Alaska History News

Volume 44, No. 3 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society Summer 2016

Alaska Historical Society & Museums Alaska
Annual Meetings & Conference
September 21-24, 2016, Juneau, Alaska

Message from the Program Chair

ur understanding of the past expands when we view it from multiple angles, and at the 2016 AHS/MA conference in Juneau next month we will have ample opportunity to do just that. The AHS theme—*Exploring Alaska's Past in the Pacific World*—has attracted presentations related to Alaska's fisheries that examine the lives of industry workers, the boats they used (and examples we preserve today), the canneries that made Alaskan fish famous, lesser known commercial fisheries like cod, and even the exciting world of salmon can label collecting. Alaska's role as a major player on the Pacific Rim will also be examined, including questions of war, politics, religion, industry, science, and cartography, as well as more local topics like Juneau's historic drinking establishments, cemeteries, and police blotters.

As the 150th anniversary of the 1867 Purchase of Alaska approaches, many people have expressed a desire to reexamine the meaning of that pivotal event. As you can see in the schedule, there will be presentations on the meeting between Secretary of State William H. Seward and the Russian diplomat Eduard de Stoeckl that resulted in the transfer of Alaska to the United States, and the history of Emanuel Leutze's painting that portrays the fateful event. A roundtable discussion will examine Seward's legacy and difficult questions related to the transfer of land and people a century and a half ago.

It all promises an exciting AHS/MA conference, and I encourage you to join us to consider history from many angles, to enjoy our beautiful capital city, and to see our new state library, archives and museum building. To register and for additional information on conference hotels and special events go to www.maahs2016.org.

Schedule

"Time flies over us, but leaves its shadow behind." —Nathaniel Hawthorne



Keynote: David Igler, From San Francisco to Unalaska: Travels and Routes to Pacific History

10:30-12:00

Session A: Alaska's Fisheries

Bob King, Iron Men of Bristol Bay: Sailboat Fishermen, 1909-1939 Tim Troll, Restoring a Bristol Bay Double-Ender Sailboat for Bristol Bay James Mackovjak, Alaska's Shore-Station Salt Codfish Fishery

Session B: Missions and Transformation

Rebecca Poulson, The Cottages: A Model Christian Native Community, 1888-1945 Herbert Alexander, 'Between Fair and Foul Weather': Mission and Nature in Russia's North Pacific 1794-1837

Fred Woods, Melting the Ice: Launching Mormon Missionary Work in Alaska, 1900-1940 Panel Discussion: Juneau Evergreen Cemetery GIS Mapping Database and Brochure Project Jane Lindsey, Jodi DeBruyne, Quinn Tracy

12:00-1:15 Local Historical Societies Luncheon

1:30-3:00

Session A: Southeast Alaska's Hidden Histories

Douglas Vandegraft, Historic Bars of Juneau and Douglas Averil Lerman, The Secret Record of Small Town Life: Juneau Police Blotter, 1946-1947 Karen Hofstad, Historic Salmon Can Labels and the Collector's Instinct

Session B: History and Identity in Alaska and Yukon

Virginia Lacy, Heritage, Discovery, and Preservation—Becoming Aware of Our Beginnings Ghert Abbott, Contested Sea, Conflicted Port: Ketchikan and the Hyper-Local Christopher Petrakos, 'The Early Days on the Yukon': Ethnography and Authority on the Klondike Borderlands

3:30-5:00

Session A: Power and Politics in the Pacific

Stephen Haycox, Troubled Waters: Navigating Episodes in Alaska's Pacific Dependence Anjuli Grantham, From Russian to American Rule: Fort Kodiak, 1868-1870 Preston Jones, Alaskans' Sense of Self and U.S. Occupation of the Philippines, 1898-1910

Panel Discussion: Fishistory: Documenting the NN Cannery at South Naknek

Bob King, Katie Ringsmuth

Panel Discussion: The 1932 Voyage of the Grampus

Jan Straley, Nancy Jane Ricketts, John Straley, Katrina Woolford Pearson

7:00-9:00

Films: Gold Town Nickelodeon

Storis: The Galloping Ghost of the Alaska Coast

Opening the Book—Recovering Culture Through Museum Artifacts: The Beginning

FRIDAY

8:30-10:00

Keynote: Trevor Jones, Active Collections: Rethinking our Collections

10:30-12:00

Session A: On Sea, Land, and Ice

Karl Gurcke, A Klondike Gold Rush Shipwreck in Nahku Bay, Alaska

Rogan Faith, 'We Had a Wonderful Time': The Wreck of the Good Ship Laurada

Angela Schmidt, Between Ice and Ocean: The Films of William O. Field

Session B: Cartography and Ways of Knowing

Marvin Falk, How Good Were Maritime Charts of the North Pacific in the Russian Era?: The Development of Rigorous Standards, 1790-1869

Yuko Kugo, Alaska Native Place Names: Vernacular Geographic Knowledge

John Cloud, The Great Convergence of the Coast Suvvey and the People of St. Michael/Tachik

Panel Discussion: William H. Seward and the Sesquicentennial of the 1867 Alaska Purchase: A Roundtable on History and Memory

Stephen Haycox, Terrence Cole, Ross Coen



Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

1:30-3:00

Session A: Commemoration and Interpretation

Wayne Jensen, The Sesquicentennial of Seward's Folly: The Deal Done in the Dark of Night Terrence Cole, Signing Seward's Folly: Emanuel Leutze's 1867 Portrait of the Alaska Purchase Janna Powell, Meaningful Commemoration of the Alaska Highway: Yukon's Main Street

Russ Vanderlugt, Charley River B-24: Army Efforts to Understand the 1943 Crash and Story of Survival

Panel Discussion: Fisheries History Speed Talks

Anjuli Grantham

Panel Discussion: Healing and History: Discussions of Douglas History, Cultural Trauma, and Social Justice Norma Shorty, Daniel Monteith

3:30-4:30 Alaska Historical Society annual business meeting

SATURDAY

9:30-11:00

Session A: Endeavor, Conflict, and Nature

Karen Brewster and Barbara Cellarius, Good Horses, Good Trails: Ahtna Big Game Guiding in the Wrangell Mountains Rita Miraglia, The Nelson and Mary McCrary Fox Farm Along the Edgerton Highway, 1925-1930

Jason Peters and Richard Ravalli, The Sea Otter's Atomic Diaspora: United States Nuclear Tests at Amchitka Island and Sea Otter Translocations in the Eastern Pacific

McKibben Jackinsky, Too Close to Home?: Living with 'Drill, Baby' on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula

Panel Discussion: Crossroads of History, Science, and Management in Southeast Alaska Fisheries Daniel Monteith, Maggie Chan, Elizabeth Figus

A Button and an Anniversary

"GOD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES." These words are inscribed on a button in a circle around an image of farmer with a plow. Behind him, a house stands on a hilltop, and a sun is rising. On the back of the button are the words: "US INDIAN DEPARTMENT."

This spring, the Sitka Fine Arts Camp put in sidewalks and improved drainage around one of the 1911 buildings on the National Historic Landmark Sheldon Jackson College campus. The ground had been disturbed by previous landscaping and by a spider's web of utilities, but scattered throughout were bits and pieces dating from the mid-1880s, when the missionaries first built on this site, and 1910, when they put up several of the existing campus buildings.

Pieces of leather shoes and worn-out soles, perhaps from the school shoe shop, were found as were broken pieces of iron heating stoves, and a number of brick shards, none more than half intact; larger bricks must have been reused. Pieces of plain white and other inexpensive ceramics attest to the economy of the missionaries. Two marbles and a broken ice skate remind us that children lived here.

Then, when the dirt was being raked out for planting grass, the brass button turned up, to remind us of why the mission was here in the first place. Having defeated Native tribes, denied the people economic opportunity and citizenship, and seized their lands, the United States government urged Natives to somehow "help themselves."

Work on the Sheldon Jackson campus, including archaeological research, has been guided by, and sometimes funded by, programs originating in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The act was important in the planning of the sidewalks and drainage project. In large part, we owe the preservation of this place—that helps us better understand Alaska's history--to the provisions of this act, which will have its 50th anniversary on October 13th of this year. It is a good time to think about how the preservation of structures and sites contributes to our understanding of the past.

The lost and discarded things, the buildings and the site, let us touch the past. We can sense the people who constructed the buildings, who looked out the windows, and who played on the quadrangle. We touch the very real pressure to abandon culture and language and autonomy, prerequisites for participation in society. These artifacts remind us that these were living, breathing people losing that button with its ironic slogan and that well-worn marble, cutting the leather to leave the scrap, removing the shoe with the sole worn all the way through.

—Rebecca Poulson

Notes from around the state

The **Alutiiq Museum**'s Qayat exhibit, which opened in May, features a rare historic Alutiiq kayak among many other artifacts of a rich maritime tradition. Along with the exhibit, the museum hosted Maritime Story Share, a time to tell dramatic or humorous sea stories, as well as a Craft Saturday where participants learned to make hunting visors.

The Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center has begun the extensive renovation of its Alaska Gallery, which will be closed until August 2017. The gallery, one of the most popular areas of the museum, was added in 1986. The redesigned gallery will invite visitors to explore the landscape, people, lifeways, and stories of Alaska. While the gallery is undergoing renovation, some of the first-floor galleries will be turned into visible storage and a conservation lab, giving visitors an opportunity to see what goes on behind the scenes at the museum.

Over the summer, the museum had week-long camps for children aged 7-12 on a variety of topics: design and construction, natural history,

comics, games, and robots, robots, robots (i.e., three different robot camps)! Each of the camps encouraged the children to be creative and use their imaginations as they learned about science and technology.

An exhibition highlighting the contemporary Arctic through the perspective of artists, *View from Up Here: The Arctic at the Center of the World* will be on view until October 2. An upcoming exhibition, *At the Edges: Arctic Conversations*, also focuses on the Arctic. It includes a series of public programs and major public art installations. Artists, indigenous leaders, scientists and traditional and nontraditional researchers will address common misperceptions inside and outside the North and foster conversations and critical commentary about Arctic and indigenous issues. *At the Edges* will be in Anchorage from September 30, 2016 through February 12, 2017.

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The **Eagle Historical Society and Museums** reported that this spring the community celebrated the entry into Eagle of a group of

Notes from around the state

men and dogs who retraced the 1905 journey Roald Amundsen took from Herschel Island to Eagle to announce to the world that he had successfully navigated the Northwest Passage. Local musher Wayne Hall and his dogs were participants in the adventure, and despite the frostbite he suffered during the expedition, Wayne had many great stories for the crowd.

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Ketchikan Museums had a terrific Native Arts Studies program this spring, and the next season of the program will start in October. On September 15th there will be an open house at the **Totem Heritage** Center to celebrate its 40th anniversary with highlights of 40 years of the Native Arts Studies Program. Renovation of the first floor of Ketchikan's historic Centennial Building, which houses the Tongass Historical Museum, has started, and the museum is closed to the public until the improvements are completed.

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Wasilla's **Dorothy G. Page Museum** continues its Thursday Night at the Museum events. One of this month's speakers was Talis Colberg, long-time resident and currently the head of the University of Alaska's Mat-Su College. His talk was titled The Alaska 67 Centennial Exposition and Expo 98 at the Alaska State Fair: The Creation of Self-Image. Earlier this summer, Alaska State Parks' ranger Mario Pagni talked about Independence Mine, and Lt. Col. George Nasif and Ivan Hodes talked about U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects around Alaska.

The Palmer Historical Society reported that the Colony House Museum was painted, cleaned, and otherwise spiffed up for the busy summer season. The museum has many school tours in April and May, and during the summer it is a favorite stop for tour companies. They staff the Wineck Barn at the Alaska State Fair—on the Red Trail at the Red Parking lot entrance (overalls are not necessary)—to share Palmer's history with fairgoers. From September to May on the third Wednesday of every month but December the society hosts History Night at the Moose Lodge with informative and entertaining speakers.

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The Port Alexander Historical Society's summer newsletter had an article about the Tyee Whaling Station on Admiralty Island at the grimly named "Murder Cove"--so named because of the retaliation murders by Kake Tlingits after a U.S. Sentry killed two Kake men in Sitka in 1867 during the hoisting of the American flag. The whaling station, established in 1907, was busy for a few years, but by 1911 the whales had become scarce and the company put the property up for sale. The station became a fish processing plant and cold storage facility, going through several owners. By 1962 its buildings were ruins. The newsletter also had a Tlingit legend excerpted from Dr. Cyrus E. Peck's book *The Tides People* (1986), telling about a paddler named Kakaa navigating through the forceful tides of the Chatham Strait.

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The **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** celebrated National Trails Day in June with local historians Lee Poleske and Sue McClure leading a walk of the first mile of the Iditarod National Historic Trail. Along the way, they talked about historic events of Seward, from the launch of the Russian vessel *Phoenix* in 1794 to the devastating Good Friday earthquake of 1964.

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The summer exhibit at the **Sheldon Museum** in Haines is *The Haines* 50: Objects of Our History. The objects span from the Chilkat

Valley's geological origins to the present. Highlights include a 1930s basketball uniform from the Quartermaster's Corps, 2,000 year-old weir stakes, and a porthole from the *Clara Nevada* that shipwrecked near Haines in 1898. The exhibit will be open until October 31.

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Among Friends, the newsletter of the Friends of the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museum, told of an exclusive preview tour of the Father Kashevaroff building on June 4th. Guests were escorted into the concrete-and-steel, climate-controlled vault where 95 percent of the museum's collection is housed. The vault is so secure that only a few of the employees have access. Also this summer, the Alaska State Library is exhibiting the original 1623 First Folio from the Folger Shakespeare Library, the first compilation made of Shakespeare's plays and the first printing of many of them. The exhibit is entitled First Folio! The Book that Gave us Shakespeare.

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The **Circle District Historical Society** held its annual meeting August 6th followed by a pig roast and auction. Several hundred pioneers and tourists were in attendance. The society is seeking items for its holiday bazaar to be held November 26th. To donate, mail items to C.D.H.S., Attn: Becky, P.O. Box 30189, Central, AK 99730 or call 907.520.1893. The same address can be used to become a member for the next year, \$15 for a family, \$25 for a sustaining membership. Much of the newsletter has an illustrated article about 12 Mile House, one of the roadhouses on the trail from Circle City to the Birch Creek mines.

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The Alaska Yukon Pioneers newsletter keeps members updated. A number of the members will be attending the 84th International Sourdough Reunion in Fairbanks, September 18-22. Tours have been planned to places around town and Chena Hot Springs. For more information about the reunion, contact Phyllis Church, P.O. Box 71701, Fairbanks, AK 99707. Notes for the newsletter should be sent to Ethel La Rose, ethellarose@gmail.com.

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The Tanana-Yukon Historical Society will again celebrate Wickersham's August 24th birthday with cake and punch at Wickersham House in Pioneer Park. Last year the group celebrated the centennial of Wickersham's historic meeting with the Tanana Chiefs at the historic Thomas Library where the meeting occurred. The Wickersham House will be open September 14 during the Pioneers of Alaska convention. The TYHS is supporting the Delta Historical Society and State of Alaska's efforts to stabilize the eroding Tanana River riverbank and preservation of the WAMCAT's cabin at Big Delta State Historical Park. All of the cabin contents have been moved to Rika's Roadhouse and park staff is arranging to have the building moved back from the river. The heavy rains this summer have swollen many the Interior rivers including the raging Tanana.

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The Fairbanks Community Museum has been open daily this summer. Established in 1991, the museum was in the old city hall before moving in 2014 to the Historic Empress Theater in downtown Fairbanks. Exhibits include 'Winter in Fairbanks', 'The Great Flood' (of 1967), and Dog Mushing. Each month, the works of a local artist are featured in the museum. This August art show, 'Flowers, Feathers, and Fur', shows the work of well known Healy artist Amy Reislan-Speer.

Notes from around the state

The **Pioneer Museum** at Pioneer Park in Fairbanks is open through Labor Day, and unofficially after as volunteer staffing permits. Last year the museum had 21,000 visitors and the year-to-date count for this season is 16,890. The museum features frontier life and has some spectacular mining dioramas. The Big Stampede Show, with murals of the gold rush painted by Rusty Heurlin with narration by Reuben Gaines, is done by spinning the audience on a turntable. The museum has historical photographs and documents from all over Alaska. They host several presentations each year that showcase photos from these collections. The museum is opening its doors for those attending the 100th Grand Igloo Convention of the Pioneers of Alaska to be held in Fairbanks September 14–17. For more information, contact Joan @ skilbred@gci.net

The Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation has its museum at 825 1st Avenue in Fairbanks open through September 20th. The museum has biographic sketches and paraphernalia associated with more than 100 pioneers that have been inducted into the organization since 1997. They hold lectures Wednesday evening. In April, the foundation inducted Cordova-born Patrick H. O'Neill, a well-known mining engineer and organizer of 'Discovery Days' in 1952, held to commemorate the discovery of gold in Fairbanks by Felix Pedro. The 100 year-old O'Neill was skyped in for the ceremony from his Connecticut home. Stefano Muzzarelli, Mayor of Fanano, Italy, recently dropped by the museum. Fanano is where Pedro was born. To know more, contact Tom at bundtzen@mosquitonet.com

The **Kodiak Historical Society's** lecture and film series at the Baranof Museum this past year included *Storytime: Alaska's Three*

Bears; History Speaks: Tool Sharpening; Way Back in Kodiak: Fort Kodiak; and Fishistory: The Science and History of Kodiak's Fishing Industry. In late May, the exhibit West Side Stories opened. It is a multi-media interdisciplinary project that uses oral histories, photography, community-created art, and public radio broadcasts to explore people, places and events on the west side of Kodiak Island.

Using an energetic team of 14 volunteers, the **Hope and Sunrise Historical Society** cleaned up their museum in April and conducted museum improvement projects in May and June. Signs and display cases were added and an tool collection from pioneer builder Charles A. Davis was put on display. Davis built Hope's Methodist Church, social hall, and a log home more than 75 years ago.

Historical organizations in Alaska's capital city were busy this summer. Juneau, of course, will host the annual convention of the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska in September. The **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** is publishing a series "Some Names Around Juneau" in its *Gastineau Heritage News* to update the 1957 document of the same name by R.N. DeArmond.

Across the channel on Douglas Island, the **Treadwell Historic Preservation and Restoration Society** received a \$5,000 grant from the Avista Foundation of Washington to begin rehabilitation of the gold mine's office building. It's a start of an estimated \$450,000 project to preserve the historic property.

News & Information

Candy Waugaman held her 8th Annual Charity Garage Sale July 29-31 at her home in Fairbanks. The event raised \$26,738 divided between the 4-H Club, the Pioneer Museum, the Animal Shelter Fund, and the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation. Buyers write their checks to the charity of their choice. Historic travel brochures, Native American art, magazines, photographs, Alaska-themed movie posters, and hundreds of books were for sale. This year two burnt moose hides depicting early 20th century scenes (the lost art of pyrography) also were in the auction—rare items indeed.

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Three museums bid farewell to individuals this summer. The Kodiak Historical Society said goodbye to Anjuli Grantham, Curator of Collections and Exhibits at the Baranof Museum since 2011. Grantham plans to stay in Kodiak and pursue freelance opportunities. Lisa Bykonen, museum protection and visitor services supervisor at the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka, retired after 23 years at the museum. Lacey Simpson, Director of the Ketchikan Museums, left after seven years. She led the museum in planning its expansion of the Tongass Historical Museum that is underway.

The Mining History Association is holding its 2017 conference in Fairbanks next year, June 15-19. The Program Committee is soliciting for proposals on any topic or aspect of mining history, with particular encouragement of presentations that address mining history in Alaska and the Far North. The proposal deadline is November 30, 2016, and should be sent to Eric Nystrom, Program Chair, eric. nystrom@asu.edu.

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The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation announced its Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties for 2016. This is the 25th year the organization has published the list. AAHP annually awards matching grants to several of the properties listed to help preserve them. This year's list includes Kake Cannery, 3 German Bachelors' Cabin (Talkeetna), the Iditarod National Historic Trail (Seward to Nome), the *Chacon* (Chugiak), Ascension of Our Lord Chapel (Karluk), Kate Kennedy House (McCarthy), 4th Avenue Theatre (Anchorage), St. Michael's Cathedral (Sitka), Buckner Building (Whittier), and Pilgrim Hot Springs (Seward Peninsula). More information about the properties is at www.aahp-online.net.

News & Information

Congratulations and thank you to **Linda Thibodeau** on her retirement. Linda served as Director of the Alaska Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums and Alaska State Librarian from 2008-2016. As director, Linda oversaw the Online With Libraries (OWL) program, Alaska Native Libraries, Archives and Museums (ANLAMs) program, and construction of the new Father Andrew P. Kashevaroff Library, Archives and Mueums building.

The Alaska Office of History and Archaeology is updating the state's historic preservation plan and seeks input from people interested in Alaska's history. To weigh in about what historic places around the state are significant and strategies and goals for the program, there is a survey underway at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AKHPP. Your opinion matters!

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The Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative continues to garner great press while educating Alaskans and others about the history of Alaska's seafood industry. Bob King and Katie Ringsmuth, recipients of an initiative grant, spent a week in July conducting a historic site assessment of the NN Cannery at South Naknek. While there, they presented on Bristol Bay fisheries history at Fishtival and were on local radio station KDLG. Committee member Ross Coen had a piece in *Alaska Dispatch News* about the evolution of a NEFCO salmon can label. *Alaska* magazine published an article about the importance of historic canneries as well.

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This month, Anjuli Grantham is joining the Clausen Museum and others to present on cannery history at the Petersburg Library. The Alaska Historical Society/Museums Alaska conference schedule has a selection of presentations on Alaska's fisheries. On Friday there will be Fisheries History Speed Talks for a quick overview of projects around the state. And you don't want to miss the trash cans decorated with salmon labels in Petersburg, Kodiak, and soon Prince of Wales Island communities!

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The Alaska Historical Commission has \$100,000 available for matching grants to ommemorate the **150**th anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession in 2017. The grants for up to \$15,000 are for research and publication, restoration of significant historic properties, community projects and programs, and heritage tourism projects that will contribute to understanding the history and significance of the transfer of Alaska from Russia to the United States. The deadline to apply is October 17, 2016. The application is at http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/oha.

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We, the Alaska Historical Society, are maintaining a calendar of events for the anniversary on our website.. To get an event listed, send a description to members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org. Make sure to include contact information. The website will also have short articles, images, and maps about the event and the times.

Alaska Historical Society

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Eduard de Stoeckl, circa 1855/1865. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. Brady-Handy Photograph Collection.

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