

# Alaska History News

Volume 45, No. 4/Volume 46, No. 1 Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society  
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## TUNDRA AND ICE IN ALASKA'S ARCTIC —CALL FOR PAPERS

Alaska Historical Society Annual Conference  
September 12-15, 2018 in Nome, Alaska

Alaska's Arctic is fertile ground for historical inquiry. Northern topics abound like whaling in the Arctic Ocean, the gold stampedes to Nome and Kotzebue Sound, the Prudhoe Bay oil strike, and the rich history of Inupiaq and Yupik people and their contributions to environmental protection and civil rights in Alaska.

This year we look northward and contemplate ways to preserve our histories and share them with the world. As always, presentations on all Alaska history topics are welcome. This year the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska will hold their conference in Nome (a first for AHS), and this year's theme—Tundra & Ice: History in Alaska's Arctic—invites reflection on the people, landscapes, and events that have shaped Alaska's higher latitudes. Our featured speaker will be Dr. Lorraine McConaghy, public historian at Seattle's Museum of History & Industry and Washington State History Museum, who has many years of experience wrangling with questions of whose stories are told and how we tell them. You are invited to submit proposals for papers, panels, and poster sessions.

PROPOSALS are due May 15, 2018. Consult the AHS website for conference information and tips on submitting proposals: [alaskahistoricalsociety.org](http://alaskahistoricalsociety.org), under "Conference Information" and "How To Shape Proposals and Presentations." Please send your proposed presentation title, an abstract (<100 words), and two sentences about yourself to Chris Allan, Program Chair, [sprucetip105@gmail.com](mailto:sprucetip105@gmail.com).

In 1899, prospectors drawn by gold in the beach sands of Nome raise a tent city on the shore (below), reaching roughly 30 miles from Cape Nome to Cape Rodney. By 1900 the U.S. Census lists the population of Nome at 12,488, making it the largest town (incorporated as a city in 1901) in the Alaska Territory. By 1920 the easily accessible gold deposits are largely exhausted, and the population of Nome has declined to 852.

Alaska State Library, ASL-P45-1054.





# ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2017 AWARDS



Woodblock print by Ray Hudson. ©Ray Hudson. Reproduction without permission of artist is strictly forbidden. Color versions of Hudson's prints can be seen in the National Park Service publication *Lost Villages of the Eastern Aleutians* by Ray Hudson and Rachel Mason (2014).

**M**ike Hawfield, chair of the Alaska Historical Society's Awards Committee, announced the recipients of 2017 awards at the annual meeting banquet last September. The Society's annual awards recognize outstanding contributions by individuals and organizations that further the study and understanding of Alaska history.

Brian Payton, *The Guardian* newspaper (UK) ranks Hudson's *Moments Rightly Placed*, number 8 of the top 10 books about Alaska, calling it "a sensitive and insightful account of 28 years living in the Aleutian Islands from the perspective of an outsider. I believe the best reportage is the kind that involves a writer immersing himself or herself in a place, culture and time. These days, being still and letting the story reveal itself is difficult to accomplish and increasingly rare. Ray Hudson offers personal and enriching insight into Aleut culture in this fine memoir."



**RAY HUDSON** of Middlebury, Vermont, formerly of Unalaska, received the *Evangeline Atwood Award for Excellence*. For over 40 years Ray has written, edited, and taught about the Unangan and other people who have lived and worked on the Aleutian and Pribilof islands. Among his publications are *Moments Rightly Placed*, *Family After All*, and with Rachel Mason, *Lost Villages of the Eastern Aleutians*. When teaching at Unalaska, Ray had his students research and write about people, the islands, and history and then compile and publish the information—collectively called the Cuttlefish Series. In addition to being a historian, Ray is a basket weaver, poet, artist, musician and linguist. He is respected by his colleagues and loved by many people of the Aleutian and Pribilof islands. And now he's a novelist. The University of Alaska Press recently published his young adult novel titled *Ivory and Paper*.





**THE ALASKA JEWISH MUSEUM** with special recognition of **Leslie Fried**, Museum Curator, received the *Elva R. Scott Local Historical Society Award* for the professionalism at the museum and completion of an important exhibit, *Refuge in the Last Frontier: The Evolution of the Alaska Development Plan*. The exhibit looks at the attempt and failure of the U.S. government to allow Jews trying to escape Nazi Germany to settle in Alaska in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Curator Leslie Fried raised funds, researched, conducted interviews, identified artifacts, wrote labels, and supervised the design and installation of the exhibit. The Alaska Jewish Museum is reaching its goal to enrich the cultural wealth of Alaska.

Courtesy of International Center of Photography.



Ruth Gruber, Alaska, 1941-43 (photographer unknown).



**DR. MIKHAIL MALAKHOV** of Ryazan, Russia received a *Contributions to Alaska History Award* for his unusual and creative way to view Alaska history. Over the last decade, Dr. Malakhov has been retracing the travels in Alaska of early Russian traders and explorers. In 2017, he led his 9<sup>th</sup> expedition that went from Dillingham to Aniak by kayak and on foot. With the objective of rekindling interest in Russian-American history, Dr. Malakhov makes presentations in Alaska and Russia about his trips. He undertook restoration of a monument to Fedor Kolmakov in Dillingham. Also in 2017, Dr. Malakhov organized a conference on Russian America in Ryazan—explorer Lavrenty Zagoskin and Malakhov's home—to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession.



**ANNE RITTGERS**, a graduate student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the Arctic and Northern Studies Program, and **MARY DINON** of Craig received *Student and Beginning Professional Travel Scholarship Awards* to attend the Alaska Historical Society/Museums Alaska conference. Anne's presentation at the conference, "Alaskan Landscapes: Arthur Kerrick paints Alaska," was about a mural in Anchorage's old Federal Building done in the 1940s as part of the WPA artists' program. Mary's presentation, "Cannery Life on the Nushagak," was about her grandmother Ella May Nielsen Nelson Adkison of Danish-Yupik descent who worked at the Kanulik, Scandinavian, and Pacific American Fisheries canneries on the Nushagak River. Dinon, too, was born in Dillingham.



The editorial advisory board members of the Society's journal *Alaska History* make an award for the best article that appeared in the last volume. The *Alaska History Award, 2016* recipient is **FRANK NORRIS** of Santa Fe, New Mexico, formerly of Anchorage and Skagway, for his article "Boomers and Bureaucracies: The Battle for Lake George Alaska."



AHS President Chris Allan presented two *President's Awards*—better known as *Beaver Logs* this year. He recognized **ROSS COEN** as an excellent historian and for taking on the position of editor of the Alaska Historical Society's journal, *Alaska History*. He also presented a Beaver Log to **MICHAEL HAWFIELD**, thanking him for all he has done for the Alaska Historical Society, particularly serving as the organization's chief financial officer, i.e. treasurer, for the last six years.

In 1941, as Special Assistant to Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, Ruth Gruber was assigned to assess Alaska's potential for soldiers to homestead at war's end. While at Unalaska, Gruber witnessed firsthand the effects of militarization on the Unanga of Unalaska City. At Funter Bay [Unanga Internment Camp, SE Alaska], she wrote "I had my first experience with refugees. I learned what it means to be a refugee: homeless... disoriented, and on the run. He knows trauma and loss. His memory of home turns even the simplest cottage in which he once lived into a villa. The Aleuts were told by the army that at the end of the war, they would be taken home. But how could they believe it? The experience, difficult as it was for me to see their hardships, helped prepare me for a life dedicated to rescue and survival."

—Dr. Ruth Gruber  
*Inside of Time*

In 1944 now "General" Ruth Gruber would be instrumental in successfully transporting roughly 1,000 Jewish refugees to New York state from Nazi Europe. Their new home was Fort Owega, a camp fenced with barbed wire.

*The Problem of Alaskan Development*, produced in 1938 under Secretary Harold L. Ickes, proposed "a haven for Jewish refugees from Germany" in Alaska. Resettlement in the territory would allow the refugees to bypass normal immigration quotas. The plan was never initiated.

*Congratulations to this year's Alaska Historical Society  
award recipients for excellent work.*

## *Message from the President:*

*Our ability to think about the past, to understand past events, relies on access to information...*



We are already nearing the end of the first quarter of 2018! How can that be? The calendar pages turn—days, weeks, months, and years wheel past us. Time is different, though, for people who look into the past. Thinking about events from a previous time allows us to step into a mental space where time does not move so fast. Thinking about the past offers us a place in which to reflect without having to run at the same time.

Our ability to think about the past, to understand past events, relies on access to information about those events. Much of that information is collected, catalogued, and stored in historical archives—treasure-houses of pictures, papers, sounds, and voices holding the traces of people and places and happenings long since vanished.

One of these wonderful collections is found in the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives at the Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska in Fairbanks. APRCA includes, among many things, an indexed trove of rare maps, original manuscripts, old letters, postcards, posters, and images, and one of the most wonderful photograph collections in Alaska. Seekers can find thousands of oral history interviews, including the largest Alaska Native oral history record in the world, historic film footage, and the Alaska Native Language Archives. People come from all over the world to use this archive.

But the Alaska Polar Regions Collections & Archives urgently needs our help. Due to budget cuts, staffing changes, and other events, the archives has lost more than 80 percent of its staff, and is now being operated by a skeleton crew of *two* people. It is no longer open without an appointment. The ability of the archive to receive, catalog, and store new donations has been disabled by the lack of staff. An archive requires steady maintenance, by trained archivists.

The 2017-18 Board of Directors for the Society has decided that one of the goals this year will be to find ways in which the Society can assist in efforts to restore necessary support to this storehouse of Alaska historical gems. We encourage our members to work with us in this effort.

—Averil Lerman



## **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

We've just finished another good year! New members since our September annual meeting and conference include Larry Carson of Pelican; Scott Carson, Karen Gray, Nikki and David Love of Juneau; Mary Alice Cook of Eagle River; Rob Stapleton, Pierce Bateman, Sigrid Brudie, and Kathleen Tarr of Anchorage; Marsha Graham of Anchor Point; Patricia Holloway, Pauline Wilson, and Keith Nuss of Fairbanks; Eric Nelson of Douglas; Carmen Stephl of Soldotna; Ken Karstens of Mead, CO; Daniel Skeahan of Grass Valley, CA; Frank Massaro of Shoreline, WA; and Uppsala Universitet and Karin Byge-Biblioteket of Uppsala, Sweden. We thank Judy Bittner, Tom Bundtzen, Susan Cloe, Barbara Hood, Tom Begich, Kay Shelton, Coleen Bridge & Michael Moeglin, Wayne Jensen, Marilyn Knapp, Gloria & Tom McAlister, Bill Bubbel, Gina Spartz, Allison Hoagland, Steve Haycox, Verbeck Smith, Shana Loshbaugh, and Thad & Sandy Poulson who renewed as patron members. John Branson, Frank & Candy Norris, Bruce & Meredith Parham, Jim Barnett, Lambert de Gavere, Sarah Isto & Gordon Harrison, Susan & Philip Means, Fran Seager-Boss, Gillian Smythe, Sue Sherif, Jacquelin Pels, Katharine Richardson, Ann Fienup-Riordan, Naoimi Gaede-Penner, Walter & Lynn VanHorn, John Fournell, Joan Fuglestad, John Chenoweth, Vicki Wisenbaugh, Colleen Kelly, Steve Brown, Lila Vogt, Mary Dinon, Rosemary Carlton, Rodger Davis, and Dorothy Moore sent generous donations along with their renewals. Members gave gift memberships to Eric Neumayer, Lily Becker, Daniel Bittner, Jonathan Bittner, William Bittner, and J.T. & Sarah Mohr. If you know any of these individuals, thank or welcome them to AHS membership when you cross paths!

We trust YOU have had a good start to 2018. We also trust you enjoyed your AHS publications this past year. If you have not done so already, please renew your membership, and consider giving gift memberships and donations. Alaska members can donate to AHS through [Pick.Click.Give](https://www.alaskahistoricalociety.org). when you file for your Permanent Fund dividend. You may renew online at [www.alaskahistoricalociety.org](https://www.alaskahistoricalociety.org). If you prefer to renew by mail, please send your check to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299. We depend on membership dues and donations to continue our many programs. Thank YOU for your continued help in this regard.

—Ruth Jolly Knapman, Membership Chair



Two [Sami] in traditional dress milking reindeer, Port Clarence, Alaska, 1900.



Three Sami women, circa 1890s. Location/photographer unknown.

Kodiak's **Baranov Museum** hosted a traveling exhibit, *The Sami Reindeer People*, in November and enhanced it with programs as part of the Kodiak Scandinavian Culture and Film Festival. They held a discussion of one of the artifacts in the exhibit for students, and had a lecture by Jim Dillard, "The Role of Finnish Craftsmen in Building Kodiak's Russian American Magazin (now the Baranov museum)."

Congratulations to the **Tenakee Historical Collection** that achieved its long-sought goal when the group opened their museum on July 2, 2017. Ninety people attended the celebration. Along with the ribbon cutting, there was an afternoon of music, a silent auction, puppet skits, and tours. A dedicated group worked five years cleaning and rehabilitating a building in the heart of town for the museum and creating and installing exhibits. The program for their next meeting is a slide show of the museum project from start to finish. The group reports they had over 700 visitors their first six months! One project, with a grant from the Alaska Historical Society's Historic Canneries Initiative, was organizing Bob Pegues' papers and photographs about the Superior Cannery. The final report is on the AHS blog, at <http://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/tenakees-superior-packing-company/>

The new 8,000 square foot **Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum** in the Richard Foster Building in Nome had its grand opening celebration last fall. Although a storm grounded the smaller air carriers, over 400 people attended the festivities. Its main exhibit is *Nome: Hub of Cultures and Communities across the Bering Strait* and has over 300 objects on display. A great opportunity to see the new museum is next September when Nome is hosting the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska annual meetings!

The **Resurrection Bay Historical Society**, Seward, started "Thursdays: Our History" programs in October. The first speaker was Fred Woods, Brigham Young University, talking about "Melting the Ice: Launching Mormonism into Alaska (1900-2017)". In November, Patrick Lewis with Kenai Fjords National Park, talked about the new book, *Historical Atlas of Seward, Alaska*, that shows changes over the years in Seward's downtown. He showed how Sanborn insurance maps, aerial images and historic photos track changes in the downtown. In January, Lee Poleske recounted the tragic story of Seward physician and pilot Ray Banister and local superintendent of schools Harold Roth who never returned from an airplane trip in December 1946. In February, Colleen Kelly spoke about numerous attempts to cross the Harding Icefield, including the successful one in April 1968. In March, Lee Poleske is going to speak on two topics: ways people have used the Iditarod Trail during the summer months and the All-Alaska Sweepstakes dog sled races on the Seward Peninsula that took place between 1908 and 1917.

A recent *Pages from the Past* column in their monthly newsletter notes the first elevator in Seward was installed in Ogle's Garage at Third and Washington streets. "A one-half h.p. motor attached to a sturdy and compact hoist runs the elevator up to the second floor without a tremor. The speed, both on the ascent and descent, is the same." Today the building is the Buick Apartments.



*The early Greeks were convinced that cabbages and grapevines were inimical, and that cabbage planted too near the vine would impart its unwelcome odor to the grapes; this Mediterranean sense of antipathy survives today.*

According to Guinness World Records, the "heaviest cabbage" weighed 138.25 lbs. and was presented at the Alaska State Fair, Palmer, Alaska by Scott A. Robb on 31 August 2012. Robb had previously held a number of Guinness Records for heaviest vegetables, including the "heaviest turnip."

Far right: "44 lb. Alaska Cabbage grown near Palmer in the fertile Matanuska Valley."

Circa 1950 vintage postcard courtesy *Greenwoman Magazine* Collection, Sandra Knaut.

The **Willow Historical and Wildlife Foundation** is exploring options after the Mat-Su Borough prevailed in a lawsuit. The group must move the historic community building that is the group's museum off borough property or give it to the borough. In happier news, the group had the museum open during the three days of the 57<sup>th</sup> annual Willow Winter Carnival. The group inducted the first three individuals into the new Willow Mushers Hall of Fame--Earl Norris, DeeDee Jonrowe and Bob Chupach, and had an exhibit about them. There was also a display about the carnival's history. The first carnival was a fundraiser in 1962 to finance building the community hall.



Ketchikan's **Tongass Historical Society** had a program where local resident Mary Henrikson talked about her book *The Mystery of the Fire Trees of Southeast Alaska*. Ross Coen was the 2017 recipient of the society's Patricia Roppel Scholarship. Ross is working on his PhD at the University of Washington. His dissertation is going to examine the history of scientific study of Alaska salmon between 1880 and 1960.



The **Palmer Historical Society's** History Night! programs have something for everyone. In February, Mike Chmielewski and Lee Henrikson of Radio Free Palmer, aka Big Cabbage Radio, talked about getting the station on air in 2011 and the challenges that face an all-volunteer community radio station in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In January, back by popular demand, Dr. Steve Brown with the Cooperative Extension Service talked about his work using the Global Positioning System (GPS) and Geographic Information System (GIS). In his spare time, he is an avid mountaineer and marathon runner. Last fall, Joe and Cheryl Homme talked about their new book, *Palmer, Alaska, Businesses and Buildings 1897-1970*. The authors grew up in Palmer and their book discusses not only operating a business in frontier Alaska but also local business owners' efforts to incorporate the City of Palmer. At another program, the society celebrated the return of the red copper finial to the top of the Palmer water tower, and Kelly Turney and Ralph Hulbert spoke about the water tower's history. That evening's program concluded with Denny Hamann, a colonist grandson, giving a photo presentation on Alaska history.

**Cook Inlet Historical Society** also continues its monthly speaker's series. In January, Rex Wilhelm, President and CEO of North West Company, owner of the Alaska Commercial Company, spoke about the ACC's 150 years of operation. In February, Bethany Buckingham Follett, Wasilla Museum, talked about Wasilla at 100. Following on the series theme "defining moments in the Great Land" the March program was on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson today and in the past, the April program will be on the oil industry and state government and the May program on the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).



For March—Women's History Month--the **Juneau-Douglas City Museum** is honoring five local women artists as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual National Museum of Women in the Arts #5WomenArtists campaign. Each Friday the museum will feature a different Juneau woman artist on its Facebook page: [facebook.com/JuneauMuseumFriends](https://facebook.com/JuneauMuseumFriends). This year more than 300 institutions from 50 states, 20 countries and 6 continents are contributors to the campaign.



*Whenever I think of the past, it brings back so many memories.*

—Steven Wright

The Juneau Public Libraries is hosting a national traveling exhibit, *Discover Tech: Engineers Make a World of Difference*, and partnering with it, the City Museum has exhibits on construction of the 1935 and 1980 Douglas bridges and on construction of the U.S. Federal and Territorial Building (now the Alaska capitol). The exhibits will be up until the end of the year.

Each week on the Friends' Facebook page there is Who's Who Wednesday with portraits from the J. Alexander collection and ThrowBack Thursday, a look at Juneau's past through the museum's collection. In March, museum admission is free thanks to the generous donation of Michelle and Robert Storer.

Nice to have news from the **Cooper Landing Historical Society**—even if it is sad news. Family and friends met December 28<sup>th</sup> at the Sunrise Inn to remember Tom and Arlene Knock. Tom was a docent at the Cooper Landing Museum for many years. He enjoyed trading stories about railroading, mining, and world travels with visitors. Tom retired to Cooper Landing in the late 1980s and never let Parkinson's disease slow him down.

The **Talkeetna Historical Society** made big plans for the winter. The group hired David Shealy to assist in collections cataloging and accessioning. They planned to update several older exhibits this winter and do a 25-year anniversary exhibit with their local radio station. The group wrote successful grants to assist with rehabilitation of several of the society's historic buildings, and are preparing to do the restoration work.

The **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society** has put out a call for stories for its history book. People who lived in the area are invited to send accounts of their earthquake experiences, about shopping at the Army dump, of bear and moose encounters, traveling to school in Anchorage, and student experiences at the first local school when it opened in 1951. Stories can be sent to [info@cerhs.com](mailto:info@cerhs.com) or P.O. Box 670573, Chugiak, AK 99567. The society's newsletter list of officers and board

members notes when he/she settled in the area--the earliest being 1935.

The **Sitka Historical Society's** speaker's series to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Alaska Treaty of Cession proved so popular they have planned a series this spring leading up to the opening of the new Sitka History Museum. Speakers include Mark Sixbey, local carver and musician, Bob Sam with Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Angie Bowers with the Sitka Sound Science Center, Dan Henry who has a new book on John Muir, and Mrs. Mercado and Mrs. Shuler who will speak on their time at Sheldon Jackson High School in the 1950s. If interested in any of the sesquicentennial programs, you can access them from the Sitka History Museum website along with podcasts that are part of the Sitka History Minute series.

At the **Sheldon Jackson Museum** until May is an exhibit, *Drawn in Silver*, with some of the museum's finest works from its large collection of 19<sup>th</sup> century Northwest Coast silver, enhanced by some 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century bracelets and spoons loaned for the show. The exhibit profiles several prominent silver engravers from Sitka. The exhibit is in remembrance and in celebration of Peter Corey, former museum curator who was a driving force behind the establishment of the museum's silver collection.

The **Pioneer Air Museum** in Fairbanks does a "What's that Wednesday" post on its Facebook page. In December they posted an image of a geological survey map of the Koyukuk-Chandalar region used by wildlife agent and bush pilot Sam O. White. The map is fixed to a muslin-type fabric so it would hold up in the open-air cockpit planes White flew in the 1920s and 1930s. A longer article about the map is on the organization's website, [www.pioneerairmuseum.org](http://www.pioneerairmuseum.org).

The **Hope and Sunrise Historical Society** has accepted from the U.S. Forest Service the Hope Highway Mile 12 Guard Station. It is being moved to the museum grounds



*I believe alien life is quite common in the universe, although intelligent life is less so. Some say it has yet to appear on planet Earth.*

—Stephen Hawking

<https://www.krbd.org/2017/10/13/chief-johnson-totem-pole-restoration-underway/>



Detail of a cleaned section of the Chief Johnson totem pole during restoration by Tlingit carver and conservator Tommy Joseph, 2017. Image has been rotated. KRBd photo by Maria Dudzak.

*...I'm probing to find the soft spots or what's hard. After that, it's scrubbing [the pole] down and using a pretty potent soap... It's scrubbers of different sizes and shapes. Softer ones for the delicate spots, and harder ones for the areas that you're just trying to get the surface cleaned out.*

—Tommy Joseph

*(After, Joseph recarved damaged pieces [including the raven's beak] and refreshed the paint to restore vibrancy.)*

this month. The group is planning to start restoring the building this summer. As always, they will be busy this spring cleaning the grounds and preparing their displays to open the museum for the summer on Memorial Day weekend.



The **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society** received a grant from the City and Borough of Sitka to record the oral legacy of Sitka's fishing families. The video and audio recordings are for use when the Japonski Island boathouse interpretive center in the east wing opens. A date when that will happen has not been announced, but the group reports progress "one paddle stroke at a time" on rehabilitating the building. Fall programs included an evening of sea chanteys about Yankee whalers and a 99<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration for the *Cummins*, a historic troller, with cake and a presentation about the boat's history. The program for the March meeting has promise to be lively; a panel of Sitkans will tell stories about the challenges and joys of working on the sea with family.

Anyone who has visited Ketchikan has seen the Chief Johnson totem pole in downtown. Last fall the Ketchikan Museums and the City of Ketchikan under the advisement of the Tongass Tribe had the pole taken down and restored. Tlingit carver, and former Ketchikan resident, Tommy Joseph spent six weeks cleaning and repairing the pole. In December it was reinstalled with a rededication celebration. The museums' **Totem Heritage Center** continues its Native Arts Studies Program with classes in carving, weaving and regalia, and the **Ketchikan Museum** hosts Museum Midday presentations on Thursdays.



The **Eagle Historical Society and Museums** newsletter noted that they rely 99% on volunteers to keep up the museums and do the daily tours in the summer. Residents in the small town also keep the library open, serve on the City Council, do all the subsistence activities involved in living at the end of the road, and hold down jobs! Nonetheless, the plans are to clean the Custom's House this spring that was impacted by the Yukon River flood several years ago and to continue with digitizing their print materials and photographs.



Across the border, the **Yukon Transportation Museum** in Whitehorse transformed into an Indoor Drive-in on December 17<sup>th</sup>. Families were invited to come, eat popcorn, watch four National Film Board cartoons, and build a cardboard boxcar that could be raced in a rally. Participants were encouraged to BYOB (bring your own box). And the museum, collaborating with the **Dawson City Museum**, has created a traveling exhibit for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the sinking of the *SS Princess Sophia*. The shipwreck, with great loss of lives, in northern Lynn Canal in late October 1918 made headlines as "the Northland's Greatest Disaster."



## News & Information

The **Alaska State Archives** recognized Black History Month (February) by digitizing and putting online ten speeches by African-American Willard L. Bowman, appointed in 1963 by Governor Egan as the first director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights. Bowman served as director of the commission until 1970, when he was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives where he served until his death in 1975.

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Alaska's new state archivist is **Karen Gray** who joined the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums in 1993, and returned to the State Archives in 2015 as the State Records Manager. Her background includes curatorial, archival, and records management work, with over 15 years of records analysis. Since beginning her career with medieval illuminated manuscripts at the Walters Art Museum, she has tackled issues of paper preservation, microform accessibility, and electronic records authenticity and stability, with the goal of preserving information and records for future generations.

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The **Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board** (ASHRAB) awarded Certificates of Archival Excellence to **Teressa Williams** and **Sara Piasecki** of the Atwood Resource Center, Anchorage Museum, for their outreach effort to identify individuals in historic photographs in their collections. They have had a booth at the Alaska Federation of Natives annual meeting since 2013. That year they took 700 images and collected information on about 426 of them. The ASHRAB also recognized **Jim Simard** with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Jim started working for the Alaska State Library as a project director for Alaska's Digital Archives and became the head of Historical Collections in 2008.

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More Alaska newspapers are now available on **Chronicling America**, the Library of Congress website. The recent additions include *The Daily Alaskan* (Skagway, 1898-1899 and 1904-1924), *The Morning Alaskan* (Skagway, 1898-1899), *The Daily Morning Alaskan* (Skagway, 1899-1904), and the *Douglas Island News* (1898-1921). The **Alaska State Library** received a second grant to continue preparing Alaska newspapers to be added to the website. Great work!

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The **Alaska Association for Historic Preservation** awarded a grant to help with preservation of Meiers Lake Church at Richardson Highway Mile 170. The unique log chapel has to be moved out of the road right-of-way, and the lower logs that have rotted need to be replaced. The organization also made a grant to help prepare National Register of Historic Places documentation for the <NN>



Born one of nine children of an Irish immigrant father and enslaved mother, Michael A. Healy rose to become the first man of African-American descent to captain a vessel of the United States Navy—the flagship of the U.S. Revenue Bering Sea Patrol, the Cutter *Bear*, in 1885. For nine seasons, beginning 1892, Healy's *Bear* ferried Siberian reindeer to Alaska for the Alaska Reindeer Service.

*When I am in charge of a vessel, I always command; nobody commands but me. I take all the responsibility, all the risks, all the hardships that my office would call upon me to take. I do not steer by any man's compass but my own.*

—Captain Michael Augustine Healy,  
spoken during his court-martial in 1896

Cannery at Naknek. Katie Ringsmuth's Tundra Vision Public History Consultants is going to prepare the documentation with the support of the cannery owner, Trident Seafoods.

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This year is the **75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Attu**, fought May 11-29, 1943. It was a prolonged and costly battle for both U.S. and Japanese soldiers. Under the lead of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that manages the island as part of the Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge, events are planned in Anchorage May 17-19 to commemorate the battle and acknowledge the tragic experience of the residents of Attu village, who were held prisoners in Japan during the war. More information can be found at [attu75.org](http://attu75.org).



*"[Alaska] was the last great gold rush. There will never be another like it. It was one of the great adventures of the American epic. It was a chapter in the great westward march of the American people in search of greater opportunity."*

—Senator Ernest Gruening, Governor of Alaska Territory, 1939-1953

<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/1-man-panning-gold-on-nome-alaska-beach-everett.html>



Panning for gold, Nome beach.

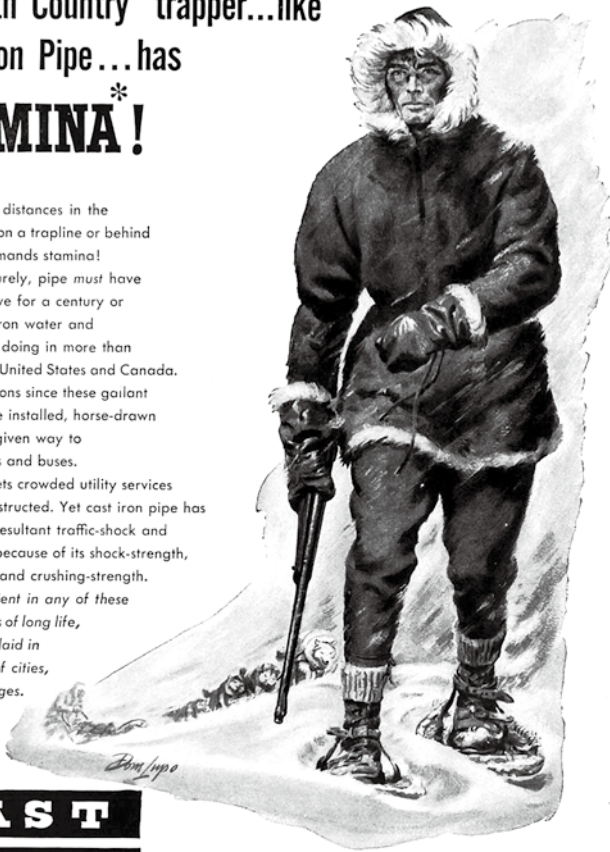


Miner's cabin, Nome Beach. Alfred G. Simmer Collection Alaska State Library, ASL-P137-038.



## A "North Country" trapper...like Cast Iron Pipe...has **\*STAMINA!**

Trekking long distances in the frozen North, on a trapline or behind a dogsled, demands stamina! And, just as surely, pipe must have stamina to serve for a century or more as cast iron water and gas mains are doing in more than 30 cities in the United States and Canada. In the generations since these gailant old mains were installed, horse-drawn vehicles have given way to multi-ton trucks and buses. Under the streets crowded utility services have been constructed. Yet cast iron pipe has withstood the resultant traffic-shock and beam-stresses because of its shock-strength, beam-strength and crushing-strength. No pipe, deficient in any of these strength-factors of long life, should ever be laid in paved streets of cities, towns and villages.



\* In a 345-mile midwinter race against death to bring serum to Nome, Alaska, a dog-team and driver covered more than 90 miles in a single day—a feat still remembered after 55 years.  
Cast Iron Pipe Research Association,  
Thos. F. Wolfe, Managing Director,  
122 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago 3.

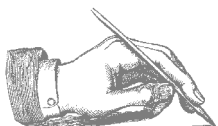
Advertisement Cast Iron Pipe Research Association of Chicago, Illinois, 1951.

<https://www.periodpaper.com/products/1951-ad-stamina-cast-iron-pipe-winter-gun-nome-alaska-original-advertising-088721-tce2-236>

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Ross Coen, *Editor, Alaska History*, rcoen@uw.edu

Judy Bittner, *Alaska Office of History and Archaeology*, judy.bittner@alaska.gov

Patience Frederiksen, *Alaska Libraries, Archives, Museums*, patience.frederiksen@alaska.gov

P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299

Tel: 907/276-1596


Email: [members@alaskahistoricalociety.org](mailto:members@alaskahistoricalociety.org)

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ODDMENT:

### **MARTIN, THE WIZARD HAS ARRIVED IN SITKA!**

Just five months after the October 18, 1867 Transfer Ceremony at Sitka, an entertainer arrived in Alaska's capital calling himself "Martin, the Wizard." The act was billed as "a night in the wonder world" with ventriloquism, magic rings, and more. Before reaching Sitka, Martin had toured the West Coast and performed for several weeks in Victoria, BC where the newspaper promised, "A lady's head will appear upon the table and will converse with the Wizard, after which it will float through the air to the footlights and disappear." The performer was Daniel Martin, a traveling magician and saloon owner from Como, Nevada, accompanied by his wife and stage assistant, Clara Martin. Reportedly the wizard could select a playing card from a deck and when the deck was thrown in the air, he caught the proper card on the tip of a sword. "The flying money, and poultry and eggs, were admirably done," said Victoria's *British Colonist*, "The ventriloquistic powers of the Wizard are of a high character . . . taken altogether, in decoration, cleverness and amusement, the Wizard's entertainments are suiting to the tastes of the most fastidious." The show cost 50 cents, and it was likely the first traveling stage show in the newly minted American territory.

—Courtesy Chris Allan

Photograph above: "Daniel Martin, a traveling magician and saloon owner from Como, Nevada, c. 1866."

University of Nevada Reno, Alfred Doten Collection.

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**The Alaska Historical Society** offers travel scholarships to a student and a new professional working in Alaska history to attend the organization's annual meeting and conference—this year to be held in Nome, September 12-15. More details about the awards and applying are at [www.alaska.historicalsociety.org/](http://www.alaska.historicalsociety.org/) or by contacting AHS awards chair, Michael Hawfield, [mchawfield@alaska.edu](mailto:mchawfield@alaska.edu). The application deadline is May 25, 2018.

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