

# ALASKA HISTORY NEWS

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Quarterly of the Alaska Historical Society



Some of the early visionaries of the effort to unite Alaska Native peoples with one voice to address land claims and other issues gather at the Alaska Native Medical Center in 1965. Nick Gray, founder of the Fairbanks Native Association, Cook Inlet Native Association and other groups stands fourth from the right, under the photograph of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Native land claims is a chief theme at this year's Historical Society conference. (Photo by Henry Kaiser, Jr. Henry S. Kaiser Jr. papers. Archives and Special Collections. Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. Photo number: uaa-hmc-1148-b1-f43-08)

## REGISTER NOW FOR 2021 CONFERENCE FOCUSED ON "GHOST TOWNS," NATIVE LAND CLAIMS

Registration is now open for the Alaska Historical Society's 2021 virtual annual conference, October 7-9 and 14-16. This year's theme is "Remembered and Imaginary Communities," a focus that includes ghost towns, forcibly abandoned villages, reinvented communities and the settings for fiction about Alaska.

Our keynote speaker is journalist and author Tom Kizzia, former resident of McCarthy, a town which was abandoned and subsequently recreated. During its "ghost town years" from 1938 to 1983, McCarthy was haunted by a beguiling absence. Kizzia will show how McCarthy's history counterbalances the boom narrative of the frontier.

The conference also features presentations from across the state about other ghost towns, towns that never were and places fondly or not-so-fondly remembered.

A strong second conference theme is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the historic 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The conference's second week opens on October 14 with a panel featuring two key figures in the passage of the law, Emil Notti and Sam Kito. In

three subsequent sessions, Alaska Native leaders involved in the land claims movement and historians will reflect on the events leading up to ANCSA and the legacy of this key legislation.

Over its two weeks, the conference will include:

- 16 engaging sessions on many aspects of Alaska history
- A workshop on the techniques of history, focusing on genealogy, biography and archives
- An open forum discussion on the teaching of history moderated by Society board member Ian Hartman
- A meeting for representatives of local historical societies to network and brainstorm, and
- The Alaska Historical Society's annual business meeting.

The cost to attend the entire conference is \$50. To register or for more information, go to the conference webpage: <https://alaskahistoricalsociety.org/about-ahs/conference/>

Please see the preliminary conference schedule on page 2.

—Rachel Mason

## President's Message

When I got the prompt that it was time for another newsletter report, I realized this is my last column as president of the Alaska Historical Society. This got me reflecting on the past two years and how rewarding it is to work with a great group of people on historical issues. I have felt a mixture of emotions: challenged, appreciated, inspired and most of all fulfilled by the work we have done together.

We can take pride in the momentous effort we mounted to keep the National Archives in the Northwest. We produced a thoughtful statement on the current debate over monuments and statues. We are engaged in a major undertaking to produce a guide to sources for the study of the historic Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. We produced our first on-line conference and all the presentations are available on our website for easy reference.

Now, we can look forward to the upcoming conference because Rachel Mason has assembled an excellent cast of presenters for our 2021 virtual conference. This is meaningful and important work, and

it is satisfying as well!

I want to continue to work with the Society; it has been too satisfying to stop! Thank you to everyone who has made the last two years so personally rewarding for me. And a big invitation to all who want to get involved and lend your help to the projects and issues that make Alaska history important.

—Will Schneider



## AHS CONFERENCE SCHEDULE, 2021

**Thursday, October 7:**

**10-11:30 am**

**Conference Welcome** by Will Schneider, President and Rachel Mason, Program Chair

**Keynote speech:** Tom Kizzia (Introduced by Karen Brewster)

**1:30-3 pm**

### **The Ghosts of Former Mines**

Nicola, Trish Hackett - *The History of the Lost River Tin Mining Company*

Scandling, Laury - *Treadwell, The Impermanent Town with a Permanent Impact: How a Big Mine on a Little Island Launched Alaska's Development and Had Worldwide Significance*

Brewster, Karen and Angela Schmidt - *Walking with Ghosts: Two Historians Hike the Chilkoot Trail*

**3:30-5 p.m**

### **Myth and Delusion in Southeast Alaska**

Poulson, Rebecca - *Alexander Baranov, the Man, the Myth: Reality, Distortion, and Why it Matters*

Sanguinetti, Niko - *Centennial Delusion: The Carving of the Juneau Centennial Totem Poles*

**Friday, October 8**

**10-11:30 am**

### **Southcentral Alaska**

Capra, Doug - *The Last Homesteaders: John and Carolyn Davidson at Driftwood Bay*

Gregory, Tabitha - *Valdez Rises: One Town's Struggle for Survival After the Great Alaska Earthquake*

Koenig, Laura - *"New York or London will have nothing on Anchorage:" Music in Anchorage, 1915-1930*

**1:30-3 pm**

### **Bristol Bay**

Troll, Tim - *Images of Nushagak - Gone, But Not Forgotten*. Branson, John - *Ivan Petroff's "Malchatna Villages" c. 1880-1888*

King, Bob - *Where the Hell was Hallerville? And Why No Canneries Survived on the Kvichak, Bristol Bay's Most Productive Salmon River*

**3:30-5 pm**

### **Food and Drink in Alaska**

Kugo, Yoko, Kazuyuki Saito, and Yu Hirasawa - *Food Life History in the Arctic Communities: Usages of Underground Cache and Food Preservation Practices*

Vandegraft, Douglas L - *Bars of Alaska's Past: Gone, But Forever Notorious*

**Saturday, October 9**

**10 am**

**Local Historical Societies meeting** (Ron Inouye, moderator)

**10-11:30 am**

**Melissa Barker workshop: Techniques of History**

**1:30-3 pm**

**Crossing International Borders**

Gorter, Waling T. - *Early Flemish/Dutch Accounts of the Bering Strait ("Anian Fretum")*

Allan, Chris - *Flag Wars: George M. Miller and the Battle over the U.S-Canada Border in Southeast Alaska*

Chapin, Melissa - *Forging an International Community: A Path to Friendship Across the Taiga*

**3:30-5 pm**

**Forum on the Teaching of History** (Ian Hartman, moderator)

**Thursday, October 14:**

**10-11:30 am**

**ANCSA panel 1:**

Schneider, William - *The 50th Anniversary of ANCSA and the Alaska Historical Society Guide to the Sources*

Meghan Sullivan, Emil Notti, and Sam Kito - *History of ANCSA*

**1:30-3 pm**

**ANCSA panel 2:**

Willie Hensley and Oliver Leavitt (not confirmed)

**3:30-5 pm**

**ANCSA panel 3:**

Wight, Philip - *Right of Way: The Trans-Alaska Pipeline System and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*

Monteith, Daniel - *William and Frederick Paul and their Contributions to Alaska Native Land Claims*

Haycox, Stephen - *Shock and Awe: Understanding Early Perceptions of the Passage of ANCSA*

**Friday, October 15**

**10-11:30 am**

**Aleutians**

Livingston, Michael - *Aleutian Ghost Towns? Call OpenStreetMap!*

McCartney, Leslie - *Preserving the Unanga (Alaska Aleut) Cuttlefish Project Recordings*

Peters, Lauren - *Sophia's Return*

**1:30-3 pm**

**Coming to Work in Alaska**

Hoefer, Carol - *Northern VISTAs: A Retrospective of the Volunteers in Service to America Program in Rural Alaska 1965-1971*

Feil, Heather - *Civilian Conservation Corps in the Arctic - 1937-1940*

**3:30-5 pm**

**AHS Business Meeting, State of the State, Memorials, Awards**

**Saturday, October 16**

**10-11:30 am**

**Interior Alaska**

Cohen, Rachel - *The Alaskan Capital that Never Was: The Willow Capital Project*

Johnson, Erik - *McKinley Park Station in 1921: The Centennial of Mount McKinley National Park's First Headquarters*

O'Connell, Keely - *Looking for Caro*

**1:30-3 pm**

**The Chena Townsite**

Shirrar, Scott, Josh Reuther, and Justin Cramb - *Historic Archaeology at the Chena Townsite*

Gutoski, Martin - *Digging for the Lost Town of Chena*

## Native Claims Source Guide Underway, Highlighted at Conference

The Alaska Historical Society's comprehensive project to produce a guide to sources for the study of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act is well underway.

The bulk of collections at major in-state archives have been reviewed and board member Karen Brewster is compiling them into the Guide format.

Bruce Parham just submitted his report on ANCSA holdings at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). He did the entire work remotely searching on-line and corresponding with archivists at NARA. His intimate knowledge of the institution, its holdings and arrangement made him the ideal person for this job, but that doesn't give enough credit to him for the hard work he put in to search out holdings. We owe him a big thanks!

Most of our work deals with primary sources but board

member Michael Hawfield has been compiling information on ANCSA curriculum developed over the years. The final product will be part of the guide and will include approaches to teaching ANCSA and available resources. Through hard work and persistence, Mike has made this an important part of the ANCSA Guide project.

While most of our work is systematic in approach, working from finding aids and hands-on review of boxes and files, there is an element of serendipity. For instance, Joaquin Estus mentioned the important role Nick Gray played in organizing Native groups in the years leading up to ANCSA and how the Alaska Federation of Natives was a dream of his.

In the *Tundra Times* archives at the Tuzzy Library in Utqiagvik, we found an article by Marilyn Richards that paid tribute to Nick in noting his dream for all Native organizations to

join as one strong voice. She wrote: “His legacy, however remains in what he envisioned. The first meeting of the Alaska Federation of Natives, included many members of associations Gray helped create.” (Richards, Marilyn. “Remembering Nick Gray, Philosopher, Visionary” in *Tundra Times*. Vol. 21, No. 25, June 20, 1984.) Then a quick search of the Alaska Digital Archives produced a picture of Nick and best of all, a copy of his moving speech to

delegates at the first AFN meeting. This is the fun part, when the pieces come together to tell the story.

Several of the pioneers in the Alaska Native land claims movement will join our October conference to speak about that era. Please consult the conference agenda (pages 2-3).

—Will Schneider

## 70's American Indian Activism Help Drive Alaska Land Claims Settlement

The Alaska Historical Society's project to produce a comprehensive guide to sources about the historic 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act has unearthed numerous little-remembered but fascinating details. Several center on efforts by President Richard Nixon's administration during an era of heightened national attention to American Indian activism.

Early in Nixon's term, Indian activists made national headlines when they occupied the abandoned federal prison at Alcatraz in San Francisco Bay, which lasted well into 1971. A year later, Indian activists occupied the Bureau of Indian Affairs just six blocks from the White House. And in 1973, followers of the American Indian Movement seized and occupied the town of Wounded Knee in South Dakota.

Nixon responded to these incidents with his “New Indian Policy,” reversing a long-standing policy of forced termination and assimilation in favor of self-determination. On July 8, 1970, he delivered a special message to Congress with a plan “to strengthen the Indian's sense of autonomy without threatening his sense of community.” His nine policy recommendations included a resolution of Alaska Native land claims.

Nixon's two key White House staff for Indian policy were Leonard Garment and Bradley “Brad” Patterson, Jr. Garment joined the White House staff in 1969 as special consultant to the president for domestic affairs. He assisted President Nixon with numerous projects focused on human rights, Indian affairs, voluntary action and the arts.

Garment's executive assistant was Patterson, who served both the Nixon and Ford administrations in several positions, most notably monitoring the concerns of Native Americans.

My sources indicate Garment and Patterson wrote most of Nixon's 1970 message to Congress on Indian policy. They were assisted by White House Fellow Barbara “Bobbie” Greene Kilberg, who served as staff assistant to the administration's Domestic Policy Council from 1971-73 and was project director for Indian policy under John Ehrlichman.

Garment eventually played a central role in the Watergate scandal's highest drama, discouraging Nixon from destroying White House tapes and pushing unsuccessfully for the president's early resignation. Ehrlichman helped cover up the White House's involvement in Watergate and served 18 months in jail after his conviction for conspiracy, perjury and obstruction of justice.

The Nixon administration's files on ANSCA are included in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States, Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, Richard Nixon, 1970* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971): 564-76. American Presidency Project. University of California at Santa Barbara.

<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/special-message-the-congress-indian-affairs>

Additional files are housed at: White House Central Files: Staff Member and Office Files: Leonard Garment's Files, 1969-1974; Indians Message Policy Memo-Background and [President Nixon's Indian] Message [July 9, 1970]; Alpha-Subject Files, 1969-1974, Boxes 105-106; Richard Nixon Presidential Library and Museum, Yorba Linda, CA.

—Bruce Parham

## Conference Panel Focuses on How to Teach U.S. History

The teaching of American history has once again become a topic of lively political discussion as state legislatures, politicians and pundits around the country have sought to influence the curriculum and exert pressure over what's taught in the classroom.

In this open forum discussion, moderated by Ian Hartman, professor of history at the University of Alaska Anchorage, we'll

discuss how Alaska's educators approach history and how they discuss the past from diverse perspectives. Panelists will share their experiences and reflect on how the current political climate has shaped the way they approach topics that might be viewed as divisive or controversial.

## Dunleavy Vetoes Hamper State Cultural and History Preservation Efforts

Historic preservation efforts will be seriously hindered in coming years as a result of budget cuts made by Gov. Mike Dunleavy, over the objection of the Alaska State Legislature.

The governor's proposed Fiscal 2022 operating budget for the State Library, Archives and Museums cut a vacant librarian position, two vacant museum customer service positions and eliminated funding for two Archives microfilers who would generate paid work to support their positions. All these proposed cuts were reversed by the Legislature, but Dunleavy vetoed the restorations.

The Alaska Library Association advocated for a \$635,000 increase to the State Library's budget to support the much-used State Library Electronic Databases and pay for two positions that maintain the Alaska Library Catalog, a shared online catalog used by 92 percent of Alaska's population. These funds would have been granted to the Alaska Library Network, which manages both the SLED databases and the Alaska Library Catalog.

Again the Legislature approved this proposal, but Dunleavy vetoed the funds. SLED and the Catalog will continue to function, but the library community is extremely concerned about the cuts these two services have suffered over the past five years.

The State Historic Preservation Office in the Alaska Department of Natural Resources sought funding required to match federal funds for the historic preservation program. Dunleavy vetoed the \$200,000 supported by the Legislature, leaving the Preservation Office unable to meet its required 40 percent state match for the annual reimbursable National Historic Preservation Fund federal grant.

The veto hinders the state's efforts to preserve its heritage and hampers the federally required environmental review of resource development and essential infrastructure projects, known as Section 106.

Large resource development and transportation projects impacted by the loss of funds include the Ambler Access Road, proposed natural gas pipeline, Donlin Gold Project, Greens Creek Mine, Kensington Mine, Coastal Plain development, Willow development, Pikka development, Liberty, Point Thomson, Pebble Mine, Red Dog Mine, and Pogo Mine, as well as improvements to all of Alaska's roads, harbors and airports.

The Alaska Historical Society will continue to advocate for funding of these vital programs and positions.

—Staff Report



**Indigenous Place Names Come to Anchorage** - Dena'ina language, culture and history received a major boost in early August when a new metal sculpture and signpost were erected at the Westchester Lagoon. Entitled "Chanshtnu" in the traditional Dena'ina language meaning Grass Creek, the sculpture represents a fire bag in which tribal leaders carried fire-starting materials. Athabascan artist and linguist Joel Isaak helped shape the themes and artist Melissa Shaginoff created the art. A committee organized by Aaron Leggett, president and chair of the Native Village of Eklutna, and the Anchorage Park Foundation is overseeing the Indigenous Place Names Project to place signs at Anchorage parks and trails with support from the Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska Native Heritage Center, Alaska Humanities Forum, the Anchorage Assembly and the National Recreation and Park Association. (Photo courtesy of the Rasmuson Foundation.)



## History is Sweet Music to the Ears of this Jazz Aficionado

Inspired by the guitar prowess of jazzman Wes Montgomery, southern rocker Duane Allman and his own uncle Jeff, Ian Hartman entered the University of Pittsburgh hoping to become a jazz performer and music teacher. He quickly discovered that studying music in academia was less than compelling, but studying history was fascinating.

Under stimulating professors such as Marcus Rediker, a well-known historian of Colonial America, Hartman quickly changed his major - and the rest is history. He earned his doctorate in American history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 2011 and published his first book, *In the Shadow of Boone and Crockett: The Politics of Race and Representation in 2015*. It explores the politics of race and inequality in the American South, focused on cultural depictions of poor whites in the Appalachian region.

Hitting the academic job market during the Great Recession, Hartman was grateful to land a temporary teaching post at the University of Alaska Anchorage, filling in for a professor on sabbatical.

"After growing up in the Pittsburgh area with its crowds and congestion, I was always attracted to the West, its broad landscapes and wide open spaces," Hartman said. "Alaska is that on steroids, the most beautiful place I've ever seen."

His one-year gig at UAA transitioned into a tenured professorship, where he teaches American history from the post-Civil War on, including the American West, colonialism, the Great Depression and America in war and peace.

In 2017 when co-editing *Imagining Anchorage: The Making of America's Northernmost Metropolis*, Hartman volunteered to write the chapter on civil rights in Alaska. It was then he discovered the enormous contributions of African-Americans to the history of Anchorage and Alaska. The research built on his earlier efforts to understand how social movements and racial inequality have shaped American history, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the Trump era.

Hartman's most recent book, *Black History in the Last Frontier*,

was published in 2020 in partnership between the National Park Service and UAA. He and Anchorage historian David Reamer are writing an expanded version for the University of Washington Press, due out next year.

Hartman joined the board of the Alaska Historical Society in 2017, a position he values for its community engagement and focus on increasing the public's understanding of Alaska history. As chair of the Advocacy

Committee, Hartman led the Society's efforts to prevent the closure of the federal archives in Seattle. He has facilitated discussions over the treatment of statues and monuments of controversial historical figures and advocated for state and federal funds for historical preservation and research.

Beyond his role with the Historical Society and his "day job" as chair of UAA's Department of History, Hartman is a past president of the Cook Inlet Historical Society and currently serves on the Board of Trustees for the University Press of Colorado.

Hartman loves traveling around Alaska and the West with his wife, Jenell, visiting and hiking in national parks from Denali to Yellowstone, and researching and reading about history. Although he's abandoned his dream to perform jazz professionally, Hartman still plays music and enjoys a concert whenever a marquee act comes to Alaska or he's traveling Outside.

—David Ramseur



## Cordova Museum Exhibits Keep Locals Coming Back for More

Frequent changes to gallery exhibits, a steady stream of out-of-town visitors and regular events of interest to residents make the Cordova Historical Museum a lively place. But on March 16, 2020, COVID-19 brought everything to a screeching halt. Staff spent the next six months scrambling to adapt and plan for reopening safely in the pandemic.

"It took us that long just to get all the PPE we needed," said Marina Briggs, museum director. When the museum reopened at the end of September 2020, "the city had ambassadors at the door who handed out masks, and we took names for contact tracing. It was a lot of work—let's put it that way," Briggs said. "We are so happy to be open."

The museum saw 2,200 visitors in the second quarter of 2019, but just 109 in the second quarter of 2020. The second quarter of 2021 brought numbers back up to 1,545 visitors—from 32 states and eight countries.

"I think that's because people just wanted to travel when it first opened up, before we had the variant come in," Briggs said.

The Cordova Historical Museum is located in the Cordova Community Center, a 34,000-square-foot, multi-use facility that also houses the library, an educational room, meeting spaces, the 200-seat North Star Theatre, city administrative offices and a full kitchen. The \$29 million center, completed in 2015, was funded with

federal and state grants and appropriations, Rasmuson Foundation and M.J. Murdoch Charitable Trust grants; Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Restoration funds; and “many, many, many bake sales,” Briggs said.

The museum’s main area includes exhibits on commercial fishing, First Peoples (including a new Eyak language kiosk), the Kennecott Copper Mine and the Copper River & Northwestern Railway. Curator Denis Keogh designs and builds the exhibits.

“As with most small museums, each exhibit is worked or re-worked depending on available funding,” Briggs said. “We’re always getting new stuff or tweaking this or adding that.”

About half the museum’s visitors are local people, Briggs said. They return often to see what’s new at the Copper River Gallery, where the exhibit changes every six to eight weeks—sometimes featuring artwork and photos by local residents themselves. Some upcoming exhibits include:

- September: David Rosenthal: Painting at the End of the Ice Age
- October: From the Vaults: Unusual Objects from Our Collection
- November: Denis Keogh: Recent Works

- December: Show Us Your Ice: Sheridan Glacier in Art and Photography (with most work submitted by Cordova residents)

Briggs keeps the museum open during special events like Cordova’s annual Christmas bazaar and the Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival. This year, the museum was awarded several grants to digitize the *Cordova Daily Times* and *Cordova Times* newspapers from microfilm. The newspapers date from 1908 forward. The project will make the newspaper collection searchable, eliminating the tedious task of searching page-by-page when members of the public request information.

“We’re very excited,” Briggs said. “We’ve been working on this for years, trying to figure out how to go about doing this.”

The museum’s collection is owned by the Cordova Historical Society, founded in 1959. To help raise funds for exhibits, the society encourages memberships during their annual gala and operates a museum gift shop. Visitors can purchase salmon labels on metal, Cordova-related books, Alaska honey and herbs, note cards, stickers, locally made jewelry and items made of copper.

“It’s a reminder that we were not always a fishing town; we used to be a mining town or copper town,” Briggs said.

—Carol Gales



The Cordova Museum's Copper River & Northwestern Railroad exhibit includes two seats from an original railcar and a screen that shows historic photos with views one would see if riding the train from the dock to the mine. (Photo courtesy of Cordova Museum.)

## News Summaries from around the State

### Hope and Sunrise

#### *Hope and Sunrise Celebrate Notable Residents*

The Hope and Sunrise Historical and Mining Museum has two picnic tables built by Tito Kagimoto (1921-2009), Hope's resident philosopher and owner of the Discovery Café. Tito advised everyone to give to others, love what you do and be happy. Born in Hawaii, Tito moved to Alaska in 1949. After a career as a carpenter, he moved to Hope in 1978. In the 1990s, he built dozens of picnic tables and gave them away. Museum visitors are welcome to eat at Tito's tables.

In July, the museum had a visit from Larry LaBrune, a descendant of a gold-rush miner, Robert Michaelson who arrived in Cook Inlet in 1889. He was a partner in the Polly Mine and dug in Blue Gulch on a trail leading up from Mills Creek. He and his Alaska Native wife, Corrine, had a daughter, Stella. Robert's wife died young, and he sent Stella outside to be raised by relatives. He left Alaska in 1930 and spent his last years at his daughter's South Dakota farm.

Joseph and Alexandria Richard were two early residents of Hope. Joseph, a 25-year-old Canadian, arrived in Hope in 1898. He married Alexandria Petroff, an Alaska Native from Tyonek. They managed a roadhouse in Sunrise and built a large home on the corner of Hope's First and B Streets. Neighbors enjoyed their company and the tea and cake they served. Joe mined gold, built Iditarod Trail roadhouses, and mushed the mail. The couple adopted two Alaska Native children, Lizzie Faday and George Brandal. Lizzie died young and was buried in Hope. George grew up, moved to Anchorage, and had a long life. His children and grandchildren still visit Hope. The Richard House ruins were leveled in April 2021.



Sunrise Roadhouse ca. 1916, perhaps when it was under management by Joseph and Alexandria Richard. This photo is from Richard Carpenter's book *Alaska on Horseback* (Doubleday), published in 1923. Carpenter is on the right. (Library of Congress photo via Museum Syndicate.)

### Whitehorse

#### *Yukon Community Welcomes New Exhibits*

In Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, there are new outdoor exhibits at the S.S. *Klondike* National Historic Site. Parks Canada has been working with Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än to bring indigenous voices and presence to the site. The Yukon River and its tributaries have always been a life-shaping force, and the introduction of riverboats greatly impacted First Nations and other people. Riverboats supported an intensive mining economy, and both the positive and negative impacts of this legacy can be seen along the Yukon River today. The S.S. *Klondike* carried passengers and freight from Whitehorse to Dawson, and back again, in the 1930s. The new exhibits include panels about the uses of the waterfront over time, including expropriations of residents from the waterfront. Work is underway to develop a welcoming area featuring three cedar posts designed and carved by local indigenous artists.



S.S. *Klondike* in 1948. (Photo from Parks Canada, Syd White Collection, #009, 1948.)

### Petersburg

#### *By Steamship Through Southeast Alaska in 1915*

The Clausen Museum in Petersburg received a special donation of a photo album and journal of Agnes Johnson Steberg's steamship trip through Southeast Alaska in 1915. Johnson was a teacher in Petersburg and stayed after marrying Knut Steberg, a founder of the Bank of Petersburg. The album contains descriptions and impressions of her trip, identifying people and places, along with photos of Port Armstrong, Port Walter, Gut and Thomas Bays, Point Agassiz and Metlakatla as well as Wrangell, Sitka and Ketchikan. The album is one of a number of notable donations to the Museum this year, including a calfskin key holder emblazoned with the names of a long-gone hotel and items from Petersburg Fisheries (now OBI Seafoods). Donations from the processing company include T-shirts and other memorabilia from the "Canned Salmon Classic," a contest to guess the fish pack each year, and the "Humpy 500," a race down the cannery hill by various vehicles and costumed operators into downtown Petersburg held every Fourth of July.



## Juneau

### ***New Publication Highlights Alcohol in Local History***

The Spring/Summer 2021 issue of the *Gastineau Heritage News*, a publication of the Gastineau Channel Historical Society, is devoted to the role of alcohol in early Juneau. The issue includes an article about the Old Log Cabin at Third and Main, which served at different times as a school, church and brewhouse. The cabin's life started as a miner's abode in 1881. It became Juneau's first school in 1885. A few years later, in 1891, a log bell tower was added to the cabin, and it served as the Presbyterian church. In 1897, the Presbyterians sold the cabin to brewer William Matlock, who made the cabin his office and built a brewery beside it. After Matlock took off for the gold fields of Nome in 1900, brewer S. Zinda took over the works as Eagle Brewery. The brewery operated successfully until prohibition began in Alaska in 1918.

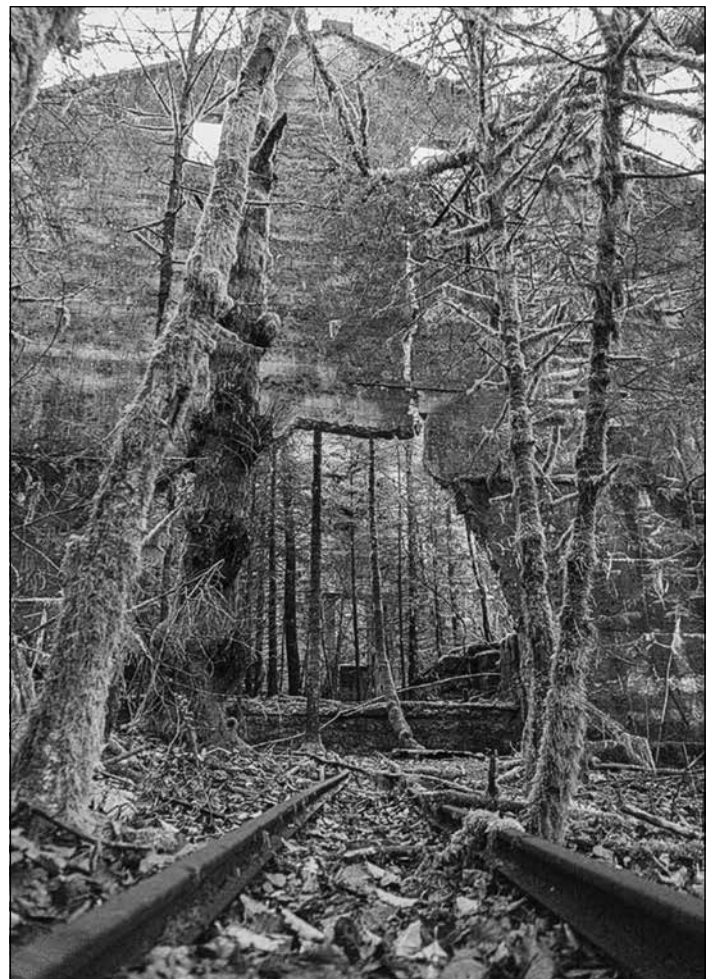
Another article in the issue focuses on the role of women in Juneau alcohol establishments. Mary Joyce was one of Juneau's most notable bar owners. She was hired in 1928 at age 29 as a private nurse for WWI veteran Leigh Hackley "Hack" Smith, who owned a camp and lodge 40 miles south of Juneau. They managed the property, raised sled dogs and guided together until he died in 1934. Hack's mother deeded the camp to Mary. The next year, Mary mushed a thousand miles overland to represent Juneau at the Fairbanks Winter Carnival. After working as a flight attendant and becoming one of Alaska's first female pilots, Mary sold the lodge in the mid-1940s and worked in Juneau as a nurse. She later bought two bars across from each other on Franklin Street: The Top Hat and the Lucky Lady (still there). Mary led Juneau's statehood parade on July 4, 1959. She died in 1976.



Mary Joyce mushing, 1936. (Alaska State Library, ASL-P67-024.)

### ***Murder in Juneau, Mining at Treadwell***

The Juneau Douglas City Museum holds walking tours each summer, focusing on Juneau history. This year, former Juneau criminal reporters Ed Schoenfeld and Betsy Longenbaugh led the True Crime Capital Killer walking tour. Participants heard about and visited the scenes of several historic Juneau murders. Local mining historian Jim Geraghty led the Treadwell Mine Complex walking tour, telling the story of what was once the largest gold mining operation in the world. After John Treadwell purchased French Pete's Paris Claim in 1881, the mine evolved from a single claim to four mines, five miles and a bustling community of mine workers and their families, complete with stores, mess halls, bunkhouses, a marching band and even Alaska's first indoor swimming pool. The tour took place on the Treadwell Historical Trail, starting on Sandy Beach in Douglas.



Treadwell abandoned gold mine. (Photo from Reddit.)

The City Museum's Juneau History Grant is now open to applicants. Any person or group with a good idea for preserving or sharing Juneau's history is encouraged to apply for funding. Projects can be live performances, public presentations, publications, community signage or memorials, digitization of historical information or other tangible products that can be shared with the public. Applications are due October 1. For information and to apply, go to [Juneau.org/museum](http://Juneau.org/museum) or call 907-586-3572.

## Ketchikan

### *Women's Voting Rights Exhibited at Museum*

The traveling exhibit *Alaska's Suffrage Star*, on women's suffrage, opened August 13 at the Tongass Historical Museum. The exhibit explains how local and national activism helped Alaska white women achieve the vote in 1913. That year, the Alaska Territorial Legislature's first bill granted voting rights to women citizens. Only in 1924 did Alaska Native women become eligible voters, because it was only then that the federal government granted U.S. citizenship to Native Americans.

The exhibit highlights Alaska women voting rights activists from the 1910s and 1930s, including:

- Nellie Cashman, entrepreneur, miner, and the first woman to vote in a territorial election in Alaska,
- Cornelia Hatcher, temperance leader who led the successful effort to enact Prohibition in Alaska,
- Lena Morrow Lewis, socialist organizer and the first Alaska woman to run for federal office, in 1916,
- Tillie Paul, Tlingit educator and tribal historian who was arrested for assisting a Tlingit man to vote.

*Alaska's Suffrage Star* will be on exhibit at the Tongass Historical Museum until September 11, and then will appear in various locations throughout Ketchikan until October 28. The traveling exhibit has already been to several museums and libraries around Alaska.

The Ketchikan Museums Artifact of the Month for August is Minnie Harvey's crazy quilt, first shown at the Ketchikan Women's Club exhibit of crafts and handiwork at the 1935 Industry Fair held in Ketchikan to lift community spirits and promote activities as the town emerged from the Great Depression. Minnie's quilt has a beautiful and busy design that includes irregular shapes, haphazard fabrics and meticulous embroidery. Minnie made the baby quilt and a matching pillowcase around 1885 for her daughter Millie's baby carriage. The Harvey family brought these items with them when they moved from Wisconsin to Ketchikan around 1920.

On September 2 Ketchikan Museums hosted a virtual Museum Midday program with Megan Smeltzer on Tlingit women's beadwork. Smeltzer is the author of *Painful Beauty: Tlingit Women*,



Minnie Harvey's Crazy Quilt, with the ribbon it won at the 1935 Ketchikan Industrial Fair. ( Photo courtesy Ketchikan Museums.)

*Beadwork and the Art of Resilience.* At a time when indigenous cultural practices were actively being repressed, beading supported cultural continuity, demonstrating Tlingit women's resilience, strength and power. Smeltzer showed how beading gave Tlingit women the freedom to innovate aesthetically, assert their clan crests and identities, support tribal sovereignty and pass on cultural knowledge.

Ketchikan Museums is collaborating with the Ketchikan Pioneer Home for a new oral history program. Family members and friends residing at the Pioneer Home are invited to share an oral history and treasure the stories they share. It can be a conversation with parents, aunts and uncles, grandparents, old friends and even new friends. Contact Erika Jayne Christian at 907-225-5900 for questions, to schedule a recording session with your elder, or if you want to learn how to record oral history interviews for Ketchikan Museums.

## Kodiak

### *History Museum's "Activities Porch" Open for Storytelling*

The Kodiak History Museum is once again welcoming face-to-face visitors. The Museum is especially thankful for the opportunity to once again host events on the Activities Porch. This gathering place is central to the Museum's mission of being the Storyhouse of Kodiak. On June 18, the Museum welcomed artist Woody Koning to the Porch to share the stories behind his beautiful artwork on display at the Museum. Visitors heard about Koning's experiences of living in Kodiak and saw Kalsin Bay through his lens.

## Seward

### *A Harrowing Story from Seward's Past*

In the Pages from the Past column of its newsletter, the Resurrection Bay Historical Society reports on past news stories in Seward. The March 5, 1942 issue of *The Seward News* reported on the harrowing story of Dr. O.L. Alberly, who survived for 85 days on Montague Island. Dr. Alberly, a 49-year-old chiropractor in Fairbanks who had recently moved to Seward, and his 29-year-old friend Alfred Thibbert, were dropped off for a hunting trip in December 1941 with a month's supply of food. As they moved to another part of the island, a ferocious storm came up. Not only did the gale winds interfere with their movements on the island, but the blizzard also drenched and corroded their ammunition so it could not be shot. They were unable to return to McCloud Bay, where they had been dropped off, and where they had left their supplies. The two men began a battle for survival, eating shellfish, worms and anything else they could find. Alfred died of starvation about a month before Alberly was rescued. The older man had weighed 200 pounds when he left Seward, but weighed only 95 pounds when he returned at the end of February 1942.

## Karluk

### *Saving Alaska's Most Endangered Historic Properties*

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation announced the 2021 Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties. Again topping the list is the Ascension of Our Lord Chapel in Karluk built in 1888, the oldest standing Russian Orthodox church in Alaska. Situated on top of an eroding cliff, the church had come perilously close to falling into the Karluk River on the west side of Kodiak Island. The good news is a crew arrived during the first week of August to move the church. It is not yet in its final position, but it's been moved far enough to keep it safe.

Three new properties were nominated to the Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties list this year: Pioneer Hall in Ketchikan, the One Room Schoolhouse in Talkeetna and Pilgrim Hot Springs, 60 miles north of Nome. The remainder of this year's list were from last year.

- Ascension of Our Lord Chapel, Karluk
- Wolf Creek Boatworks, Prince of Wales Island
- U.S. Commissioner's Cabin, McCarthy
- SS *Nenana*, Fairbanks
- Pilgrim Hot Springs, Nome
- Pioneer Hall, Ketchikan
- Eldred Rock Lighthouse, Lynn Canal
- Talkeetna One Room Schoolhouse, Talkeetna
- Qiyhi Qelahi (Groundhog Mountain) Cultural Landscape
- 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue Theater, Anchorage

## Building a Long Trail from Fairbanks to Seward

One of the goals of the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is to establish and build the Alaska Long Trail, a hiking trail from Fairbanks to Seward. As broadly planned, the trail would follow a scenic route close to the Parks Highway from Fairbanks to Talkeetna, then swing east through the Alaska Range, head south to Hatcher Pass and Chugach State Park, then follow the Iditarod Trail from Girdwood to Seward. While about a third of the trail exists as an established route, it could take decades or more for the Long Trail to become walkable from end to end without venturing onto roads. The Long Trail got a huge boost recently when, thanks to an amendment by Sitka's Sen. Bert Stedman and Anchorage Sen. Bill Wielechowski, \$13 million for the project was included in the Senate's version of the Alaska state budget.

## Naknek

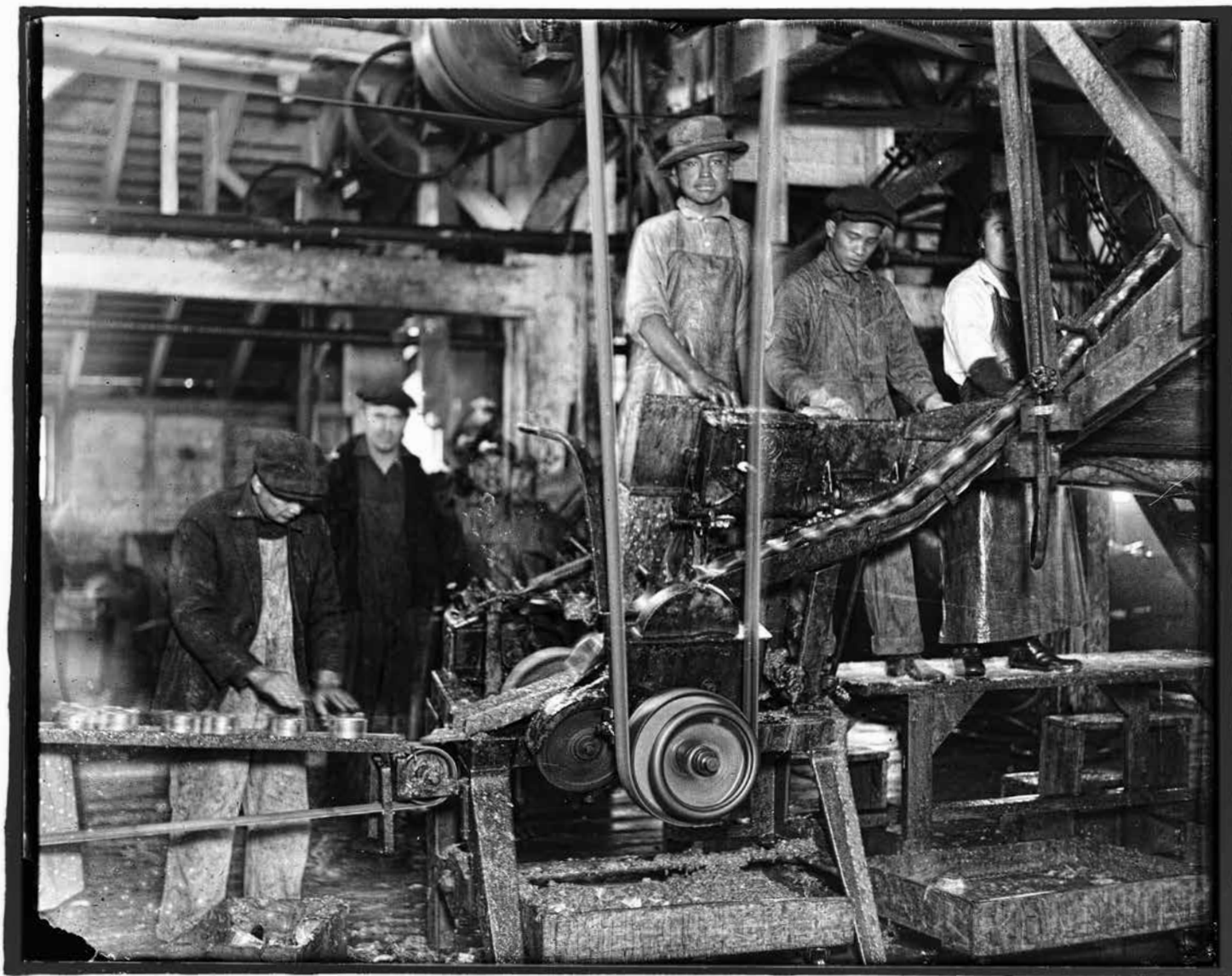
### *Cannery History Project Approved for State Museum*

Big news from the Naknek Cannery History Project is that the Alaska Historical Commission unanimously passed the APA Diamond NN Cannery Maritime Historic District recommending listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The project's exhibit entitled *Mug Up: The Language of Work* will be at the Alaska State Museum from February to October 2022 in Juneau. The exhibition's "big idea" is that the NN Cannery's 15-minute mug-ups brought together diverse cannery workers, who provided essential labor and created a unique social milieu within the workscape of Alaska's salmon canneries that, collectively, represented the industrial revolution of the North.

## Anchorage

### *Bringing a Missile to the Nike Site Summit*

Friends of Nike Site Summit are currently in negotiations to acquire a decommissioned Nike Hercules missile from the Air Power Park in Hampton, Virginia. FONSS hopes to bring the missile to Anchorage this summer. Once acquired, the missile may spend some time in Anchorage being rehabilitated prior to being moved up to Site Summit. Many challenges, some still unknown, are involved in transporting the 40+ foot missile and its incredibly heavy launcher.



**Early Yakutat cannery work.** (Shoki Kayamori, Photographs, circa 1912-1941, ASL-P55-305.)

## Port Alexander

### *Progress Underway to Protect Local Museum*

The Port Alexander Historical Society, with its museum in the Karl Hansen house in town, was offered the lot the museum stands on by the Society's benefactor, Orrie Bell. After much discussion, the Society concluded it would be more prudent to give the land to the City of Port Alexander. Mr. Bell was agreeable to gifting the lot and museum building to the city. Talks are underway for an agreement that will have the PAHS operate the museum and the city insure the property. The Society has appealed to its members and friends to renew or become a member at \$12/year (or more). They also would like articles for the "I remember when" column of their newsletter. The Port Alexander Historical Society's address is 224 Katlian, Sitka, AK 99835.

*Rachel Mason and Jo Antonson*



Officials gather at the dedication of Anchorage Cemetery's new Bell Tower Plaza on June 20. From left, Diane Kaplan of the Rasmuson Foundation, former Assemblyman Ernie Hall, Lile Gibbons of the Rasmuson Foundation board and Beth Nordlund of the Anchorage Parks Foundation. (Photo courtesy of Rasmuson Foundation.)

## Bell Tower Plaza Completes Renovation of Anchorage Cemetery

More than 100 people attended the final touch to the renovation of the Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery on this year's summer solstice – dedication of the Bell Tower Plaza featuring a small pavilion with benches, shrubs and a tower with carillon bells. The addition was envisioned by long-time Alaska resident John P. Bagoy, who led the effort to identify and restore many of the gravesites of Anchorage pioneers.

Thanks to the efforts of Bagoy and many others, the downtown Anchorage cemetery is now a beautiful historic gem at 6<sup>th</sup> and Cordova. But it wasn't always so. The 22-acre tract was laid out in 1915 by federal planners with the Alaska Engineering Commission as the town moved from a tent city on Ship Creek to the bluff above it. But by the 1980s, it had become derelict.

"Headstones and wooden markers eroded away and disappeared; the grounds were choked with weeds," wrote Audrey Weltman Kelly in the introduction to the 2021 cemetery tour brochure.

Bagoy became an advocate for the cemetery's renovation in 1984 when he buried his mother there. His extensive research about early residents became a book, *Legends and Legacies: 1910-1935*. It was expanded with the assistance of the Cook Inlet Historical Society (CIHS), which hosts a website based on Bagoy's work: <http://www.alaskahistory.org>.

In 1995, Bagoy began giving cemetery tours on summer solstice, telling the stories of those buried there. By the early 2000s, the tour had become so popular with more than 250 attendees that he asked Audrey and Bruce Kelly to assist him. Bagoy was planning the installation of the carillon bell tower when he passed away in 2005. The Kelly's assumed leadership of the tours and saw through Bagoy's plan which culminated in the June 20 dedication of the Plaza.

Major supporters of the project include the Rasmuson Foundation, Anchorage Park Foundation and Cemetery Advisory Committee.

*—J. Pennelope Goforth*





An estimated 75 people attended a book signing event Aug. 5 at Nome's Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum to mark publication of *Our Stories Etched in Ivory / Qulip'yugut Iksiaqtuumaruat Tuugaami: The Smithsonian Collections of Engraved Drill Bows with Stories from the Arctic*. Edited by Amy Phillips-Chan, the publication combines drill bow stories from Smithsonian museums with oral histories gathered from 40 contemporary Alaska Native contributors from Utqiagvik, Point Hope, Kotzebue, Shishmaref, Nome, St. Michael and Anchorage. Stories of hunting and community life are accompanied by illustrations of cultural heritage objects from the McLain museum. About 50 free copies of the book were given out to attendees, and many of those who contributed knowledge to the project signed books. Back row: Susan Omiak (representing her father, James Omiak), Janice Knowlton (representing her father, Francis Alvanna), Yaayuk Alvanna-Stimpfle, Sylvester Ayek, Wilfred Anowlic, John Penatac Sr., Joe Kunnuk Sr. Front row: Amy Phillips-Chan, JJ Alvanna (representing his father, Francis Alvanna) holding daughter Suluk, and Jerome Saclamana. (Photo courtesy of Amy Chan.)

## Society Business

The annual business meeting of the Alaska Historical Society is scheduled for 3:30-5 p.m., October 15, 2021, via Zoom. Along with reports of the past year's activities, the agenda includes announcement of newly elected members of the Board of Directors, presentation of the Society's annual awards, and remembrance of our colleagues who died this past year.

Incorporated into this year's meeting will be the "State of the State," when the heads of the State Library, Archives & Museums and the Alaska Office of History & Archaeology talk about their programs. There also will be time for members to speak on issues of

concern to Alaska's history community and propose programs and projects for the Society to explore.

The annual business meeting is part of the Society's conference, but members only interested in attending the business meeting can participate. To do so, send an email to [members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org) before October 15 to get the Zoom user number and passcode.

Be on the lookout for a mailing later in the fall with information about the Society's annual silent auction, our principal fundraiser.

## Alaska Historical Society

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### Others:

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Ross Coen, *Editor, Alaska History*

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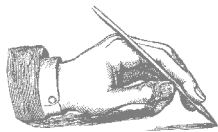
Judy Bittner, *Alaska Office of History and Archaeology,  
Anchorage*

Patience Frederiksen, *Alaska State Libraries, Archives, and  
Museums, Juneau*

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.alaskahistorical society.org](http://www.alaskahistorical society.org) and then click on "membership and giving."



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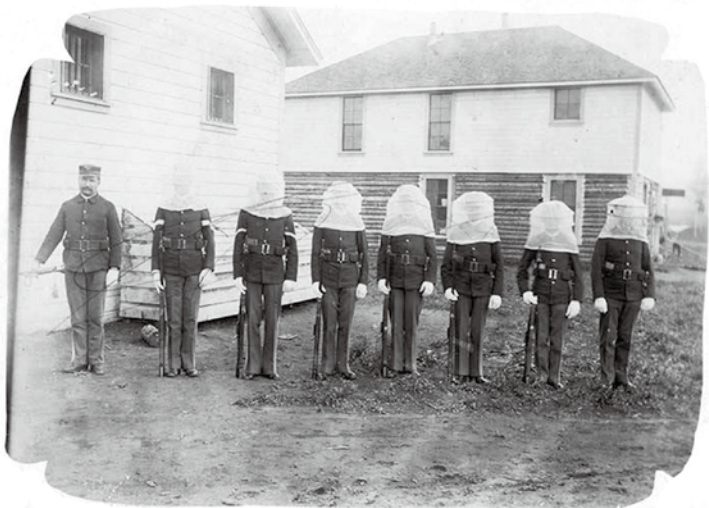
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Fort Egbert soldiers muster in their Army-issue head nets, July 27, 1902. (Alaska State Library, Ark A. Tower Photograph Collection (334).)

*Of All the Bugs in the World . . .*

In 1902, Bert Snedden of the Army Hospital Corps at Fort Egbert in Eagle wrote in a letter to his family that Alaska's bugs are unrivaled:

*For every hour of sunshine and rain we have, it seems as if a million mosquitoes are born. Perhaps you think they do not understand the art of feeding on human flesh? It has been the pleasure of the writer to witness the antics of sand flies in Old Mexico, gnats in Cuba, mosquitoes in the Philippines, green flies in India and a thousand and one different pests in China, but of all the bothersome pests that torture mankind the Alaska mosquito takes the medal and ranks first.*

—From Eagle City, Alaska, *Osborne County Farmer* (Osborne, KS), July 31, 1902.

—Chris Allan