

# Alaska History News

Volume 38, No. 3 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society Autumn 2010

## Alaska Historical Society 2010 Annual Meeting in Fairbanks, September 15-18

### *Energizing Alaska*



Trans-Alaska pipeline leading to Pump Station number 3, North Slope, Alaska. circa 1975.  
Photograph by Steve McCutcheon. AMRC-b90-14-3-226.

Among the many landmarks visited by tourists to Fairbanks every year is the Gold Dredge No. 8 on the outskirts of town. Once owned by the Fairbanks Exploration Company and operated from 1928 to 1959, the dredge features 68 huge buckets, each weighing over 1,500 pounds, which chewed through countless tons of gravel contributing to the company's production of 7.5 million ounces of gold. The behemoth now sits in a gravel pit the machine dug itself. Though its gears are rusty and the buckets have not moved an inch for many decades, the dredge still inspires awe and makes one wonder about the incalculable amount of energy it once consumed in its quest for gold.

Across the Steese Highway from Gold Dredge No. 8 is the Trans-Alaska Pipeline visitor center, another monument of sorts to humankind's quest for precious natural resources. The 800-mile pipeline is now its thirty-third year of operation and has delivered over fifteen billion barrels of crude oil from the North Slope to Valdez. Much like the gold dredge, the sheer size of the pipeline bears witness to the effort, both human and mechanical, behind its construction and operation.

The juxtaposition between the gold dredge on one side of the highway and the pipeline on the other seems particularly relevant to the theme of this year's Alaska Historical Society conference: *Energizing Alaska*. Both machines have not only shaped the landscape itself, but have had an impact on the people and institutions of Alaska as a whole. Energy, whether scarce

or abundant, and in its many forms and uses, has played a significant role in shaping our history.

Some three dozen presenters will expand on this theme in sessions on such diverse topics as mining, war, music, hospitals, Native land claims, fishing, and pioneer women. The meeting's keynote speaker, arctic historian and archaeologist John Bockstoe, has authored many books on the far north, including *Whales, Ice and Men: The History of Whaling in the Western Arctic* and his latest, *Furs and Frontiers in the Far North: The Contest Among Native and Foreign Nations for the Bering Strait Fur Trade*. This prize-winning book is a comprehensive history of the native and maritime fur trade in Alaska during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In addition to the presentations related to the conference theme, the meeting features workshops on genealogy and oral history, and tours of the university, permafrost tunnel, and downtown Fairbanks. A full schedule of sessions and events is available at: [www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org).

Ross Coen, 2010 AHS Program Chair

The conference planning committee extends a warm welcome to everyone interested in Alaska history and we are looking forward to seeing you in Fairbanks!

In the late 1960s, Humble Oil decided to rebrand their gas stations nationwide. "Enco" was considered but rejected when it was found the word was similar in pronunciation to the Japanese term for "stalled car." In 1972, "Exxon" was unveiled as the new, unified brand name for all former Humble Oil (Esso) outlets, and so it remains to this day.



Exxon sign in Framingham, MA. Photograph by Brian Katt.

## Energizing Alaska: September 15-18, 2010 Alaska Historical Society Sessions Wedgewood Hotel and Conference Center, Fairbanks

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

### *You are your organization's own best advocate, or If you don't advocate for your organization who will?*

- Mike Walsh

Do you ever talk about the cool stuff that is going on within your organization? If so, you are already advocating for it. In this session you'll learn how to make the most of your important advocacy work and move it to the next level with a solid, comprehensive Strategic Advocacy Plan.

### *Up Close with John Bockstoe*

- John Bockstoe

Following the AHS keynote address by John Bockstoe, this extended Q&A session provides conference attendees an opportunity to continue the conversation.

### *Historical Perspectives on Oil*

- Shana Loshbaugh, *"How Oil Transformed the Kenai"*

The discovery of oil at Swanson River in the summer of 1957 was one of those rare events instantly and widely recognized as a turning point in Alaska history. This presentation describes the transformation of the Kenai Peninsula communities of Sterling, Soldotna, Kenai, and Nikiski between the 1957 discovery and 1974, when Cook Inlet oil production slackened and North Slope oil reserves began dominating the state economy.

- Rogan C. Faith, *"Hope Gushes Eternal: The Story of Kanatak, a 1920s Oil Boom Town with Everything...Except Oil"*

Oil seepages in the storm-tossed region of Kanatak had long been used by the native Alutiiq people. Early Russian explorers noted them as did oil companies and geologists sent by the U.S. government to assess the area's mineral potential. By the 1920s there was enough confidence that "boomers" touted Kanatak as a sure fire investment. Threatened by storms and nearby volcanoes, the town survived on dreams but it couldn't survive the lack of oil.

- Ross Coen, *"Before Prudhoe: Exxon's Early (Disappointing) Years in Alaska"*

The history of Humble Oil (now Exxon) in Alaska prior to the Prudhoe Bay discovery of 1968 is marked by frustration and failure. The company's first exploration well on the Alaska Peninsula in 1957 cost \$7 million and was the most expensive dry hole in company history. This paper describes how this and other failures nearly caused the company to abandon Alaska altogether, a move that surely would have altered Alaska history in innumerable ways had it come to pass.

### *Women Who Energized Alaskans to Make Alaska a Better Place for Women, Children and Families to Live*



- Janine Dorsey, *"Episcopal Women Missionaries of Fairbanks and the Tanana Valley, 1904-1915"*

Between 1894 and 1954, two hundred women came to Interior Alaska as missionaries of the Episcopal Church. They poured their energy into providing medical care, schooling, and religious services—primarily in Alaska Native villages. Episcopal women missionaries played a critical role in Fairbanks and the Tanana Valley during the particularly dynamic period from 1904 to 1915.

- Phyllis Demuth Movius, *"Women's Role in Creating A Place of Belonging, 1903-1923"*

Women energized life in Interior Alaska from its inception. Ellen Gibson built a luxury hotel, Aline Bradley arrived as a physician and later became a lawyer, and Jessie Bloom started a private kindergarten and brought Girl Scouts to the Interior. These women and others were instrumental in creating an environment that attracted and held families, which allowed Fairbanks to grow and develop into a major center for commerce and social services.

- Beverly Beeton, *"Votes for Women and Prohibition of Liquor in Early Alaska"*

In early twentieth century Alaska, women petitioned the legislature to grant voting rights to women and persuaded voters to prohibit liquor in the territory. Cornelia Templeton Jewett Hatcher and Lena Morrow Lewis were two who organized and educated women to the political process.

### *Resources of Southeast Alaska*

- Daniel Monteith, *"Energy Efficient Tlingit Fishing Practices"*

Historical Tlingit fishing practices optimized efficiency and energy, but allowed for large scale harvest of salmon. The technology developed allowed for large numbers of anadromous fish to be caught. Tlingit fish weirs and stone traps required a great deal of labor and knowledge about streams and tides. Notions of property ownership and local ecological knowledge enabled the Tlingit people to harvest salmon without depleting the resources.

- Yoko Kugo, *"Fuel for Traditional Ecological Knowledge: The Use of Spruce and Cedar Trees in Southeast Alaska"*

Spruce root and cedar bark weaving has been practiced in the Tlingit and Haida culture for six thousand years. Spruce trees, roots, and cedar bark were harvested for cooking, heating, clothing, housing, and used to make baskets, food containers, and fishing tools. This paper discusses how these materials were used and how changes in utensils, appliances, and energy needs changed after Euro-American contact, and provides baseline information about resilient practices and vulnerable resources in a rapidly changing world.



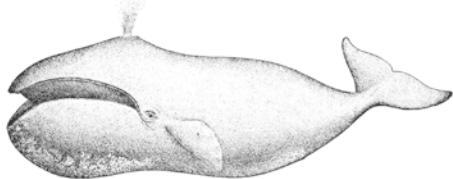
• Anjuli Grantham, “*The Most Unfair Contrivances’: Fish Traps and Alaskan Statehood*”

From the beginning of industrialized salmon fishing in Alaska, the fishery was a highly contested resource replete with race, class, and social divisions. The fish trap represented nearly all of the ills of Alaska’s territorial status: absentee ownership, federal government neglect, and diminishing salmon runs. The battle against the fish trap became a rallying call for Alaskan statehood and the creation of an ethically managed fishery.

Russia, Russian America, and 19th century Alaska

• Odin Miller, “*Are the Wanderers Lost?: Sedentarization and Cultural Change among Reindeer Herding Peoples of the Sakha Republic*”

Sedentarization has caused unprecedented changes in the lives of indigenous Even, Evenki, and Dolgan reindeer herders in the Sakha Republic during the past century. In the 1930s, the Soviet state collectivized reindeer herds, formed *kolkhozy* (collective farms) and *sovkhozy* (state farms), established permanent villages, and pressured indigenous nomads to settle in them. Traditional subsistence hunting, fishing, and trapping have resurged in the post-Soviet era, but it is unclear whether nomadic reindeer herding is compatible with the cultures of modern Eveny, Evenki, and Dolgany.



• David Wiswar, “*Commercial Bowhead Whaling in the Eastern Beaufort Sea, 1889-1911*”

The discovery and exploitation of the bowhead whale *Balaena mysticetus* in their summer feeding areas in the eastern Beaufort Sea marked the beginning of the end for unrestricted commercial whaling. The time interval between discovery and cessation of exploitation lasted from 1889 to the early 1900s. The decline of commercial whaling can be attributed to petroleum products becoming more profitable than whale oil, steel being preferred over whalebone, and the overexploitation of bowhead whales.

• Marvin Falk, “*Changing Landscapes: Volcanoes and Glaciers in Russian America*”

Most recorded observations of natural phenomena in Russian America were made by expeditions in one location only for a short time. The reports and maps made between 1741 and 1867 significantly extend our time horizon and show significant changes. The Aleutian Islands, Cook Inlet, and Southeast Alaska are documented best, but scattered observations elsewhere exist. This paper is based on published coastal profiles, direct scientific observation, and anecdotal accounts.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Science, Study, and Intellectual Affairs

• John Fournelle, “*The Aleutian Volcano Project, 1946-1954: An oral history and archival study*”

This paper covers the oral histories of men with the U.S. Geological Survey Volcano Investigations unit who worked the Aleutians in 1946-54. Most of the geological studies were published as USGS Bulletin 1028, but the “story behind the story” remained to be told. Interviewees include most of the USGS geologists and field assistants, as well as the founder, G.D. Robinson. The impetus for the project was the June 1945 eruption of Okmok Caldera, Umnak Island.

• James King, “*Energizing Alaska with a University to Match Our Mountains*”

Alaska has the grandest setting for the premier Pacific Rim University, midway between population centers of Asia and North America and on the edge of the Arctic ecosystem. Alaska’s 16 campuses could attract students and endowed faculty from across the world for academic research on the unique ecology, economy, and anthropology. So let us build up the University Foundation by appropriation, bonding, innovative taxes, or constitutional amendment.

• G. W. (Greg) Kimura, “*Native Ways of Knowing: A Philosopher’s Perspective*”

A casual survey of Alaska-themed publications, broadcast programming, and lectures indicates a growing interest in traditional Alaska Native lifestyles and worldview. This paper argues that Alaska Native thought qua thought needs to be reclaimed by Alaska Natives, articulated in Native idioms, and moved beyond current models to a substantive epistemology. It should be conceived along the same lines as German Idealism, Anglo-American epistemology, or French deconstruction. Better yet, it should understand itself as a distinctive American philosophy.

• Jack de Yonge, “*Student Editors Ire the U. of A. President, Rile the FBI, and Spark Journalism Teaching the in the Far North*”

One star-lit day nearly 60 years ago, Alfred Baumeister and Jack de Yonge, editors of the University of Alaska student newspaper, republished an article from Czechoslovakia on Communist summer camps. The piece amused neither UA President Ernest Patty nor the two FBI agents sitting in his office when Baumeister and de Yonge were summoned. The meeting earned the students FBI dossiers, Patty’s choler and guaranteed the college’s new PR chief, Chuck Keim, years of work teaching a new curriculum—journalism—at the University of Alaska.

Inside – Outside – Morningside

• Ellen Ganley (CEO, Information Insights) • Karen Perdue (VP Health Programs, UA) • Robin Renfroe (VP Human Resources, Doyon) • Niesje Steinkruger (Superior Court Judge (retired), 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District) • Meg Greene (Superior Court Judge (retired), 4<sup>th</sup> Judicial District)

From 1904 to the 1960s, Alaskans who needed mental health services were sent to Morningside Hospital in Portland, Oregon. Alaskans convicted of being insane—as many as 3,000 to 3,500 adults and children—were taken from their families and often never heard from again. The panel will discuss territorial court records, federal administrative records, genealogical resources, and the project blog (<http://morningsidehospital.com>) that are being used to piece together the story of Morningside Hospital and the Alaskans sent there.

Howard Rock

• Willy Templeton and other speakers TBD, “*Howard Rock: Energizing Alaska Natives*”

Howard Rock was a “sparkplug” who “energized” the Alaska Native community with the publication of the statewide newspaper *Tundra Times*. The 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of Howard Rock will occur in 2011, as well as the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The panel will recognize and celebrate the historical significance of these anniversaries.

Murder, Vice, and the Law

• Mary Ehrlander, “*Through Wickersham’s Eyes: Alcohol on Alaska’s Frontier*”

During much of the early 20th century when Judge James Wickersham lived in Alaska, alcohol manufacture and consumption were prohibited. In 1915, as Alaska’s delegate to Congress, Wickersham introduced Alaska’s Bone Dry Law, which banned manufacture and sale of alcohol in the territory. This paper addresses the alcohol culture(s) on the Alaska frontier from 1900-1920, largely through Wickersham’s eyes, relying upon his diaries and memoirs, along with other archival materials such as federal alcohol and firearms agents’ reports.



• Terrence Cole, “*The New ‘Old Yukon’: Editing, Annotating and Abridging James Wickersham*”

In 2009, the University of Alaska Press, with support from the Tanana Yukon Historical Society, published a new edition of James Wickersham’s 1938 memoir *Old Yukon*. This paper recounts Judge Wickersham’s twenty-year struggle from 1917 to 1937 to write and publish the book, and explores the ways in which this new edition, supplemented with extracts from his private diary, reveals a fresh look at the life of the most influential Alaska leader in the first half of the 20th century.

- **Brittany Retherford, “Corked: Investigating Alaska’s Only Unsolved Mass Murder”**

In early September 1982, eight salmon fishermen were brutally murdered onboard their million-dollar purse seiner in the middle of the night in the Craig harbor. The case remains unsolved. This paper uses court documents and interviews to better understand the tragic events that led to the murder. It also examines the peculiar dynamics of the fishing industry that year, long-standing insider-outsider tensions, and the way the court system handled what would be the longest, most expensive trial in the state’s history.

#### War in Alaska

- **Mary Breu, “Last Letters from Attu”**

My great-aunt, Etta Schureman, arrived in Alaska in 1922, married Foster Jones the following year, and taught school in rural villages for the next two decades. While living in Attu in 1942, Etta witnessed the Japanese invasion and was taken to Japan as a prisoner of war. Using excerpts from her letters, unpublished manuscript, and photos, I will tell the story of this remarkable woman whom I knew for my first 20 years and her last 20.

- **Zachary R. Jones, “Torch, Cannon, and the Hangman’s Noose: American Military Relations with Alaska’s Tlingit Indians during 1869”**

The year 1869 was a year of violence against the Tlingit Indians, who were persecuted, kidnapped, ransomed, executed, and killed by U.S. military officials. These efforts of force were undertaken by the military to break Tlingit independence. Many surveys of Alaskan history omit the 1869 campaign against the Tlingit in their zeal to discuss the ‘greatness’ of Alaska becoming an American possession. This paper makes use of Tlingit sources to reexamine the causes and events of 1869.

- **Leighton Quarles, “The Reel War That No One Saw: John Huston’s World War II”**

Film played a vital role in shaping public opinion in World War II. John Huston exemplifies the American film community’s commitment to the war effort and the difficulty of producing critical films. Despite intense pressure to the contrary, he strove to portray the war as dispassionately as possible. He paid for his efforts by having his greatest work censored. His films demonstrate that even within the Army’s propaganda division, relevant documentary could be produced, but was ruthlessly censored.

### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

#### Power in the Past

- **Jeremia Schrock, Jamie Hazlett, and Caleb Kuntz, “Ghosts in the Spruce: A Look at the Past, Present and Future of an Alaskan Mining Town”**

The gold rush city of Livengood spent its early years as a thriving center of commerce and mining with a population of 10,000 before it gradually declined into nothing more than a state service station. A present-day surge of renewed interest in the mineral content of the soils of Livengood could transform this desolate area to a world-class mining operation. This paper presents a story of how Livengood was, is, and may become.

- **John Branson, “Steam Power In Twentieth Century Bristol Bay, From Kvichak Bay to Lake Clark, The Charles Denison Sawmill 1934-1955”**

Adaptive reuse of the material culture from the Bristol Bay commercial salmon industry by upriver people has long been recognized as an important aspect of the long reach of the commercial fishing industry throughout the region. Gill-netters were taken upriver and used by local people on Iliamna, Lake Clark, and Lake Aleknagik as early as 1897. Another example is the small vertical steam engine and boiler brought to Lake Clark by Charles Denison in 1934-1935.

- **Jane Haigh, “No Gold Without Wood”**

Gold discovered in Fairbanks in 1903 was deep under frozen ground. Miners had developed technologies using steam to thaw the overburden and tunnel through frozen gravels. Wood was the only fuel available to fire the boilers at hundreds of mines, and deep shafts also required wood to shore up unstable ground. Easily available wood was used up quickly, thus it was not a lack of gold but a lack of wood which caused a drop in production by 1909 and resulted in a search for coal.

- **Bruce and Ted Merrell, “Up Ship Creek: How Anchorage Used a Broken Oil Tanker to Provide Electrical Power During the Post-War Boom Years”**

Anchorage’s population grew rapidly during and after World War II, causing huge strains on the town’s infrastructure. When the tanker *Sackett’s Harbor* broke in half during a storm south of the Aleutians in 1946, the stern portion with its steam turbine engine was towed to Anchorage, docked at Ship Creek, and used to generate electricity for eight years. The presentation covers the history of this and other Liberty Ships.

#### Iraq—When is the Present History?

**Douglas Beckstead, Brian Patrick O’Donoghue, Jessica Hoffman, Jennifer Canfield, Tom Hewitt**

U.S. Air Force historian Douglas Beckstead has produced monthly histories of the Air Force’s activities in Iraq and Afghanistan. UAF Journalism Professor Brian O’Donoghue led a group of journalism students on a month-long embed with the 1st Stryker Brigade in Diyala Province, Iraq. The panel discusses their roles in recording the history of Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM and how the present is actually history.

#### Love and Music

- **Heike Hoffer, “Cultural Validation and the Arioso Chamber Ensemble in 1980s Alaska”**

In the early 1980s arts organizations throughout Alaska received a financial boost from the oil boom. Formed in Anchorage in 1983, the Arioso Chamber Ensemble consisted of musicians from the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra who wanted to enhance their personal musical development as well as explore community performance opportunities. Personal interviews and newspaper reviews show how this ensemble cultivated an image devoted to local culture while still achieving validation through the artistic standards of the country.



- **Jacquelin Pels, Jeani and Rob Hamilton, and George Prince, “Rhyme and a Reason”**

Alaska’s history has been chronicled in generations of songs. This is an opportunity to get acquainted, perhaps reacquainted, with examples across the musical spectrum—nostalgic, patriotic, lulling or rousing, occupational (how to choose among all the lyrics devoted to fish? what rhymes with Exxon?). Music is energizing, stress-relieving, community-building, much more. Come to participate or just listen and remember. (Song and story sheets provided.)

- **Katie Ringsmuth, “Martin and Gussie: An Alaskan Love Story”**

Martin Radovan and Augusta Iverson came to Alaska after the Kennicott copper discovery in 1900. They married in 1911 and spent the rest of their lives prospecting for gold and copper in the surrounding river drainages. Historically, we can learn much from the Radovans because their story reflects broader themes that have shaped Alaska’s past, including the contributions made by early 20th century immigrants; the role of big business and Alaska’s Americanization; fostering a relationship with nature through work rather than play; and the dependency on science, industry, and corporatism even in the heart of wilderness.



## Searching for Gold, Copper, and Love in the Wrangell Mountains

This is my last essay as AHS president, and it is a tribute to the remarkable Alaska women I've encountered as a historian over the years. I've never considered myself a scholar of women's history, but I can't help being drawn to people whose so-called ordinary lives are so extraordinary, at least compared to my own experiences. In my current project for the National Park Service, I've been writing about Martin Radovan, who spent his adult life searching for gold and copper in the Wrangell Mountains. Martin's story is important to Alaska history, because it serves as a window into early twentieth century mining activities. But a major part of the story—one typically overlooked in stories about men's work like mining—is his wife, Augusta Louise Iverson. Like so many other scholars of pioneer women, I teased Augusta's story from the background of Martin's story. Her story provides a rare female perspective of work and life in Alaska's mining industry. And on a deeper, perhaps more human level, it shows how two people blazed entirely different trails and, instead of copper or gold, found each other in the heart of the Wrangell Mountains.

In 1900, Martin departed Croatia for the United States. He arrived at Elis Island where his surname, 'Radovanovich' was transliterated to 'Radovan.' He gained railroad experience in New Jersey and in California, but after the 1906 earthquake leveled most of San Francisco, Martin moved to Seattle. There he found out about a railway being built into the Interior of Alaska by some of the largest names in American business: J.P. Morgan and the Guggenheim brothers. Martin gained employment on the Copper River & Northwestern Railway in 1908. After completion of the railway in 1911, he took a job with a hydraulic mining company at Dan Creek, and began to prospect nearby creeks and benches on his own. In the 1920s, Martin began searching for copper in a glacier cirque located at Glacier Creek, a tributary of the Chitistone River. Somehow during this time Martin—a brown-eyed, black-haired Croatian, who spent more time in a tunnel than in town—caught the attention of a Norwegian bookkeeper who worked at the Kennecott Mill.

Martin and Augusta were married by the Justice of the Peace in McCarthy in 1914 and made their home at a cabin near Dan Creek. While Martin worked his claims, Augusta interacted with the larger community of miners and their wives. Augusta fished, baked bread, sluiced for gold, cut wood, called on neighbors and friends, traveled to town usually on foot, scheduled daily life around the mail, and had a naturalist eye for wildlife. Besides working at Kennecott, she supplemented their meager earnings by running the roadhouse in Blackburn for a short time, washing miners' laundry, and assisting as the local postmistress and notary. While making a small income, she continued to send money to her mother in Seattle. Moreover, Augusta helped Martin build a trail that scaled a 6,000 foot cliff wall to the famous Binocular Prospect, in which they staked some thirty claims.

Whereas Martin followed a more traditional route from Europe to the United States, making his way to Alaska by way of the Atlantic seaboard, Augusta's family made their way to the Pacific Northwest and eventually Alaska by a far less customary course. Augusta's father was John Alfred Iverson who married Thora Fredericka Nordholm sometime around 1880, the year the couple emigrated from Norway. In December 1881 Thora gave birth to Charles John Iverson in Hawaii. Norway, in the late nineteenth century, was in the midst of a depression. The Iversons were most likely extremely poor and to survive, agreed to join other farm laborers on a migration to the Hawaiian Islands to work on Maui's sugar plantations. According to a paper published by the Hawaii Historical Society, the Norwegian laborers were unhappy with their living and work conditions, and instigated one of the first labor strikes on the island. Because of the problems they confronted in Hawaii, most of the Norwegian migrants left after three years when their contracts expired.

The Iversons disappear from the historic record after 1884, the year Augusta was born. Fifteen years later, the historic record picks up the Iverson's trail in Seattle. The Polk Directory lists both Augusta L. Iverson and her brother Charles in 1899. Augusta was living at a boarding house on Lenora Street in downtown Seattle and Charles was living on 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and attending the Acme Business College. Located on the corner of Second and Pike, the college initially taught shorthand and typing, but expanded its curriculum to include bookkeeping, accounting, business

law, English and mathematics after it was bought out by the Acme Business College in 1894. In 1900, Augusta was enrolled as a student; and her mother Thora, described as a 'widow,' lived at the same address as Charles.

Augusta, being single, understood what tools she needed. At school, she learned bookkeeping, typing, and accounting. Ten years later, Augusta, now 26 years old, found employment as a bookkeeper at a local Seattle office.

There is no way of knowing why Augusta went to Alaska. Was the office she worked at associated with Kennecott? Perhaps in 1909 Augusta attended the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, celebrating Seattle's ties to the Far North and commemorating the ten year anniversary of the Klondike gold rush. Maybe Seattle's nearly five-month long celebration of Alaska triggered an interest in the North. Alaska and the development of its resources were central to the city's growing economy, but it also had become a focus of politics during the Roosevelt and Taft administrations. Seattle's own Richard A. Ballinger made headlines between 1906 and 1909, first as the Commissioner of the Central Land Office and then as the Secretary of the Interior, in his public battle with Louis Glavis and Chief Forester Gifford Pinchot over coal leases in Alaska. One of the so-called Ballinger-Pinchot Affair's outcomes was the Alaska Syndicate's purchase of the Alaska Steam Ship Company, which linked Seattle to the copper mines at Kennecott.

What we do know about Augusta is that she went to Kennecott on her own gumption. Although Augusta and Martin both lived for a time in Seattle, as far as we know, their paths never crossed. At the time, Seattle, the gateway to Alaska, directly linked the Northwest to Kennecott. Each journeyed north, driven by their individual needs and dreams.

Augusta's life was cut short in 1944 when she was only 60 years old. But Martin, for the next thirty years, continued to search for copper in the cirque which bears his name. Besides the Binocular Prospect, he discovered and staked Low-Contact and the Greenstone, and built a substantial camp on the banks of Glacier Creek near the mouth of Radovan Gulch. When he was not tunneling into the contact zone, Martin passed time by feeding the local wildlife, an activity that brought him comfort and companionship after "Gussie" died. In 1951, Martin was reunited with his long-lost brother Jack Radovich of Delano, California, but the reunion did not deter him from his mining aspirations. Martin remained at Glacier Creek, persistently working his claims and marketing the prospects to outside interests.

After a string of disappointing leases and business arrangements between the 1950s and the late 1960s, the Geneva Pacific Corporation purchased Martin's prospects in the early 1970s, giving Martin hope that the Binocular Prospect would finally be mined and his life work validated. In 1974, at age 91, Martin left Alaska to live permanently with brother Jack. The following spring Geneva-Pacific reached the Binocular Prospect using a helicopter. Before the company's findings were reported, Martin died.

Martin Radovan may not have achieved instant wealth, but without a doubt, he achieved lasting fame and respect for his Binocular feat, bulldog-like tenacity, and love for the local wildlife. The story of Martin and Augusta, their lives on Dan and Glacier creeks and his Binocular prospect continue to captivate the imagination through compelling personal profile stories written about them. In addition to the stories, every U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin or geological survey of Glacier Creek since the earliest published reference to Radovan's Camp in 1931 has retold the story of Radovan and the Binocular Prospect, and placed the site and trail, as well as his camp, on official maps. The cirque in which the Binocular Prospect was located began appearing on USGS topographical maps as 'Radovan Gulch' in the 1950s. In short, the prospect and the prospector became part of the local legend. Martin never found gold or copper, but in the end, Martin and Augusta found each other, deep in the heart of the Wrangell Mountains. And living with Augusta in the places he loved made Martin Radovan a very rich man.

Katherine Ringsmuth  
President



# Notes from around the state



Skull of Steller's Sea Cow (*Hydrodamalis gigas*). Steller wrote: "The animal never comes out on shore, but always lives in the water. Its skin is black and thick, like the bark of an old oak...its head in proportion to the body is small...it has no teeth, but only two flat white bones—one above, the other below." The meat of the cow was considered fine. The subcutaneous fat used like butter and as lamp fuel because when burned it put off no smoke or odor. By 1768, the docile animal had been hunted to extinction.



Tlingit halibut hook fashioned from wood, root binding, and rusty nail. The carving symbolizes the story of *Blackskin*, a man of the Raven phratry who showed his strength by tearing a sea lion in two.

Photograph by Brian Allen. UA Museum of the North, 0717-0054.



Circa 1830 illustration of the distinguishing features of black and brown bears—the black bear (above) being smaller, with a more concave profile, shorter claws, and no shoulder hump.

Ahoy, Matey! (Or the nautical phrase of your choice.) The **Valdez Museum & Historical Archive Association** went maritime in their latest newsletter. Photographs and short biographies of various ships and companies with ties to Valdez; the ships *Gypsy*, *Mariposa*, *S.S. Dora*, *Lizzy Colby*, and *Windsinger*; Alaska Steamship Company and a short history of the containers that transformed shipping are told. We assume Georg Steller, the first European naturalist in Alaska, joined the seagoing crew because he arrived in 1741 with Vitus Bering in the *St. Peter*.

They also took the time to tout their 9th Annual Roadhouse Dinner coming October 9th, when the above mentioned will be featured. (Don't forget to wear your best sailor clothes and the deck-swabbing contest will be held at midnight. Just joking. Editor.) To cruise around their website, it's [valdezmuseum.org](http://valdezmuseum.org).

The summer exhibit, *Sacred Space, Sacred Time* at the all-purpose center of the **Kenai Convention and Visitors Bureau** is a tribute to the Russian Orthodox Church icons, paintings, and objects in Alaska and Old Town Kenai.

As always, the fine classes in carving frontlets and general Northwest Coast traditional designs, including halibut hooks, weaving in cloth and cedar bark and basketry; all taught by masters in the fields, will occupy the lucky students at the **Totem Heritage Center** this fall, winter, and into the spring of 2011. The course on power tools reminds me of a famed Tlingit carver in Sitka who pointed out when he was carving a canoe that his ancestors used the best tools at hand. If they had had power tools, they would have used them. Want to attend? Write them at 629 Dock Street, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901 or aim your browser at [ketchikanmuseums.com](http://ketchikanmuseums.com).

Now what's going on in Homer? Lots. The **Pratt Museum** is hard at work on *Tamamta Katurlluta - A Gathering of Native Traditions* September 3-4. Sugpiaq/Alutiiq, Dena'ina, Unangan, Yupik and Inupiat will be celebrated. *Landing Ceremony of the Kayaks*, the *Day at the Pratt* with storytelling and a potluck, and the *Native Art Exhibition* sound particularly fun. Want to get in on it? Head for Homer or visit the very slick website - [prattmuseum.org](http://prattmuseum.org).

A complete index of all the issues of the **Gastineau Heritage News** is part of the current newsletter. They'll be on sale for \$2.00 plus postage, or copied if out-of-print for \$3.00 plus postage. An idea for your group? They are also planning on a series on the famous or infamous, depending on your viewpoint, of Judge and Territorial Delegate James Wickersham who lived in Juneau for many years. His house is part of the Alaska State Park system. Should be an interesting read; his devotees were Wickershamites; his detractors used names not suitable for a family newsletter.

When you have a very small population it can be difficult to keep a museum open in the summer. But the **Hope & Sunrise Historical Society** has found a way. This summer they have a different volunteer for the afternoon of every day of the week from Memorial Day to Labor Day. They also have at least three special programs at the Hope Social Hall. Give them a call at 907/782-3115 or write Post Office Box 88, Hope, Alaska 99605. \$10.00 will make you a member for a year.

Your editor thought she knew every historical museum in Alaska, but the *Alpine Historical Park* in Sutton written about in the **Alaska State Museum** newsletter was a first. I hoped it was new, but the Mat-Su Valley display of its mining history has been around for several years. It seems it has what is at the core of every museum; enthusiastic, dedicated volunteers. The bulletin also has a nice account from a paper conservator's six weeks in Fairbanks, Eagle and Barrow.

The **Dorothy G. Page Museum** in Wasilla has been busy with art in their summer season. June's exhibit was cartoon artwork, followed by the famous *Snoopy as the World War I Flying Ace* display to the middle of August. If you're around Wasilla, be sure to stop by and see what else is new. Can't wait? Visit [www.cityofwasilla.com/museum](http://www.cityofwasilla.com/museum). And don't forget the **Wasilla-Knik Historical Society** with its emphasis on the Iditarod Trail and Race. A feature of their centennial celebration of the trail was a discussion with the family that owned the original poolhall that is now the museum.

The **Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance** in Seward is working on a monument design and location in town as the Alaska Historical Commission provided funding. In 1912, their newsletter reports, the revolutionary international Travelers' Checks were available. Current news lists [www.pnts.org](http://www.pnts.org), the site of National Trails System maps. Very slick; check it out.

Why would any place want something stainless steel that stands 24-feet high and weighs 37,000 pounds? The answer is easy if you think of it as a sculpture by a famous artist now on the grounds of the **Anchorage Museum**. They are rightly quite proud of it. They are also hosting the *All Alaska Juried Exhibition* until October 3. There are also displays of contemporary crafts, contemporary Native art, as well as numerous classes for children and adults this summer. The Planetarium and summer movies are among the other things to do and see. With so much happening, if you can't be there, you'll just have to visit [www.anchoragemuseum.org](http://www.anchoragemuseum.org).

*Ebb and Flood* is the name of the **Port Alexander Historical Society** newsletter. The current issue contains the memories of a young woman in 1944 at Port Armstrong, very near P.A. as the residents call it. Due to the lack of civilian men, she spent the summer processing herring. Among the details is a nice account of the bear one of the men shot and the steady procession of men standing with a gun by the bear to have their picture taken as a Mighty Hunter.

The **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society** is having a busy summer. In July they hosted a reception which featured new architectural plans for its Japonski Island boathouse rehabilitation, a Davis boat, history displays, and a video of Sheldon Jackson School students boat building in the 1930s. They were just awarded a federal Historic Preservation Fund grant to rehabilitated the roof of the boathouse. The total project is estimated at \$147,000, so they will be raising more funds this fall for construction next spring.

## News & Information

PAT ROPPEL HAS BEEN WRITING her amusing and informative monthly newsletters about Wrangell's history for several years now, always threatening to cease as she has many other projects underway. So far, however, they continue and we rejoice. Her latest one concerns Chinese cannery crews and making salmon cans by hand. There is also a fine article on the time Wrangell wanted to join Canada. The \$20.00 a year subscription goes to the Friends of the Wrangell Museum. You can write them at Post Office Box 2019, Wrangell, 99929, or contact Pat at [patroppe@gmail.com](mailto:patroppe@gmail.com) if you have news or want to beg her to continue.

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THE 78TH SOURDOUGH ANNUAL REUNION is slated for October 17-20 at the Palace Station, Las Vegas, Nevada. They are looking for Alaskans and Canadians who mined, prospected, were in the military, built highways or the railroad; in short, Sourdoughs. Write Irene Peyton, Publicity, at 35405 First Avenue South, Federal Way, Washington 98003 or [irenepeyton@yahoo.com](mailto:irenepeyton@yahoo.com).

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ALONG THOSE LINES the newsletter would not be complete without a mention of the **Alaska Yukon Pioneers Newsletter**. For \$12.00 a year you receive the monthly compendium of news of other longtime northern dwellers, reminiscences and minutes of meetings of the AYP. It's a bargain. Checks to Joyce Penman, Recorder, 27833 83th Drive, NW, Stanwood, Washington, 98292, or write [olwomn@wavecable.com](mailto:olwomn@wavecable.com).

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AND WHAT WOULD WE AS ALASKANS interested in the preservation of our heritage do without the *Heritage* news from the Office of History and Archaeology? A recent issue listed the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation's ten most endangered historical sites for 2010.

Chief Kashakes House, Saxman  
Alaska Native Brotherhood Hall, Sitka  
Matanuska Colony Project Warehouse, Palmer  
Sage Building, Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka  
Totem Row, Saxman  
Battery Magazine (402), Dutch Harbor  
Churchill/Cotter Homestead Cabin, Palmer  
Inlet Trading Post, Homer  
Totem Square, Sitka  
Igloo Hotel, Cantwel

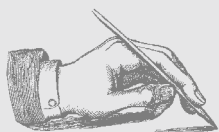
SEPTEMBER WILL SEE maritime heritage workshops held in Anchorage 9-11 and Juneau 14-16. Need more information? Write [jo.antonson@alaska.gov](mailto:jo.antonson@alaska.gov), or call 907/269-8721. If in Anchorage, drop by the office at 550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1310, or get your own subscription to the newsletter by tapping in [oha@alaska.net](mailto:oha@alaska.net) and putting in "Heritage Subscribe" as the body of the message. Want to play around on the website; it is [www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/)

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THE ARCTIC STUDIES CENTER of the Smithsonian has an Anchorage office and a new research facility at the Anchorage Museum. Its focus is the study of all Northern peoples around the world. Their newsletter is issued regularly; consult [www.mnh.si.edu/arctic](http://www.mnh.si.edu/arctic) for details.

Visit our website:

**[www.alaskahistoricalociety.org](http://www.alaskahistoricalociety.org)**



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor:  
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Dorothy Warrington poses in front of Ford Mustang: "First prize Sourdough Rendezvous." Yukon Sourdough Rendezvous, Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, 1967. Photograph courtesy *Whitehorse Star*. AMRC-b85-27-1731.

## Alaska Historical Society Board of Directors

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**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 \$30.00 per member (\$20.00 for students; \$40.00 per family.)

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 feature is the society's publication *The Alaska 67* with annotated recommendations of good books on Alaska history.

Send your application for membership to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299; or join through the website: [www.alaskahistoricalociety.org](http://www.alaskahistoricalociety.org).



Peter Angaiak (left), Trans-Alaska Pipeline employee.  
Trans-Alaska Pipeline Construction Collection, 1976-1977. ASL-P2-6-17.

### Editor's Comments

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I'll admit it. I cut Fairbanks a lot of slack. There is something about living in a place where you can frost your lungs in the winter while going to the store for a loaf of bread that is enticing. Why would anyone live there?

Various people, like many of Alaska's newcomers, are lured into vowing a lifetime here during an idyllic summer of daylight, fishing, hiking, glorious views, and the sense of being on a true frontier only to decide around January that they can't understand why anyone stays in this terrible place and off they go to California or somewhere. We're accustomed to that, but Fairbanks is a special case.

Down here in the effete Southeast, our winter weather sneered at by the Interior denizens, we do wonder what the attraction of Fairbanks truly is. Then we meet Fairbanksans and admire their spirit and general attitude towards the world. We remember that Joe Vogler, who spent many years urging Alaska to secede from the Union, is buried in Canada as he requested since his campaign was unsuccessful. Fairbanksans are tough and proud of it.

D.L.



Larry Wagner's silver and gold belt buckle and ruby ring.  
Pipeline Impact Photograph Collection, Fairbanks 1974-1977. Image by Paul Helmar, ASL-P17-8463.