an award for the best article in the last volume. **CHRIS ALLAN** of Fairbanks received 2015 *Alaska History Award* for his well-researched, entertaining, and well-written article "Gold Rush Ice Train: The Curious History of George Glover's Invention and the U.S. Government's Klondike Relief Expedition."



President Rebecca Poulson awarded the President's award known as the *Beaver Log* to **RACHEL MASON** of Anchorage. Presenting the award, Rebecca said Rachel has been a steady, rational, and enthusiastic mainstay of the Alaska Historical Society for the last six years. She has served as program chair and committee member, secretary, and on the awards committee. Rachel always stepped up—helping with the newsletter, moderating conference sessions, and writing book reviews for the Society's journal. Her work for the National Park Service on the internment of the Attuans in Japan during World War II and the relocation of other Unangan people after World War II is outstanding, but these are just some of the excellent and impressive body of work she has done as an anthropologist.



Above: Patent drawing of George T. Glover's "snow locomotive." U.S. Patent Office, No. 593.466, 1897.

Right: Fanciful description of Glover's machine blazing a path to the Klondike gold fields.

From *Gold, Steel & Ice* by Chris Allan, 2015.



Notes from around the state



Photography is a way of feeling, of touching, of loving. What you have caught on film is captured forever... it remembers little things, long after you have forgotten everything.

—Aaron Siskind

Kodiak's **Baranov Museum** received one of twelve National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards for its History and Film Intensive program. Marie Acemah started the program in 2012. Junior and senior high school students explored historical topics and created short documentary films about them. They did the research, conducted interviews, shot the footage, created the storyline, and edited the film. Subjects have included the Filipino community, the 1964 earthquake, the Exxon *Valdez* oil spill, and the impact of climate change on Kodiak and the fishing industry. The films can be viewed at www.youtube.com/BarMuse

The **Kodiak Historical Society** reports that after the U.S. Purchase, for two years (1868-1870) Kodiak went by two names: St. Paul as it was known to the Russians and Fort Kodiak as it was one of six Army posts established in Alaska following the purchase. The KHS has updated and added new features to their website, www.baranovmuseum.org. KHS welcomes Alana Blumenthal, the new Curator of Collections and Exhibits at the Baranov Museum.

Driving through Palmer? Stop by the newly completed Matanuska Colonist monument at the historic quad in the center of town. The project started in 1997 when **Palmer Historical Society** board member Dan Strouse and local resident Helen Hoffman designed the monument, but it did not get finished. The Society's Board of Directors resurrected the project and commissioned Pat Garley, owner of Arctic Fires Bronze Sculptureworks to design, fabricate, and install a sculpture for the top of the monument. The sculpture depicts a Colony family after disembarking the train at Palmer in 1935. The society will have its annual Christmas open house at the Colony House Museum in December. Check out the Palmer Historical Society at www.palmerhistoricalsociety.org

The **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society** has spent many hours repairing and preserving the doors of the Japonski Island Boathouse built during World War II. Much of the work was done during three workshops in which Anthony Vlahovich and other master craftsmen showed volunteers how to restore historic doors. Sitkans remembered World War II this past summer with a history and wildlife cruise and had as guest of honor Walter Dangel, who came to Sitka in May 1941 with the 250th Coast Artillery. Guests on the cruise received a

map of Sitka's WWII installations, and board member Rebecca Poulson shared the history of the boathouse and Sitka's role in the war.

The theme for **Cook Inlet Historical Society's** 2016-2017 James Barnett Lecture Series is Educating Alaskans: A History of Learning in the Great Land. The lectures are held at the Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center and monthly feature scholars, authors, and civic leaders who will be talking about Alaska's public schools, mission schools, universities, and the Anchorage school system. On January 19th, Jacqueline Hamberg, Curator of Collections, Sheldon Jackson Museum, will speak on "Comparing and Contextualizing--Understanding Sheldon Jackson's Education Policies." A complete list of lectures, times and dates is at www.cookinlethistory.org

Be on the lookout in Ketchikan for the renovated **Tongass Historical Museum**. The artifacts are out and the construction crew is in! Over 6,000 objects in the museum's collections were carefully transported to their temporary home until completion of the remodel.

Northwest Coast Native art and culture classes at the **Totem Heritage Center** are planned after another successful year. Contact 907-225-5900 or email StaceyW@ktn-ak.us for more information and to register for classes.

The **Tongass Historical Society** in Ketchikan announced that Anne Rittgers is the first recipient of its Patricia Roppel scholarship, a \$5,000 award. Rittgers is a graduate student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Arctic and Northern Studies Program. The scholarship will be awarded annually to an undergraduate or graduate student attending an accredited college and majoring in history, especially pursuing the study of Alaska and the North. Special consideration is given to an applicant specializing in Southeast Alaska history, or the history of mining, fisheries, or timber in Alaska. The fund is being managed by the Alaska Community Foundation, and those interested in applying or contributing should go to website <https://alaskacf.org/blog/funds/thspatricia-roppe-scholarship/>. There is also a link on the THS website tongasshistory.org. Generous donations from the Roppel family, the Eichner family, and others established the scholarship to honor Pat Roppel; author, historian, researcher, and two-time Alaska Historian of the Year. Pat served on the THS

SITKA MARITIME



HERITAGE SOCIETY

Notes from around the state

Board of Directors and made significant donations of objects, information, time, and money to it.



Craig Historical Society members shared photos at a recent meeting. Klawock historian MaryEllen Skinna and Ralph Mackie were able to identify many of the people in the photos. Jan Trojan is working on the group's cemetery identification project and Cheryl Fecko is working on the fisherman's memorial.



The Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums recognized the **Alutiiq Museum** in Kodiak with its 2016 Museum Institutional Excellence Award. This annual award recognizes an indigenous museum or museum service that demonstrates a significant commitment to the care, preservation, interpretation, and preservation of material cultural heritage. Congratulations on national recognition for great work!



Charlie Lean was the guest speaker at the **Kenai Peninsula Historical Association** semi-annual meeting earlier this fall. Cooper Landing Historical Society was the host. Lean spoke about the Citizens Advisory Commission on the Federal Areas of Alaska and his family, one of the Cooper Landing founding families.



James Brooks, reporter for the *Juneau Empire*, was present for a panel discussing the capital city's history of disasters last October. The program was held at the **Juneau-Douglas City Museum** and presenters included former firefighters and historians who revealed how the capital escaped the fate of fire and natural disasters. Juneau had destructive fires in 1911, 1939, 1946, 1956 and 1963. Two water systems for drinking and saltwater that fed the Alaska-Juneau gold mine were saving graces. Some say a little luck as well. Weather-caused disasters--avalanches, landslides, and floods--in the town's history were also talked about.



Entries from Judge James Wickersham's diaries have been featured in the last seven issues of the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society's** newsletter. June 6, 1937 entry: Received a copy--the first one--from the publisher by mail today. We--Grace and I--feel as proud as a new father and mother over the advent of a new baby! It is a good looking book--well printed, beautifully illustrated, and quite satisfactory as we had anticipated. Wickersham is referring to *Old Yukon -- Tales -- Trails -- Trials* that he wrote (an edited

and abridged version of the book is in print). W. D. DeArmond is providing material from his father's 1957 book, *Some Names Around Juneau* for the newsletter as well. In sum, the newsletter is interesting to read!



The **Anvik Historical Society** reports 220 visitors signed its museum guestbook, three times the local population! They recently got a donation of a round wooden peg calendar introduced in Alaska by Russian seafarers in the 1700s. This artifact came from the long abandoned village of Dishkaketa on the upper Innoko River.



The **Tanana-Yukon Historical Society** keeps interior Alaska history alive with programs presented by Alaska Natives, visitors, students, local residents, and the U.S. military. More about dates and speakers and their other activities is at www.tananayukonhistory.org



The **Clausen Museum** in Petersburg has a plan to inventory, catalogue, and provide proper storage of their collection. With the help of Anjuli Grantham, staff and volunteers have started identifying what they have and will be moving the objects to off-site storage as they are inventoried and the records updated. The work can be tedious and labor intensive, but the staff and volunteers are finding it "always interesting."



The **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** in Seward used revenue from hosting the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska annual meetings several years ago to purchase a new case to display its gutskin parka. The November newsletter also talks about the conundrum posed when donations are left at the museum door. Under state law, "orphan" items must be kept for seven years and then advertised as abandoned property to claim ownership. Maddi McGraw, Curator, has the word out that she would like to reduce her growing pile of orphans in the museum workroom.



A plaque for the Brown & Hawkins Store from the **Seward Historic Preservation Commission** and another from the National Register of Historic Places were unveiled in Seward by members of the **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** Keith and Jackie Campbell and Hugh and Iris Darling. The plaques were placed on the storefront of the historic building in August. State Historian Jo Antonson, while dining with the Darlings, helped get them to hang the plaques.



Facing the Enemy—American Fireman.
Currier and Ives, 1858.

News & Information

The historic **Alaska Railroad depot** in Fairbanks recently transformed into a schoolhouse thanks to local entrepreneurs and contractors and a 35-year railroad land lease. Spruce Tree Montessori invited the public to a ribbon cutting August 31st to celebrate. The newly renovated facility is hailed by neighbors and community leaders as a positive investment. The Alaska Railroad Corporation reports that the depot was built in 1959 and served as a train station until 2005, when the ARRC sold it to the *Fairbanks Daily News Miner*. A decade later, Sabrina and Ryan Binkley purchased the building from the newspaper and leased the nearly one acre of surrounding land from the railroad. Sabrina Binkley is the founder of Spruce Tree Montessori School.

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Pricilla Hudson, **Pioneers of Alaska**, wrote that the group in Juneau is planning a 2018 centennial commemoration of the sinking of the *Princess Sophia*. The ship sank on Vanderbilt Reef October 24, 1918. Any stories or photographs are welcome by the planners. Send information to Mary Lou Spartz, P.O. Box 20211, Juneau, AK 99802.

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The **Yukon Historical & Museums Association** is interested in heritage news and events if you have any to share. Information should be sent to info@heritageyukon.ca. In a recent e-bulletin they noted that New York filmmaker Bill Morrison premiered his feature-length documentary, *Dawson City: Frozen Time*, at the prestigious New York Film Festival. The documentary uses footage from reels of film found in 1978 that had been dumped in the old Dawson City pool.

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Ethyl from the **Alaska-Yukon Pioneers** encourages anyone with a story to tell, remembrance of the North, or news to

share in their monthly newsletter to contact George Parent at 20518 - 73rd Drive SE, Snohomish, WA 92296.

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The **Alaska Women's Hall of Fame** invites nominations of outstanding women who have made significant contributions to Alaska for its class of 2017. Nominations must be submitted electronically (www.alaskawomenshalloffame.org/). The nomination deadline is 6 p.m., January 23, 2017. There will be an event honoring the women selected in May 2017.

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The **Alaska State Archives** catalog is online and searchable. The State Archives has State government records, 1959-present, and select District (1884-1912) and Territorial (1912-1959) government records. The largest groups of the early records are the District Court records (that include land records) and the papers of the governors.

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The Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board recognized **Michael Carey, Dermot Cole and Damon Stuebner** with Certificates of Excellence for using archival records to educate. The ASHRAB, coordinated by the State Archivist, is a nine-member Governor-appointed board. It promotes collection and preservation of historical records – Alaska's priceless legacy.

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The **Alaska Association for Historic Preservation** is opening the Oscar Anderson House Museum in Anchorage the first two weekends in December. The house will be decorated by longtime museum caretaker Mary Flaherty in the Swedish tradition. Visitors will “step back in time” to the holidays in early Anchorage with a tour and Swedish-themed seasonal treats and activities. Happy holidays!

Alaska Artist Reflection: Nancy Stonington

Standing in my friend's guest room, I noticed a painting by Nancy Stonington of one of the Klawock canneries. I took note of the artist, came back to my home in Craig, looked online and bought an artist's proof. I was determined to find out more about the artist. I sent Nancy an email and she replied quickly and was gracious to allow me to use her name and information about her painting in *Alaska History News*. It turns out, Nancy has been around Alaska quite a bit. She is no stranger to noted historians of Alaska. Pat Roppel and the DeArmond family shared their knowledge of historic sites in southeast with her and helped her track down many historic canneries to paint. Throughout her long career, Nancy drew on location directly onto her stretched watercolor paper, then worked either from memory (in a protected location) or from photos for details.

Nancy moved to Sitka in 1971 and began painting full time. She founded and directed art galleries in Juneau, Anchorage, Ketchum, Sun Valley and Seattle. She opened the galleries in the



Mary Ellen Skinna, Klawock, writes “The left building is the Sand Point Store, owned by Archie Demmert Sr. and Alfred E. Widmark. It was left to Byron Skinna who sold it to Virginia Demmert and is now owned by her son Mac Demmert. The Peratrovich Cannery is on the right.”

Alaska Artist Reflection

mid 1970s to showcase works of Northwest and Alaskan artists as well as her own work. The Seattle Stonington Gallery, established in 1980, has become the nation's premier gallery for Northwest Coast art. By 2001, Nancy had sold all the galleries and returned to a less hectic lifestyle. Nancy notes that Frank and Pat Roppel took her to Klawock on their boat where she started the painting I recently purchased. Nancy mentioned in her email to me that "I poked around Alaska by boat, ferry, van and small plane to many wonderful places in the 1970s and 1980s. It was the canneries in particular (and of course the gorgeous moody scenery of SE) that kept me energized as a painter."

Nancy has made an impression on many people in Alaska, including AHS past president Rebecca Poulson. Rebecca recalls taking a workshop with Nancy in Sitka maybe ten or more years ago. "It was interesting, she used a lot of earth colors that are difficult to work with and keep clean, but they do give you some nice browns and blues. One piece of advice was to make sure the horizon was straight, as that is important in a landscape." Rebecca also recalls in around 1979 on a Girl Scout trip to Wyoming, stopping in Ketchum/Sun Valley at one of Nancy's homes. Nancy praised Rebecca on her drawing of the feet of a person standing, drawn from behind the person, saying "feet are hard."

Nancy and her husband Chuck, are now based in Washington and travel between Alaska, Oregon and Idaho. Her work can be seen on her website www.nancystonington.com

—Kathy Peavey, Editor

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."

Membership lapsed? Renew today to celebrate yesterday!



Merry Old Santa Claus,
Thomas Nast, Harper's Weekly 1881.

Alaska Historical Society

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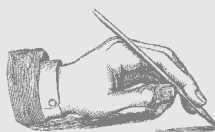
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Portrait of Two Indigenous Women, ca. 1950s.
Elisabeth Meyer, Preus Museum of Photography, Norway.

THE ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY is encouraging organizations and individuals to plan events and activities to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession. The Society has created a calendar of events on its website. If you are planning or know of an event please send information about it to members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org

Does something special about Alaska come to mind? One of the commemoration activities is compiling *150 Reasons We Love Alaska* to promote the state. Kathy Ruddy of Juneau is heading up the project and would like to hear from you! Please send your suggestion, explained in 150 words, by mid-January to kathy.ruddy65@gmail.com



Happy Holidays & Best Wishes for 2017
**"THE ALASKA YEAR OF
HISTORY AND HERITAGE"**

150th ANNIVERSARY
ALASKA TREATY OF CESSION
1867~2017 RUSSIA / USA