



Alaska History News

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Alaska Historical Society 2010 Awards



The year 2010 was one of “great performances” as the Alaska Historical Society recognized the work of individuals, historical societies, and public institutions with its annual awards. The presentations were made at the annual meeting in Fairbanks in late September. Congratulations to all of the worthy recipients.

Rosemary Carlton and **Mary A. Flaherty** received **Evangeline Atwood Awards**. Rosemary retired in the summer from the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka where she was curator, education coordinator, and interpretation specialist for just shy of 25 years. Rosemary’s book, *Sheldon Jackson: The Collector* is an important contribution to Alaska history. Mary has managed the Oscar Anderson historic house museum in Anchorage since 1992, though she volunteered there starting in 1987. This past year Mary not only opened the house for tourists and school groups, she garnered community support to get the Municipality of Anchorage to meet its responsibilities for care and maintenance of its historic house museum. Thanks to Mary’s tireless efforts, the house was open in August and there will be Swedish Christmas tours in December, but the house’s future is far from assured.

The **Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center** received the **Esther Billman Award of Excellence**. In May, the Smithsonian’s Arctic Studies Center’s gallery and the Imaginarium science discovery center opened, signaling completion of the Anchorage Museum expansion project. These new partnerships with the art and history exhibits and collections are providing Alaskans and visitors with an incredible place to enjoy themselves and learn. The award recognizes staff, past and present, who worked on the project including James Pepper Henry, Director, Patricia B. Wolf, former director, Suzi Jones, Marilyn Knapp, Aron Crowell, Walter Van Horn, Dawn Biddison, Monica Shah, committee members, and many volunteers who worked on the project.

Gregory W. Kimura received the **Pathfinder Award** for editing *Alaska at 50: The Past, Present, and Future of Alaska Statehood*. Dr. Kimura, Executive Director of the Alaska Humanities Forum, has been a leader in the support, promotion, and implementation of programs to further the study and understanding of Alaska arts, cultures, and history. The selection of articles in *Alaska at 50* engage readers to reflect on the state’s past and to ponder what can be done now for the future.

The **Sitka Historical Society** received the **Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Newsletter Award**. Recent issues of the newsletter described new acquisitions and kept people advised of upcoming activities. Notably, the society reached beyond the walls of its space in Harrigan Centennial Hall. Society members worked to get the bells of St. Michael’s Cathedral ringing again, cosponsored the very successful 2010 International Conference on Russian

America held in Sitka in August, and hosted a Sitka 1802 and 1804 battle sites narrated cruise.

Mary C. Mangusso, **Stephen W. Haycox**, and **Brenda Dates Campen** received recognition with **Contributions to Alaska History Awards**. Mary retired last spring from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, and plans to return to the subject of her dissertation, Anthony J. Dimond, and write the biography he deserves and Alaskans should have. Steve retired as a full-time faculty member at the University of Alaska Anchorage, but is continuing to teach through the 49th State Fellows program, part of UAA’s honors college, and to write a column for the *Anchorage Daily News*. Brenda retired last June after teaching history at Mt. Edgecumbe High School since it opened as a state school. She plans to continue to prepare Alaska history curriculum materials, and to train and mentor Alaska history teachers. She has been a lead teacher for the Alaska History teacher institutes sponsored by the Alaska Humanities Forum.

Anjuli Grantham and **Heike Hoffer** received **Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards** to attend the Alaska Historical Society/Museums Alaska annual conference. Anjuli is a public history graduate student at the University of South Carolina, and originally from Kodiak. Heike is a graduate student in musicology at the University of Arizona. Both made presentations on their research at the Fairbanks meeting and society members hope to hear more from each of them.

Jim Ducker, editor of *Alaska History* for almost all of its 25 years of publication, and one of the founders of the award-winning journal of the Alaska Historical Society, received a special award. President Katie Ringsmuth selected **Ross Coen** to receive this year’s **Beaver Log**. Ross served as program chair for this year’s meeting, and was part of that committee the prior year. He is now a member of the Society’s Board of Directors of the Alaska Historical Society.

Two Alaska Historical Society members received recognition from other groups and were honored at the awards banquet with the others. The Alaska State Legislature recognized **Dee Longenbaugh**, the Alaska Historical Society’s fabulous newsletter editor, as well as author, long time Alaskan, and bookstore owner, with a special resolution. **Dirk Tordoff**, head of the Film Archives at the Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, was the recipient of the 2010 Edith R. Bullock Award. Dirk has built an incredible collection, sought funds for conservation of the fragile resource, and helped many researchers.

Wow! Again, congratulations to award winners. Members, please be noting exemplary people and programs for the 2011 awards so they can be honored and others can be inspired. The call for award nominations will go out in the summer.

In Praise of the Small Museum

There is an essay I keep in the top right-hand drawer of my office desk. I discovered it as a newly-hired director of a local historical society, a time when I was struggling to define and embrace my role as preservation generalist and purveyor of sometimes hyper-local history narratives. Ron Chew's "In Praise of the Small Museum," originally published in *Museum News*, April 2002, is the perfect reminder of the value of local history and cultural institutions, where staff and volunteers enjoy flexibility to try new ideas, freedom from bureaucracy and closeness with visitors. The article is a rallying call for better financial and technical support for smaller heritage institutions. It also encourages staff and volunteers to embrace their responsibilities as advocates for their organizations.

I thought once again of Chew's words when I attended a session on advocacy and lobbying presented by Mike Walsh of the Foraker Group at the Alaska Historical Society annual conference in Fairbanks this fall. Walsh's session promoted a better understanding of the distinction between advocacy and lobbying and offered guidance as to how non-profit organizations can do both appropriately and effectively. We are all advocates for the organizations we care about, he reminds us, when we share the posi-

tive impact our institutions have in our communities with those in positions of influence and leadership. The take-home message is that local history organizations can and should advocate to promote their cause, and lobby to influence legislation. We must do so purposefully, and with awareness of state and federal regulations. Like Chew's essay, I found Walsh's session insightful and empowering.



The Alaska Historical Society has an active advocacy committee under the leadership of chair Ron Inouye and with support from Clark Gruening. We hope you appreciate our efforts to inform Alaskans about issues affecting historical and cultural heritage programs in the state. We are committed to being effective non-partisan participants in the public policy arena. Through your work and ours, we can strengthen the cultural fabric of our state, community by community.

Look for information from AHS on state issues related to historic preservation and museums on our website or in the mail in February.

Katie Oliver
President

Notes from around the state



"Woman of Kodiak" by Gavriil Andreevich Sarychev, 1763-1831. "Alaska native, female, displaying facial tattoos, plus nose and lip piercings." Bookplate from: *Voyage of naval Captain Sarychev along the North-Eastern part of Siberia, the Arctic Ocean and Eastern Ocean, for eight years, attached to the Geographical and Astronomical Marine Expedition, under command of naval Captain Billings from the year 1785 to 1793.* ASL-P20-033.

To pull a curtain over something is a well known metaphor. To open a curtain normally refers to the theater. During the renovation of the Baranov Museum, the **Kodiak Historical Society** contractor made an interesting discovery when he pulled aside an 80-year-old curtain, originally placed to make a darkroom. There were three empty bottles on the windowsill, still in place. So now there are new artifacts for the museum. They join other items found in the building over the years; a kayak model, bullet casings, wallpaper samples, a wheelbarrow wheel, and a spruce root basket. Newer museums can only sigh with envy.

Not as novel, but an exciting collection of photographs of old Kodiak canneries was bought by the museum with a grant from Museums Alaska, funded by the Rasmuson Foundation. To add a nice touch, these are individually mounted on found tin.

The **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society** not only has a recipe for Sweet Potato Balls (eight potatoes will feed the family), but has the four volumes of *Chugiak/ Eagle River: The Early Years* now available. \$20.00 with \$5.00 shipping if you can't come in person. They're also doing a volunteer short memoirs called, "What's My Story?" A sweet way to garner local memories and share.

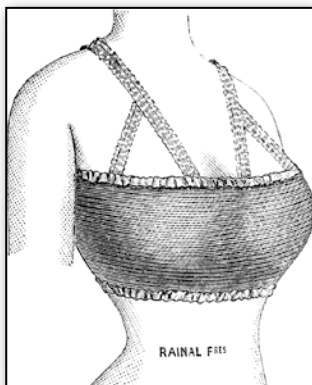
The **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** often runs interesting news items from the old *Seward Gateway*. In 1905 the newspaper reported that a smoker was held in the rooms of the Kenai Club to celebrate the second anniversary of the founding of Seward. I suspect a lack of total honesty in the report that "...there was plenty to eat and smoke and all the water anybody wanted to drink and the celebrants must have had a good time for most of them stayed pretty late." Another item, this from 1931, extols the establishment of a new 12-mile long road connecting all sorts of homesteads, scenic areas, and grouse and game population. The reader can hear the deflating hiss at the end. "It is not known how satisfactory the road is for auto travel."

If there was a prize for the toughest town in Alaska, Eagle would certainly be in the running, and likely the winner. The times that try one's soul have now extended over a year. 2009 saw the huge flood of the Yukon River that broke apart the old Customs House, home of the **Eagle Historical Society and Museums**; the members and townspeople retrieved the contents and generally repaired the town. This year the Taylor Highway, the only road into or out of town, was hit repeatedly by summer floods and resulting mud slides. Once more tour buses were unable to reach Eagle, so again summer sales were skimpy. So what did the town do? Why, held a bang-up old-fashioned Fourth of July celebration, of course, complete with a

Notes from around the state



"Edna Ignatin-Kodiak." by Claire Specht Fejes, 1920-1998. Oil on canvas board. Size: 24.25 x 20.25 inches. Inscription: "Mother Aleut, Father Russian. July, 1990." UA1997-006-001



Compression Elastic Bra by Leon Jules Rainal Freres, 1907. "The bra is for people who can dispense with the use of the corset. It is also used for the night, for the seaside bathing or in cases of extreme breast tenderness. It consists of a very light fabric, it is laced to the dorsal and sets forward a very flexible busk."

parade, root beer floats, and the auction of, among other things, a hand-made bear fur trapper's hat. They also noted thankfully that the rains kept the wildfires down.

The newsletter has a short biography of an early resident. He died and was buried there as he'd always said he wanted to be buried in Alaska because it was like going into cold storage and he liked that idea. Eagle was tough from the beginning.



Restoration of the old Mt. Edgecumbe boathouse, the long-sought goal of the **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society** is set to begin in January. Grants of \$325,000 have been given, but more matching funds are needed. Donate and see how your contribution will be rewarded. Their newsletter address is www.sitkamaritime.org and you can also read about the mystery of the Russian boat, *Kad'yak*, among other interesting items. Want to write? Post Office Box 2153, Sitka, Alaska, 99835 will work.



The **Palmer Historical Society** came up with a cool idea this fall. Their movie about the Matanuska Colony, *Alaska Far Away*, was shown on the Anchorage PBS television station during their fund drive. The PHS provided the phone answers, had their president interviewed, and a fair amount of money was raised for the station. Everyone was happy.

As befits a community founded as agricultural, root cellars played (and play) a large part in Palmer. Perfect place to store food. The Dena'ina had the same idea, though they called them cache pits.

What do you know about the Palmer Seismological Center? Me too. And the West Coast Tsunami Warning Center? Same here. But if we had been in Palmer this autumn we could have learned about how one morphed into the other as two scientists reminisced. So when you hear a tsunami warning coming from Palmer, pay attention.



James Wickersham was one of the most interesting men in early 20th century Alaska as well as one of the best known. He was either adored by the "Wickershamites" or "Wickites" or loathed by others whose terms wouldn't fit a family newsletter. The **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** is beginning one of their series that could easily be turned into a book with excerpts from Wickersham's 39 years of diaries, now found in the Alaska Historical Library and on-line at Alaska's Digital Archives: <http://www.library.state.ak.us/hist/hist/html>. This first issue is heavily concerned with the long feud with John Troy, owner and editor of the *Alaska Daily Empire* in Juneau. The two wrote and said terrible things about the other, but at the end became very good friends. Photographs and mini-biographies of other men mentioned in the diaries are included. Juneau's social elite are prominent. A fascinating read. His 153rd birthday was celebrated last August 24 at his old house in Juneau.



Cooper Landing may not be a large city, but it's great on helping its local group, the **Cooper Landing Historical Society** reports. They made \$750.00 from a garage sale alone. Nothing like being truly appreciated by the home town.



Playing melodic tunes is a traditional part of Russian Orthodox bell-ringing. The original cathedral in Sitka, the first Russian Orthodox cathedral in North America, lost in the fire of 1966, was rebuilt; however, no traditional bell-ringers have been available for over forty years. Thanks to help and interest from the **Sitka Historical Society**, a priest from California was brought up to train new bell-ringers. As is common with historical restoration, the project blossomed from simply cleansing the belfry floor of pigeon dung and improving the stairs into discovering rotten wood and far more expense. That has been solved now and on September 30 a celebration was held after the triumphant songs rang out over Sitka again.

The society also had presentations concerning *Leaders to Scoundrels: Five Sitkans*. A fun idea; does your group have some (preferably past) residents of interest today?



The **Alaska State Museum** is extending Halloween, so to speak, with the exhibit of the art of Jackie Manning, *Ghost in the Graveyard*, November 5 to January 15. At the same time *The Great Alaska Game Show* opened. How many ways can you play poker or Old Maid, you ask? Think again. How many thousands of years have Alaskans played games? Which ones have evolved, which ones were brought by newcomers? What are the underlying reasons for games? If you can't come in person, get an idea of what you're missing by visiting www.museums.state.ak.us. All sorts of other events are happening as well, so be sure to thoroughly check out the site. Again, we applaud the numbers of things for children to enjoy. Grab them young!



The **Dorothy G. Page Museum** in Wasilla held a first-ever *Brassieres to Nowhere Masquerade and Bra Auction* to celebrate Halloween and raise funds for Pink Ribbon Days. Was it a triumph or a bust? We're anxious to hear how it went.



The Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers have been busy placing a stone and deciding what monument figures they want placed on it, the **Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance** reports. Seems they've decided a bronze miner and his dog are just what they need.



The centennial of Knik was celebrated last summer by the **Wasilla-Knik Historical Society**. The town was an important departure location for miners heading for Iditarod, Discovery, and Flat, until the Alaska Railroad killed it. The residents moved to Wasilla or Anchorage.

We all remember the importance of the dog-mushing mail carriers in the early days, but how many of us knew they not only brought the mail, but the local mushers waited for them to break trail in the winter?

News & Information

ALASKA HISTORY'S editorial advisors have cast their ballots for the best article in the Society's journal for 2009. The winning article is "Advanced in Age, Decrepit, and Unfit: Colonial Citizens and the Formation of a Permanent Russian Population in Alaska" by Andrei Grinev.

The article examines the Russian American Company's efforts to obtain workers within the Russian system of unfree labor and how to deal with workers who no longer were fit for vigorous work in the company's behalf. "Advanced in Age, Decrepit, and Unfit" was Grinev's seventh contribution to *Alaska History* and his fourth prize winner. He has a new article in the Fall 2010 issue.



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MIKE BURWELL, author of the classic *Shipwrecks off Alaska's Coast* is looking for any information about a large steel barge sunk off the north end of Fox Island. It has been known and explored for many years, but its origin and ownership are still murky. Contact michael.burwell@boemre.gov if you can help. Visit <http://alaska.boemre.gov/ref/ships/index.htm> if the subject interests you.

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LIVED IN ALASKA OR THE YUKON for a long time and would like to keep up with friends? The *Alaska Yukon Pioneers Newsletter* is a great way to read about them and have your contribution added, all at the most reasonable price of \$12.00 per annum. Send a check to AYP, Joyce Penman, Recorder, 27833 85th Drive, Stanwood, Washington, 98292. If you have questions, phone 360/ 629-3554, or oldwomn@wavecable.com if you're in a hurry.

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WONDER HOW TO KEEP UP with cultural events and news across Alaska? Worry about the impact on rural Alaska kids when they move to an urban environment? The *Alaska Humanities Forum* has lots of answers. Stop by their new address 161 East First Avenue, Door 13, Anchorage, Alaska 99501, or tour around at www.akhf.org.

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FOR HISTORY NEWS you can't do better than contact the Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska State Parks, Department of Natural Resources. They issue the monthly *Heritage*; contact jo.antonson@alaska.gov, or mail to 550 West 7th Ave. #1310, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501-3565, or telephone 907/269-8721. Issues are posted to www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks and distributed to subscribers by e-mail. Paper copies can be sent to individuals and organizations that specifically request them. To be added to the list, tap out oha@alaska.net with "Heritage, subscribe" in the subject line.

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FORT ROSS, CALIFORNIA, Russian America's furthest south outpost, is gearing up to celebrate its bicentennial in 2012. It is now part of Fort Ross State Historic Park and is planning all sorts of events featuring people; the local Indians, Alaska Native people, Russians, Spanish, Mexicans, and Americans. Everyone is invited and each month in 2012 is already marked by a special happening. Three web sites are already up and interesting: www.fortrossstatepark.org (yes, three "s" in the middle), www.fortrossinterpretive.org and www.fortross2012.org. All different and all worthwhile.

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LUCKY WRANGELL, PETERSBURG, SOUTHEAST AND ALL ALASKA, not to mention other places; all have enjoyed Pat Roppel's *Around Wrangell and Environs* for six years now. The money raised has gone to the Friends of the Wrangell Museum, and the satisfaction has gone to the reader. The last two issues discussed the looking back rather jolly days of alcohol prohibition in Wrangell, the rise and fall of Alaska's False Hellebore's use as a drug, the coho hatchery at Neck Lake, the financial problems of a Petersburg cannery, Xtratuf rubber boots, and more. A real loss if Pat does discontinue.

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ABSTRACTS TO ESTABLISH a Maritime Archaeology session at the 2011 Alaska Anthropological Association conference next March are being requested by the **Alaska Maritime Society**. Include your name, contact information, presentation topic, and an abstract of no more than 200 words. Send to kflworthington@tamu.edu or kflworthington@gmail.com as soon as possible.

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THIS IS TAKEN FROM THE FAIRBANKS NEWS-MINER. Thanks to Pat Roppel for sending.

Anaktuvuk Pass last summer celebrated an open house at the improved Simon Paneak Memorial Museum, a tribute to the Nunamiut people, the inland Inupiat. The Nunamiut people have survived traveling all over the North Slope region, Northwest Arctic region and the Canadian borders always returning to the location of Anaktuvuk Pass for its prime caribou hunting. This way of life persisted until beginning of the settlement in 1949, and by 1962 permanent infrastructure and a community began. It is this culture, different from any other on the North Slope, that the museum showcases in its exhibits and programs. Speeches were made, then, as if the day couldn't get any better, the celebration continued with a potluck full of niqipiaq, or Eskimo food. Caribou and berries from the Anaktuvuk Pass, maktak from Barrow, and sheefish from Kotzebue were some food items, to name a few. An Eskimo dance was held after the feast. The swift strong sound of the drum was so very distinctive to the Nunamiut dance style, and community members showed visiting guests how it was done in the mountains. Many songs were danced, but eventually the visiting guests had to say their goodbyes.

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SAD NEWS FOR ALASKA'S HISTORIANS. One of the best died recently of cancer. Elizabeth (Betsy) Tower. M.D., 84, wrote books about Bill Egan, Cap Lathrop, Michael Heney, folks at the Kennecott Corporation, and was honored by the AHS as Historian of the Year. She also served on the Alaska Historical Commission and recently was helping the University of Alaska Anchorage with identifying people and places in photographs.

She and her husband came to Anchorage in 1954 and raised their four children there. Betsy worked in the Alaska Division of Public Health for twenty-five years.

The couple loved Alaska's outdoor offerings; they became private pilots, built several lakeside cabins, skied, played tennis, golf, and swam. After her retirement, Betsy took up Alaska history. In 2010 she was inducted into the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame, limited to women who made a difference in the state.

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News & Information

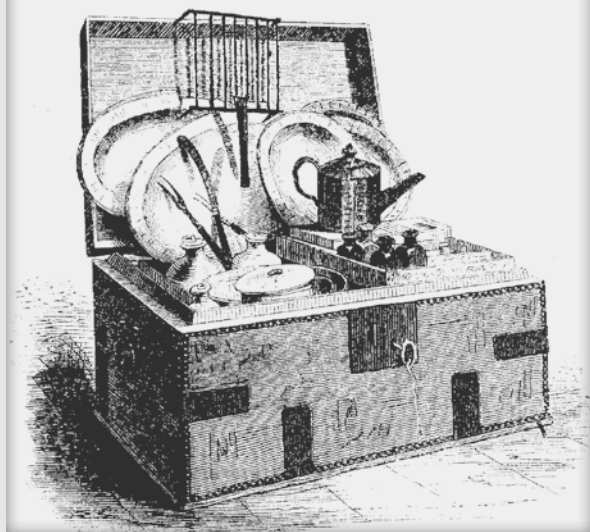
GENEROUS ALASKANS donated almost \$1,000 to the Alaska Historical Society when they filed for their Alaska Permanent Fund dividend last year. The society is included in the contribution list for 2011. Please consider giving to the society when you file—it's greatly appreciated!

Pick.Click.Give.

RON INOUE AND ANGELA LINN, co-chairs of the 2010 annual AHS/MA fall meetings, were recognized for their great work by the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors' Bureau. The Fairbanks CVB statistics show 176 people attended the meetings, resulting in 336 room nights and \$168,960 in direct attendee spending. The host committee from the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society and University of Alaska Museum kept attendee costs minimal and generated a modest profit divided among the sponsoring and host organizations. Thank you, and congratulations, to all the conference planners and workers!

SEEKING TREASURES

The Alaska Historical Society's big fundraiser is its silent auction held as part of its annual fall meeting. Auction committee co-chairs Andrew Goldstein and Candy Waugaman are soliciting items. Please send a description of what you would like to donate to akhist@gci.net or Box 100299 / Anchorage / AK 99510

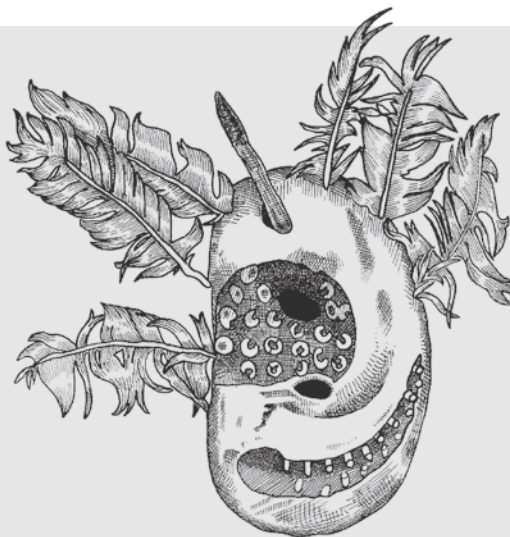


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We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor:
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It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual *Alaska History*, the quarterly newsletter *Alaska History News*, 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.



The shadow of Count Orlock.
Nosferatu, directed by F. W. Murnau, Germany, 1922.

Editor's Comments

Times change and even holidays evolve. When I was a child, Halloween was carving pumpkins, bobbing for apples, and telling ghost stories in the evening. Then "trick or treat" appeared in the small Oklahoma town where I lived when I was twelve; a girl fresh from California told me how much fun it was to ring doorbells and demand food or threaten a trick. My mother was dubious, but allowed it. We went to a few houses, but the inhabitants were confused and wondered why we were there. I think one kindly woman gave me an apple, which somehow didn't taste very good.

That was that for several years, but the trick-or-treat idea spread as a fine way to sell costumes and candy, and is now ubiquitous. On the other hand, young children do love to dress-up and hope to frighten grown-ups when they go door-to-door.

So, like most things, the results are not all bad or all good; just different. Something to remember after this year's strange and febrile state election. Being Alaskans, of course you voted. Your candidates did or did not win; the end result is just different. And remember—another state election in two years. And have a wonderful New Year.

D. L.



Halloween greeting card, 1904.