

ALASKA HISTORY NEWS

Volume 49, No. 1, Spring 2021

Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society



Photograph by Neal Herbert, courtesy National Park Service.

Kennecott Mine, 2010.

Call for Papers ***Communities Remembered and Imagined*** **Alaska Historical Society Annual Conference** **October 6-9 and 13-16, 2021**

Alaska is full of once-thriving communities that now stand empty, or have vanished without a trace. Some were boom towns that grew up around a gold mine or processor, but shrank when the source of wealth dried up. Others were forcibly abandoned because of natural disaster or war, or lost population to lack of government services and the draw of economic survival. At the same time, other towns have risen from the ashes of former ones, or have been rebuilt in a new location. We have also seen some fictional Alaskan towns as settings for books, movies and television. Some of them are thinly disguised real places; others are a combination of reality and imagination.

Alaskans have always had to be flexible and creative in building our communities, relying not only on sharing a physical location, but also on more intangible connections to the people in our lives. As the pandemic has reined us in more tightly

in our homes and communities, but increased our digital communications, we can appreciate a more accommodating definition of community. This year's conference theme, *Communities Remembered and Imagined*, focuses on the life cycles of communities, particularly on those phases that exist only in memory or imagination.

Our 2021 conference will be completely digital and held via Zoom. Again, we will spread the sessions over two weeks, Oct. 6-9 and Oct. 13-16. We plan special sessions on the 50th anniversary of ANCSA, on statues and monuments in Alaska, and much more!

To submit a proposal, please send your presentation title, an abstract of no more than 100 words, and two sentences about yourself to Rachel Mason, Program Chair, rachel_mason@nps.gov. Proposals are due May 15, 2021.

Message from the President

THERE IS BIG NEWS! I won't steal thunder from the Advocacy Committee report except to say our hard fight to keep the National Archives facility in the Pacific Northwest has a new window of opportunity thanks to a recent federal district court ruling. Many thanks to the members of the Advocacy Committee, Alaska historians, our colleagues in the Pacific Northwest, and the numerous Native tribes who made it known how important NARA records are to tribal members.

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and we are working hard to bring recognition to this historic event. Our Society has launched an ANCSA project to uncover sources for the study of the act, the key events leading up to its passage, and the act's impacts. More details are in a separate article in the newsletter. Your suggestions are welcome, and please encourage your historical

societies, museums, and local Native organizations to share information about collections they have on the subject.

When you opened the newsletter you found an auction catalog. Usually held at our annual meeting, the auction raises several thousand dollars for the Society's many programs. We didn't have an auction last fall with our virtual meeting, but do need funds for our programs and, as you will see, have some terrific donations. I hope you find items of interest and submit bids.

Lastly, the newsletter is being revamped. Thank you, David Ramseur, for stepping up to help. We welcome news articles from our readers and your community; share your work with us, whether it is events of your society or a story about a community member. Looking forward to hearing from you,

—Will Schneider

Society Launches Study on Historic Native Claims Settlement Act

The Alaska Historical Society has initiated a major study to document sources for the study of the Alaska Native Land Claims Act of 1971. Being conducted with the assistance of the Alaska Library Network, the effort is the Society's way of contributing to the 50th anniversary of the passage of this historic act.

The project is funded by the Rasmuson Foundation and a consortium of Alaska Native corporations including Doyon, Koniag, Calista, Bering Straits and Sealaska. Daniel Monteith is researching collections at the Alaska State Library in the archives and historical collections. Becky Butler is working on collections at the University of Alaska Anchorage/Alaska Pacific University Consortium Library, and Karen Brewster is investigating materials at the Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks. Bruce Parham is applying his in-depth knowledge of the National Archives to drill down on its collections. David Krupa is searching a multitude of on-line sources such as Alaskool and *The Tundra Times* for material related to ANCSA. Sue Sherif and Jo Antonson are updating the ANCSA@40 bibliography that was created by Suzanne Sharp, Institute of Social and Economic Research for the 40th anniversary.



Prominent Native leaders gather in 1962 in Copper Center to discuss Native land claims in this photo from the Bear Ketzler collection at UAF archives. They are: Mayor Ryan of Annette Island, Charlie Purvis, Oscar Craig, Kay Hutchcock, Theodore Hetzel, and Howard Rock.

The scope of this work includes events leading up to land claims beginning at Statehood, provisions of ANCSA, and impacts of the act in the years since passage. The approach is selective and our goal is to identify key sources that will provide future researchers with a guide to what exists on this topic and where to find it.

—Will Schneider

Federal Judge Halts Closure and Sale of Archives Facility in Seattle

Thanks to efforts by Pacific Northwest historical groups including the Alaska Historical Society, a significant victory has been achieved to stop the proposed plan to close and move the federal archives facility in Seattle which contains thousands of invaluable Alaska records.

In early February, a Seattle federal district judge granted a request by Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson to temporarily suspend the closure and transfer. Several of our Society board members joined a meeting with Ferguson just weeks earlier to encourage the suit. Nearly 80 Pacific Northwest groups and individuals joined the complaint which grew from 87 to about 600 pages.

Judge John Coughenour was especially critical of the process initiated under the previous administration to ignore the needs of historical groups in the region and failure to engage in adequate tribal consultation with affected Native groups. A number of Alaska's Native entities including Tanana Chiefs Conference, Doyon, and Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes, joined Native Tribes of Washington and Oregon in the suit.

The aging archives building houses historical records from Alaska, Washington, Idaho and Oregon. As some of the last of the territories to become states, the federal government kept voluminous records of births, deaths, treaties, industry, shipping and most other events of note that occurred in the Pacific Northwest from the 1850s to today. The collection houses charts, maps, photographs, films, and hundreds of cubic feet of textual materials.

In 2019, a five-person Public Buildings Reform Board surprised Pacific Northwest historians and researchers when it recommended the Seattle archives closure along with 11

Society Advocates for Alaskans on Numerous Fronts

In addition to our success regarding the Seattle National Archives facility, the Society's Advocacy Committee is working on other initiatives to raise the profile of the importance of history to Alaskans. We are gearing up for a 2021 campaign to raise awareness about the value of Alaska history with state legislators and our congressional delegation. As another round of federal stimulus is debated in Washington, D.C., and the state budget is debated

other federal facilities—no other archives however—across the nation.

Much of the Seattle facility's Alaska records had been moved from Anchorage just five years earlier when the National

Archives abruptly closed the Anchorage branch.

"This action shows a callous disregard for the people who have the greatest interest in being able to access these profoundly important records, which include Tribal and treaty records, case files under the Chinese Exclusion Act, and records related to Japanese American internment during World War II," AG Ferguson said in his complaint.

Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman is in talks with federal archives officials and local stakeholders on the possibility of moving the records, not to Missouri and California as originally planned, but to keep them in a facility in either Olympia or Tumwater.

The Alaska Historical Society's Advocacy Committee continues to monitor the issue and urges Alaskans to contact Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan and Representative Don Young and protest the transfer of Alaska's archives out of Washington state.

—Pennelope Goforth

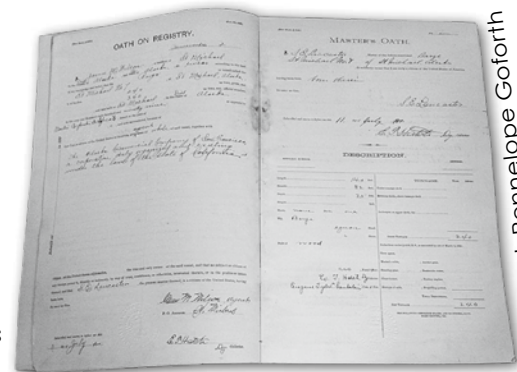


Photo by J. Pennelope Goforth

One of the rare Alaska maritime history artifacts is this U.S. Customs declarations book which was kept by the Alaska Commercial Company trading station agent at the Port of St. Michael from 1895-1913. Five such books were donated by the company, first at NARA's Pacific Alaska Region and then sent to the Seattle facility.

in Juneau, the Advocacy Committee is determined to register our members' expectation that the humanities are not left behind. We recognize our public libraries, universities, schools, and state cultural agencies have endured deep cuts and are advocating to preserve and strengthen these vital institutions that have for so long been critical to understanding Alaska's unique history and culture.

—Ian Hartman

Historical Society Looking for a Few Good Board Members

The Alaska Historical Society has 15 board members and one-third stand for election each fall. We encourage AHS members to nominate candidates for the board throughout the year. If you know a good candidate, please contact Erik Johnson (erikkristian@gmail.com) and provide contact information for the potential nominee. The ideal board member is passionate about Alaska history, but is also willing to volunteer, to work collaboratively and to help the AHS carry out its mission.

—Erik Johnson

New Board Member Thrives Digging into Gold Rush History

Like many Alaskans, one of the Alaska Historical Society's newest board members adopted our state as her new home after what she thought would be a quick visit a quarter-century ago. Today, Carol Gales is enjoying a true Alaska experience in Nome where she's contributing enormously to her community and state.



Photo by Carol Gales

Carol Gales near the remains of a World War II army hospital outside Nome.

It all began in 1996 with a summer traveling across the state with a sister who lived in Ketchikan. After visiting Nome, Carol landed what she thought would be a year-long job as public communications director at Norton Sound Health Corporation. After getting active with the Nome Arts Council, “the years went by and I forgot about leaving.” ►

Carol's prowess on the accordion also cemented her ties to the former Gold Rush community. She and friends formed a string-band, Landbridge Tollbooth. In 2005, she married the band's banjo player, Jim Dory, who ventured to Alaska in 1979 and also never left.

In 2002, Carol bought Nome's oldest known surviving Gold Rush building, the Discovery Saloon. Built in 1899 by one of the original gold claim stakers, it was converted into a house in 1917 and is now her home. “It was while researching the building to support a historic preservation grant application that I started really digging into Nome history,” she said. “I had devoured many books about the history of the region and had interviewed and written about many elders in the regional villages during my first years here. The more I learned, the more I realized I needed to learn.”

When the Alaska Historical Society conference convened in Nome in 2018, Carol became a member and made a presentation on the history of her home. As a board member, Carol wants to better connect AHS with Nome and the

Bering Strait region. She is sharing her considerable publications expertise on the AHS newsletter committee and serving on the membership committee as well.

After leaving a 12-year job at University of Alaska Fairbanks Northwest Campus, Carol began a small tour business, Roam Nome. “My work as a tour guide keeps me searching for details I can share with visitors. Lately I've been trying to decipher Nome's somewhat hidden military history.”

Recently, she hosted her first clients since Covid shut down operations in February 2020. “I took three women snowshoeing and for a drive as far

as snowplows had cleared one of the roads. We had all been vaccinated and they'd all tested negative the day before. We wore masks while in the car. It was kind of weird, but worked out. And I got to yack about Nome history. It was fun!”

—Pennelope Goforth

Alaska History Day Motivates Students

Despite the limitations of the pandemic, Alaska students are preparing National History Day projects. Fairbanks has some 30 students in the competition and Anchorage's Roger's Park Elementary School has students working hard. Students will be registering in March and the state contest will take place March 22-29. There are two divisions: junior—grades 6, 7, and 8 and senior—grades 9-12. Students can work as individuals or in groups on projects in various categories: a paper, exhibit, performance, documentary, or website. This year's theme is *Communication in History: The Key to Understanding*. Support Alaska students—future society members—by volunteering to be a judge. Winning students at the local level can go on to compete in the state contest. For further information contact Kari Lovett at klovett@akhf.org or 907 632-4263. There is a Facebook page as well.

—Pennelope Goforth

Community of Craig Keeps Local History Alive

Members of the Craig Historical Society are lending their expertise to several community initiatives.

The City of Craig recently received funding for a breakwater and future harbor to be developed on the old Wards Cove Cannery property which the city purchased in 2006. The upland areas contain historic cannery buildings some residents want to save. The city invited historical society members to be part of a Cannery Committee to discuss possible uses for the uplands and help design the harbor and overall concept for the area.

Victoria Merritt, a Craig Historical Society member and the city's parks and recreation director, is heading a committee to plan Craig's February 2022 centennial celebration. One idea is a period costume party with games for kids. Historical society member Cheryl Fecko contacted fellow members by email to start the committee.

"So you see, we are probably no different from any other small town in Alaska," said Kathy Peavey, a member of the historical society. "We are all wearing lots of hats!"

Peavey is currently gathering information and images for a timeline of Craig's salmon cannery history, with sidebars on area mining and logging, to be printed on a four-by-eight-foot outdoor display board, similar to one created by collector Karen Hofstad for Petersburg. Hofstad generously donated 50 copies of the publication she spearheaded, *Tin Can Country* (2019, sold ►

out) to the Craig Historical Society. Sales of the books will help fund the timeline. When completed there will be one outside city hall and a second for for the harbor department.

Last May, Peavey and Ralph, Edith and Lauren Mackie located the site of a long-gone saltery near Craig, using photos from a book published in 1923. Craig, originally named Fish Egg, is located on Craig Island, formerly known as Bergman Island. The village and island were renamed in 1912 for William Duncan Craig Millar (or Miller), a Canadian who came to Alaska in 1886 and started salteries and canneries important to the development of the salmon industry in Alaska. Peavey and friends headed by boat to Kasook Inlet on Sukkwan Island, taking with them *The Salmon and Salmon Fisheries of Alaska: Report of the Alaskan Salmon Investigations of the United States Fish Commission Steamer Albatross In 1900 and 1901*. The four walked the beach, found building remains, and compared the location to a photo in the book.

You can follow the Craig Historical Society's activities on Facebook.

—Carol Gales

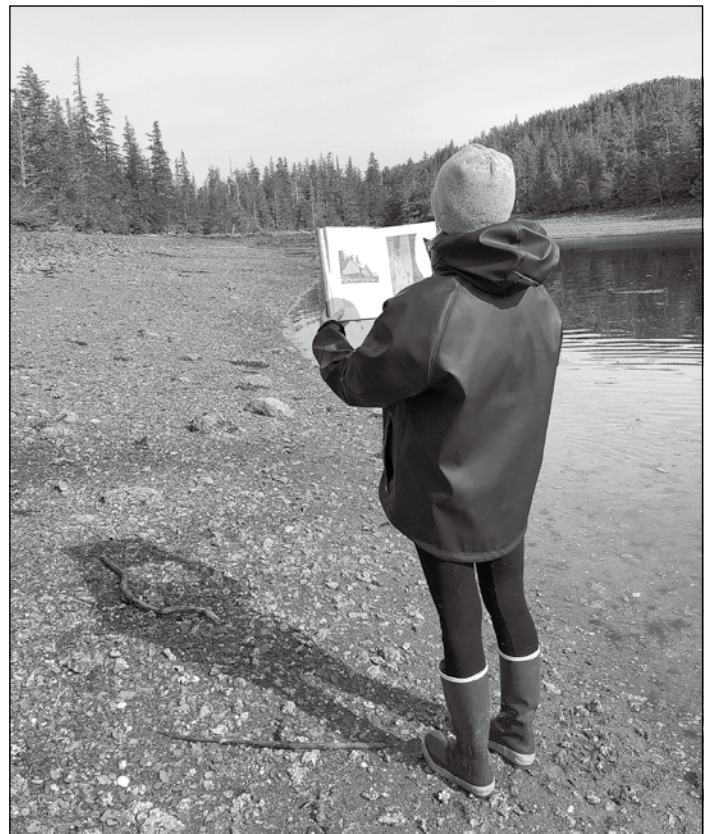
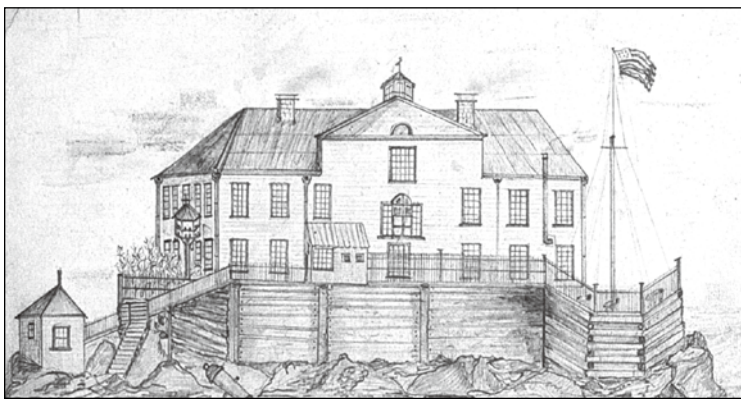


Photo by Kathy Peavey

Lauren Mackie compares photo and landscape to find the site of the saltery.

New on the AHS Website

Historian, author, and former AHS Board member, Chris Allan has compiled four booklets of what he calls the “Eyewitnesses Series.” They are being made available on the Alaska Historical Society’s website. Chris’s intent with the first four booklets is to showcase voices of the past: “I wanted to get away from the traditional historian’s narrative form where primary sources play a secondary or tertiary role behind the historian’s voice and analysis. I like the idea of people hearing history from the eyewitnesses. In each case, I was so impressed with what was available in digitized newspapers that I wanted to share it.” His booklet about mining operations at Coal Creek and Woodchopper Creek does the same as the others but allows photographers from the 1930s to tell the story. Each booklet includes advertisements, early maps, paintings, drawings and photographs previously unpublished or never collected in the same place. Hoping to stimulate others to undertake new investigations, Chris also prepared a guide called “The Newspaper Bonanza: How to Discover Alaska’s Past in Newspaper Databases” for the AHS website.



The booklets are:

As the Old Flag Came Down: Eyewitness Accounts of the October 18, 1867 Alaska Transfer Ceremony, a collection of sources describing the ceremony at Sitka after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia.

The American Side of the Line: Eagle City’s Origins as an Alaskan Gold Rush Town as Seen in Newspapers and Letters, 1897-1899, a collection from the town’s first year during the Klondike gold rush.

A Rough and Tumble Country: Juneau’s Origins as Alaska’s First Gold Mining Boomtown as Described by Eyewitnesses, 1880-1881, a collaboration with Mark Kirchhoff about the discovery of gold in Gastineau Channel and the evolution of what would become Alaska’s capital city.

Of Gold and Gravel: A Pictorial History of Mining Operations at Coal Creek and Woodchopper Creek, 1934-1938, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, a collection of seventy-five photographs illustrating the construction of two mining camps and two gold dredges in Alaska’s backcountry.

Left: John A. Fuller’s 1867 sketch of the residence atop Castle Hill where the governor of Russian America and his family lived until the transfer ceremony, at which time they made way for General Jefferson C. Davis and his wife Marietta. Note the discarded cannon at lower left and the American flag on the pole. From: *As the Old Flag Came Down*.

Notes from around the State

Two museums in Kodiak will each receive very big donations from Don Clark. The late Dr. Donald W. Clark (1932–2018), a historian and archaeologist, named both the **Kodiak History Museum** and the **Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository** in his will. Clark was born at Kodiak, and during his long career made enormous contributions to understanding the prehistory and history of the island.

The Kodiak History Museum, which facilitates exploration of the natural, cultural and artistic heritage of Kodiak Island and its surrounding communities, will receive \$1,176,043 from

Clark’s estate. The Alutiiq Museum, which works to preserve and share the heritage and living culture of the Alutiiq people, will receive \$1,274,047. For both organizations, Clark’s gifts are the largest ever received. Margaret Roberts, chair of the Alutiiq Museum Board, spoke for both museums when she said Quyanasinaq (“big thanks”) to Don.

■
The **Alutiiq Museum** and the Sun’aq Tribe of Kodiak are collaborating on the Amutat project, a database that will help people locate, view and study Alutiiq tools, clothes and ceremonial objects in museums all over the world. The



Donald W. Clark (third from left) with an archaeological field crew in Rolling Bay, 1962.

database will include a photo and description of each item, the Alutiiq word for it and detailed information on its current location. The Alutiiq Museum is piloting the database with its own holdings and will eventually expand Amutat to include collections from other museums in Europe and elsewhere.

■
This spring, the **Anchorage Museum** will open an exhibit exploring the history and culture of African Americans in Alaska. It will occupy the space in the museum's atrium and represents a collaboration among the museum, community members and faculty at the University of Alaska Anchorage. It is scheduled to run from the end of April through 2021. See www.anchagemuseum.org/exhibits/black-lives-in-alaska-journey-justice-joy/



Youths pose in front of a sign for the NAACP Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO) in Anchorage, 1981.

The **Cook Inlet Historical Society's** 2020-21 lecture series is entitled *Disasters*. The first lecture of 2021 was Penelope



Don Clark (left) and archaeologists board floatplane to do survey work for the Alutiiq Museum at the Red River, 2004.

Goforth's talk, "The Sinking of the Good Ship *Dora*" in January. The February lecture was about another kind of disaster: murder. Laura Koenig and Rick Goodfellow presented "The Murder of Chief of Police Sturgus," a cold-case investigation of the mysterious shooting death in 1921 of Anchorage's first police chief, John Johnson "Jack" Sturgus. Goodfellow, who leads Ghost Tours of Anchorage, has included the Jack Sturgus story in his tours. The lecture revealed new evidence about Sturgus's life and death, and about early Anchorage.

■
Anchorage's first full-length classical concert was held on April 11, 1921, just five months after the city was incorporated. This year, on April 11 the **Anchorage Festival of Music** will honor the centennial of this significant milestone in Anchorage history by recreating the concert, entitled "A Longfellow Evening." The virtual concert presents the complete musical program, as well as the stories of the 31 original performers. The AFM was able to uncover a treasure trove of documents, articles, and photographs telling the stories of the people who first brought classical music to Anchorage.

■
ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska) is one of the partners working to move the Ascension of Our Lord chapel in Karluk to a new site. The chapel, built in 1888, is now precariously perched on a quickly eroding cliffside. The site is #1 on the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation's 2020 list of the top 10 most endangered historic properties in Alaska. Karluk is a small community on the west side of Kodiak Island. Other partners in moving the chapel are the community and parish, the Russian Orthodox Diocese, the National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and AAHP.

In December, **Sealaska Heritage Institute** launched its first virtual 3-D exhibit as an effort to open its space to people worldwide during the pandemic. The site offers visitors a free tour of SHI's exhibit *War and Peace*, which closed in April due to COVID restrictions. The virtual exhibit, designed by Kai Monture, allows users to navigate on desktop and mobile devices. It includes icons that when clicked bring up detailed photos and unveil information on the objects.

In other news, SHI hosted a lecture series in January and February entitled *Exploring the Origins and Early Presence of Indigenous People in Southeast Alaska*. Archaeologists, anthropologists and linguists spoke on early migrations, social and environmental change, cultural intersections and linguistic history of Haida, Tlingit and Tsimshian peoples.

Tim Miller of the **Lower Kuskokwim School District** has digitized a set of tapes from the 1970s of *Yugtun Qanemcit*, a program of students recording interviews with elders. At that time Bethel Regional High School was the hub school for all the villages in the region. Students, who lived in dormitories or with families in Bethel, would travel to the villages to interview and record elders speaking about traditional culture. Tim Miller digitized the surviving tapes, enhancing them a bit so the elders could be heard.

The link to the digitized tapes is:
https://drive.google.com/drivefolders/1rvGkuubj8Kq7VHhQZ-_coklwVQC_r1FJ?usp=sharing

As a summer artist-in-residence at Sitka's **Sheldon Jackson Museum**, June Pardue shared her passion for fish skin tanning. The Alutiiq artist has been experimenting with various tanning techniques and dyes to produce unusual colors and textures. The process of tanning takes strength, skill, and patience. In the past, the skin was made flexible by soaking in urine; today lye or soap is used. After soaking, the artist must work the skins for hours by hand, massaging and stretching them. The scales may be removed, but are sometimes left on for aesthetic or utilitarian purposes; scales on the bottom of boots provide traction on the ice.

Traditionally, Alaska Natives used fish skins for clothing, boots, mittens, and bags. Today, artists have extended fish skin art to include dolls, masks, and earrings, among other things. Pardue taught a class on making porcupine quill and fish skin earrings and gave a talk on traditional Alutiiq sewing bags. The

museum's other artists-in-residence in 2020 were Tsimshian carver and engraver Abel Ryan and Tlingit regalia maker Pamela Johnson.

Did you know that the Surrealists, members of an artistic movement that developed in Europe after World War II, were influenced by Yup'ik art? According to an article by Jan Steinbright in the **Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum** newsletter, when artists such as André Breton, Max Ernst, and Leonora Carrington arrived in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s, they were attracted to the powerful visual language of Yup'ik masks and Northwest Coast art, as well as by these traditions' connections to dreams, shamanism, and transformation. Breton and others collected Alaskan art and brought indigenous art to the public's consciousness. At the same time, however, the publicity separated Yup'ik and Northwest Coast art from its cultural context.



Bronze sculpture,
Max Ernst, 1934.

The **Sitka Maritime Heritage Society's** winter 2020 newsletter featured an interview with Caven Pfeiffer, a commercial fisherman and captain of the F/V *Sword* and F/V *Caribou*. The *Sword* is a historical wooden vessel, built in 1927 by "Honest Johnson" in Tacoma. Pfeiffer has personally completed the boat's extensive rebuild. When his family outgrew the accommodations on the *Sword*, Pfeiffer bought a larger wooden vessel, the *Caribou*, built in 1961 and rebuilt by Juneau shipwright Mike "The Swede" Svensson. Long ago, Pfeiffer promised his grandfather that he would never own any boat other than a wooden one, and he still thinks a healthy wooden boat has the best ride on the ocean.

The **Resurrection Bay Historical Society** sent the news that the Jesse Lee Home, a nearly century-old Methodist children's home that was long part of the Seward landscape, has been demolished. A brick from a fireplace near the main south side entrance to Jewel Guard Hall was salvaged and donated to RBHS.

In an article in the RBHS newsletter, Gerrit Verbeek tells the histories of several geographic features near Seward named after members of the Lowell family who settled in Resurrection Bay around 1883. Frank Lowell came to Alaska from the East Coast. His Alutiiq-Russian wife, Mary, was from the village of Nanwalek. Mary and her two daughters are the namesakes for three mountains, Mount Mary, Mount Eva, and Mount Alice.

Further inland, in the Matanuska River Valley, is Alfred Creek, named after a Lowell son, known in Ahtna as Tsidghaazi Na', or Rough Rock Creek. There was a gold strike there in about 1913. Alfred Lowell was born in Nanwalek in 1876, and died in 1910 when he drowned in Kenai Lake. In his brief life, he worked as a miner, musher, hunting guide, fox farmer and saloon owner. In 1905 he began mushing the mail route from Seward to Tyonek and built up a reputation as an extremely competent musher. It's unclear what connection he had to the Matanuska region and the creek that bears his name. There is no reason to believe he prospected that area, but he may have been a friend or benefactor to someone who named the creek.

The **Palmer Museum of History and Art** is working hard, through its Matanuska Valley Historical Photo Project, to create and maintain a database of digitized photos that document local history and make it accessible to the public. The project aims not only to collect historical photographs from the Palmer area, but to gather and share stories about the images collected, and to make these easily available for viewing and research. The project has already established galleries of Colony Barns, Vehicles and Equipment, and Farms and Farming.

Ketchikan's **Totem Heritage Center** has a new exhibit wall, entitled *Mapping the Landscape*. The exhibit identifies Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian village sites by their indigenous names throughout Southeast Alaska. Cultural objects are mounted on the map wall, highlighting their association with special places. When possible, the project includes the indigenous names of cultural objects, materials, and techniques, along with place names that have been omitted from records and maps starting in the 1700s.

Brandon Castle, an intern in summer 2020, completed this installation along with other exhibit updates. Castle, a former Totem Heritage Center guide who is preparing for a career in museums, said: "I am passionate about preserving Alaska's

history because I believe we all deserve the ability to make connections with each other and celebrate who we are."

The **Talkeetna Historical Society and Museum** completed a master ground plan at the end of 2020. The plan will guide future decisions on the museum site and historic buildings owned by the society. Among several measures that need to be undertaken in the next few years to maintain the museum buildings, the plan provides guidance for historical rehabilitation of the main museum building as well as stabilization of others. The society also received a technology grant to launch an entirely new website with virtual 3D. Go to www.talkeetnamuseum.org to check out the latest information.

The **Yukon Rendezvous**, which took place in Whitehorse this year February 12-28, dropped the word "Sourdough" from its name to better represent all people in the Yukon. While many Yukoners have fond memories of past festivals, the Rendezvous organizers received some negative feedback about the word "Sourdough" and its association with a colonial era. Sourdough was a staple for many of the stampeder who came north during the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, and eventually anyone who stayed in Yukon or Alaska for at least a winter came to be called a "Sourdough." After 57 years, the Yukon Rendezvous committee decided it was time for an updated name.

To celebrate African American History Month in February, the **Yukon Hidden Histories Society** published the story of Lucille Hunter, a Black woman who arrived, pregnant, with her husband Charles in the territory on her way to the Klondike in search of gold. The couple arrived at Teslin Lake in late 1897, where Lucille gave birth to a daughter. The young family then headed north to the Klondike by dog team in mid-winter. They stayed there, working their claims, for the next 40 years. When Charles died in the late 1930s, Lucille worked their claims by herself for a few years before finally settling in Whitehorse and opening a laundry business. By the time she died in 1972 at the age of 93, she had been a well-known and well-respected character in Whitehorse for many years.

The **Cooper Landing Historical Society and Museum** received a donation from the Clayton family of a large antique showcase. It took four volunteers, including Alfred Clayton, to move the showcase into the museum. CLHS also received items from the Charlie Hubbard Mining Museum, which operated in Cooper Landing on Cooper Creek in the 1980s.



"Souvenir of Happy Days at Scroggies Roadhouse" — Lucille Hunter (second from left) with friends, 1918. Photo courtesy HHSY, Carol Young Family Collection.

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation is seeking nominations for its Ten Most Endangered Historical Properties list for 2021. This will be the 30th year the AAHP has published the list that focuses attention on historic properties around the state that are threatened or in need of rehabilitation. The deadline for nominations is April 10, and the list will be announced in early May. Information about submitting a nomination is at www.AlaskaPreservation.org or one can call 907.929.9870.

The Haines **Sheldon Museum** is working to help the community recover from the devastating storm, flooding, and mudslide that impacted Haines in December. Soon after the storm and recognizing its significance, the museum began to document the story in order to preserve it for the future. The museum also distributed a list of resources and best practices to help community members salvage flood-damaged heirlooms, antiques, and keepsakes.

The **Soldotna Historical Society & Museum** is looking forward to opening May 15. Staff report working on signs for each of their buildings with a grant from the Alaska State Museum. As always, they welcome members and volunteers. Contact them at soldotnahistoricalmuseum@gmail.com or 907.262.3832.

The **Juneau-Douglas City Museum** is accepting nominations for the first \$5,000 Marie Darlin Prize. The prize will be awarded to an individual or collaboration who has completed a significant work that expresses a regional commitment to women's rights, social history, or community advocacy. The award honors and remembers Darlin, a passionate Juneau historian, community watchdog, and advocate for senior citizens. The application deadline is April 3. More information is www.juneau.org/museum.

Petersburg's Clausen Memorial Museum remained mostly closed this past year, though did tip a toe into the "timed entry event" pool this past December with surprising success. Hoping to build on that, the staff have put together a tentative program of events and exhibits for this year including a February show reflecting personal challenges and opportunities in the 2020 year of historical COVID impacts. The museum hopes to add to its online collection of virtual exhibits and information for the public to enjoy, including a video recap and expansion of a past exhibit called "Reconstructing Tonka" highlighting the short history of a cannery that was established along the Wrangell Narrows from 1901 - 1906.

— Compiled by Rachel Mason and Jo Antonson

Thank you to the many folks who renewed their memberships for 2021. Of those, 25 individuals renewed at the patron level, 41 included a donation with their renewal, and 6 members have given gift memberships. Charles Tobin of Nome has become a life member. To date the AHS has 20 new members!

Several members have asked about distributing the newsletter by email. If you are one who would like to receive it electronically, please send an email to: members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org with the address you want used to send you a link to access it. Copies of the newsletter will continue to be printed and mailed to those who enjoy a paper copy.

Alaska Historical Society

Board of Directors

William Schneider, *President*
Fairbanks
Rachel Mason, *Vice President*
Anchorage
Angela Schmidt, *Secretary*
Fairbanks
Tim Troll, *Treasurer*
Anchorage
Karen Brewster
Fairbanks
Carol Gales
Nome
Patuk Glenn
Eagle River
Penelope Goforth
Anchorage
Ian Hartman
Anchorage
Michael Hawfield
Homer
Erik Johnson
Denali Park

Sara Piasecki
Anchorage
Rebecca Poulson
Sitka
David Ramseur
Anchorage
Anastasia Tarmann
Juneau



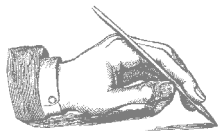
Others:

Jo Antonson, *Executive Director*
Ross Coen, *Editor, Alaska History*
Judy Bittner, *Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, Anchorage*
Patience Frederiksen, *Alaska Libraries, Archives, and Museums, Juneau*
David Ramseur, editor, *Alaska History News*

A great gift for a friend, relative, local school or library is a year's membership in the Alaska Historical Society. Your gift includes the newsletter and journal *Alaska History*, and supports important activities and programs. It's easy . . . go to the AHS website, www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org and then click on "membership and giving."



PLEASE DONATE



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to an address on the right.

P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299
Tel: 907/276-1596
Email: members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org
www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org
or find us on Facebook

ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Non-profit Org.
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit 69
Anchorage, AK



KLONDIKE ICE-TOWING SCHEME: AN ODDMENT

During the frenzied days of the Klondike gold rush, would-be entrepreneurs cooked up hundreds of schemes to profit from whatever the Far North had to offer. Most of these were mere fantasy. Take for example, this chilly prospectus described in the *San Francisco Examiner*:

Within the next few weeks, if you happen to be gazing out over the ocean and see a huge iceberg go floating calmly by in tow of a puffing little tugboat, you may set down that remarkable spectacle to mean that the 'Klondike and Cuba Ice-Towing and Anti-Yellow Fever Company' has got into working order. [The company] is an organization that is in earnest, despite the fantastic nature of its undertaking. It intends to make a serious business of towing icebergs from the Klondike to such countries in the southern seas as are in need of refrigeration or cooling applications, ice water, ice cream, cracked ice for fever patients, etc.

According to the company's spokesperson,

The sight of icebergs floating in the bay of Acapulco will daze the natives a bit at first, but wait till they feel the blessed sensation of cold on their burning throats and temples and come to realize what a boon has struck their country for the first time since the world began—all through the ingenuity of a few men in correcting an uneven distribution of nature's elements. Those people oughtn't to be condemned to that intolerable heat forever. We are going to equalize things. The Arctic regions have been piled up with stacks of portable coldness all these ages, and it has never before occurred to anyone to haul some of it down around the equator, where people have all the time been suffering for it.

Excerpted from "Will Tow Icebergs to Market," *San Francisco Examiner*, April 10, 1898.

—Chris Allan