



Another example of conflicting visions of Alaska history as protesters demonstrate outside Anchorage's Sydney Laurence Auditorium during the 23rd oil and gas lease sale in September 1969. Photo from the Ward Wells Collection, Anchorage Museum, B1983.19.54794.15

Registration now open for October conference

Nearly three dozen presentations spanning the many conflicting views of Alaska history, from colonialism and Native sovereignty to colorful characters and international relations, are on tap for the Alaska Historical Society's fall conference.

Award-winning author and nationally known environmental historian Bathsheba Demuth kicks off the conference Oct. 6 at the Anchorage Museum. Her talk is entitled "History from a Dogsled: The Yukon and the Stakes of Telling the Past," which examines the conflicts and changes spawned by the intertwined lives of people, dogs and salmon along the 19th century

Yukon. Demuth's keynote presentation will start with a 6 p.m. reception, followed by her talk at 7 p.m. (which will be shared virtually online) and a book-signing afterwards.

The conference continues the following day reflecting this year's theme, "Conflicting Visions of Alaska History." Thirty-one presentations grouped into 13 panels will be held online via Crowdcast, a digital meeting platform similar to Zoom. Four sessions will be held each day starting at 9 a.m. Oct. 7-8 and again Oct. 13-15.

The conference theme reflects the many examples of conflicting visions of Alas-

ka history and how it has been portrayed over the centuries. From the time of the first European contact through resource development and the modern Indigenous land claims movement, Alaskans have often been at odds with Outside forces and among ourselves.

Conference presentations focus on these conflicts, including contested figures and events, disputes over Native land claims, commerce and transportation, international conflicts between Alaska and Russia, and the portrayal of Alaska through the arts. There is a panel discussion about

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AHS seeks to bring more light to civil discussion of history

"History is at the center of our public conversations, but right now these conversations are generating more heat than light."



That's among the conclusions of a recent two-year study, "Reframing History" by the American Association for State and Local History, to better understand how Americans think about history and how historians can more effectively explain its value.

In Alaska of late, we've seen plenty of heat-generating conversations inflamed by historical overtones. Remember those recent yellow-star wearing protesters at Anchorage Assembly meetings comparing Covid masks to the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust? Or the racially tinged debates of the late 1980s and '90s over which Alaskans should have priority access to subsistence fish and game?

How to encourage Alaskans to appreciate their history is an every-day mission at the Alaska Historical Society. It's difficult as state budget cuts eat away at efforts to preserve our history. As Alaska historical records housed by the federal government are threatened. When programs designed to encourage young Alaskans to understand history, such as Alaska History Day, face the chopping block. When civics education in our schools and universities seem an afterthought.

To meet this challenge, one of our thoughtful board members has advanced an innovative idea: a lecture series to enhance civil discourse. Fairbanks anthropologist William Schneider, who devoted his career to the collection and preservation of oral history, envisions that by organizing presentations by Alaska and national experts, we can shed more light than heat on

timely topics with historical roots.

The goal is offering multiple fact-based perspectives to demonstrate how discussion can build greater understanding and tolerance of different perspectives, leading to a more informed citizenry. History has a role in civic discourse.

Among the subjects we've knocked around are a fresh look at the long-debated Alaska stalemate between conservation and development, reconciling Native sovereignty with the principle of equality under the law, how Alaska's geopolitical position has been shaped by the Cold War past and present, and an historical perspective on Juneteenth and its implications for our collective heritage.

We're still in the concept stages, with a panel fleshing out details. Schneider's vision is spot-on for integrating the four guidelines that AASLH study recommended in how to talk about history with the public: emphasize

critical thinking; compare historical interpretation to detective work; demonstrate how history helps make progress toward a just

world; and use location-specific examples to build support for inclusive history.

On other fronts, the AHS continues its efforts to advance the understanding of Alaska history. This year's annual conference promises both heat and light through nearly three dozen presentations under the broad theme of "Conflicting Visions of Alaska History." It kicks off with a reception and in-person/virtual presentation by nationally-known environmental historian Bathsheba Demuth at 6 p.m. Oct. 6 at the Anchorage Museum.

Also during the conference, please participate in the annual AHS business meeting on Oct. 14 to discuss and vote on the first update of our bylaws since 2009. The goal is to improve how we serve our 400-plus members.

—David Ramseur

By organizing presentations by Alaska and national experts, we can shed more light than heat on timely topics with historical roots.



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First guide to Native Claims Act sources published

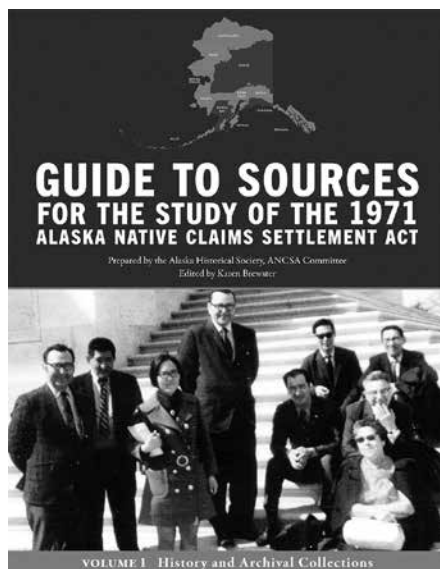
The first-ever comprehensive guide to historical sources about the landmark Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which marked its 50th anniversary last year, is being released this month by the Alaska Historical Society.

The three-volume, nearly 1,200-page guide identifies the vast majority of documents in existence in libraries, archives and personal collections from Alaska to Washington, D.C., about the historic legislation. The guide serves as the premier information gateway for researchers, historians and those interested in the fascinating history of how the largest land claims settlement in U.S. history became law.

The legislation, which passed Congress and was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1971, resolved long-standing issues surrounding aboriginal land claims in Alaska and dramatically changed the state's economy.

The Alaska Historical Society spent more than two years identifying documents and detailing where they are located and how they can be accessed. The project also unearthed numerous fascinating "gems" leading up to passage of the act. Here is a sample:

- A 20-page report about the first statewide meeting of Alaska Native leaders in Anchorage in 1966 that laid the groundwork for establishment of the Alaska Fed-



eration of Natives.

- A 1970 speech by President Nixon on Indian self-determination in which he called "the first Americans the most deprived and most isolated minority group in the nation."

- A speech by Dr. Henry Forbes who financially helped establish the *Tundra Times* and worked with editor Howard Rock.

"As Alaska's only statewide organization dedicated to the promotion of our state's history, the Alaska Historical Society is proud to produce this landmark document which should serve those interested in Na-

tive land claims for generations," said William Schneider, project director and professor emeritus at the University of Alaska Fairbanks Rasmuson Library.

"ANCSA was a major turning point in the history of Alaska Natives and their relationships to local, state and federal governments," said Dr. Chuck Smythe, senior ethnologist with the Sealaska Heritage Institute. "This invaluable sourcebook provides a guide to primary and secondary sources for understanding what led to this act and its aftermath (which is still unfolding) across the state."

The project is organized into three separate documents for ease of use. Along with describing archival materials, it includes an introductory essay, materials for teachers and an annotated bibliography. It is a fully searchable PDF document available online at the AHS website and at Scholarworks, a source for university research.

Essential funding came from Alaska Native corporations including Doyon, Sealaska, Calista, Bering Straits and Koniag, as well as the Rasmuson Foundation and the University of Alaska Anchorage library director's office from an Atwood Foundation grant.

Here's a link to the guide: <https://alaskahistoricalociety.org/discover-alaska/resources-for-the-study-of-the-1971-alaska-native-claims-settlement-act/>

—David Ramseur

History Day, civics education and archival access on AHS agenda

Throughout the summer, the Alaska Historical Society has continued to advocate around several topics of interest to our members. Some will be familiar while others are a new direction for the Advocacy Committee.

ALASKA HISTORY DAY With no official in-state affiliate, Alaska's History Day competition is now in jeopardy. The Alaska Humanities Forum will no longer host the competition, effective 2023.

The AHS is looking to partner with other nonprofits, historical societies in Alaska or with the University of Alaska to support the competition, ensuring that it has a viable future and continues to foster enthusiasm for history among Alaska's students.

If you have interest in donating to Alaska History Day, helping promote the program or participating as a judge,

please contact Ian Hartman (ichartman@alaska.edu).

CIVICS EDUCATION We also have urged our congressional delegation to support passage of the Civics Secures Democracy Act (Senate Bill 879), which creates grants for states and districts to support and expand access to American history and civics to help meet the needs of today's students and our constitutional democracy.

We agree with many of our colleagues across the nation that our free society depends upon well-informed citizens who are prepared to defend our freedom through reasoned and fact-based dialogue. History fosters thoughtful and constructive dialogue which is essential in our country today.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS With election season upon us, the AHS will once again send questionnaires to those seeking office at the state and federal levels.

Alaska has a wealth of libraries, archives, museums, universities and historical organizations that benefit from sustained investment. The AHS believes the state legislature and Congress must play active roles in maintaining and preserving our state's history.

We'll inquire who among those seeking office are supporters of Alaska history, and the humanities generally. We'll inform our membership once we receive responses to our questionnaires.

NARA ACCESS Finally, we are continuing our dialogue with Alaska's congressional delegation over the fate of the National Archives in Seattle. The AHS is dedicated to ensuring access to the physical records in Seattle and a more robust campaign to digitize records of interest to Alaskans.

—Ian Hartman, Advocacy Committee Chair

Talkeetna marks 50 years of preserving history

Though Talkeetna's "little red schoolhouse" closed in 1971, there's lots to learn inside. Now painted its original white, the 1936 federal school building has served as the Talkeetna Historical Society Museum since 1974.

The society was formed in 1972 by residents determined to save the historic schoolhouse from demolition, according to Sue Deyoe, museum executive director since 2013.

Today the museum's collection resides in five of six historic buildings it owns. The schoolhouse, two nearby converted railroad buildings, and two century-old log cabins house exhibits, while a third log cabin is rented out to generate income.

Maintaining six historic buildings is a challenge.

"We are trying to find the money for rehabilitation of the three main buildings since none of them has received much work at all, especially in the last 30 years," Deyoe said.

Talkeetna first earned a spot on the map as a community of about 1,000 in 1916 when it became a camp for railroad workers laying track between Anchorage and Fairbanks.

The community remains unincorporated. With no access to city funding, the nascent historical society in 1972 started what for years was its sole fundraiser, the Moose Dropping Festival. Its signature event was a raffle that involved releasing painted and numbered moose "nuggets" over a target; the nugget landing nearest the target signified the winner. The festival was discontinued after 2009, having grown too big and rowdy for the small community to handle. The event was no longer netting much income anyhow and didn't meet the museum's mission, Deyoe said.

Today, about a third of the museum's \$160,000 annual budget comes from grants. Since about 2005, nearly half the budget has been covered by admissions and museum store income. And most of that income is from cruise ship passengers on shore excursions. Of the roughly 2,000 ship passengers arriving in Talkeet-



"The Spirit of Talkeetna" diorama features carved representations of recognizable residents (past and present) and buildings. Photo courtesy Talkeetna Historical Society.

na daily by bus or train, Deyoe estimates that 80-120 visit the museum, located a block off Main Street.

"A big day is 150 people—and it's exhausting," Deyoe said. The museum is on track for record visitation this year.

Among the museum's most popular exhibits is a 12'x12' model of Denali, created in 1969 at the behest of explorer Brad Washburn for a Seattle exhibition. On permanent loan through a partnership with the National Park Service, the model nearly fills one of the museum's buildings. Antique climbing gear, including ice axes from some historic climbs, is displayed nearby along with a looping 15-minute video about what it takes to climb Denali.

The Gleason Exhibit, added this year, is another must-see. A decade ago, local artist Jim Gleason carved from balsa wood more than 100 figurines representing Talkeetna residents and several Talkeetna buildings, creating a diorama of a community street scene.

"It was in private hands for a long time and now it's part of our museum," Deyoe said.

Legendary bush pilot Don Sheldon's aerial wolf hunting guns also draw attention. Sheldon mounted four guns under his airplane and designed push-button controls that allowed him to accurately

shoot while flying at a time when aerial hunting of wolves was encouraged.

"We hope that we have those forever and continue to tell the story," Deyoe said. "It was a part of our history, whether it be good or bad."

As part of observing Talkeetna's centennial, a volunteer in 2016 helped the museum develop a walking tour app through STQRX, a storytelling platform used by museums and tour destinations worldwide. Visitors can download the app and enjoy a 45-minute narrated walk around the Talkeetna Historic District. Deyoe says it's worth the annual fees.

"We hope that in the future, it'll have a lot more on it," she said.

Now marking its 50-year anniversary, the society is fundraising with sales of commemorative mugs, caps and t-shirts and is planning a Sept. 9 party. Celebrations could extend to 2024, the 50th anniversary of the museum's opening.

In addition to rehabilitating museum buildings, Deyoe said the society envisions a complete make-over of exhibits and the inclusion of more Native history.

The Talkeetna Historical Society Museum is open daily all summer and on weekends in winter. Until you can get there, go online to visit virtually at www.talkeetnamuseum.org.

—Carol Gales

Understanding history vital to establishing truth, says attorney and returning AHS board member

Researching a book about the last two territorial Alaskans put to death before Alaska abolished capital punishment in 1957 inspired Anchorage attorney Averil Lerman to years of service as an engaged Alaska Historical Society board member.

Currently in her third three-year term on the board, she said she appreciates the society for its advocacy in preserving historical resources and for providing a platform for those studying the past.

"I've always viewed history as a way to answer questions, by establishing an honest factual record and inquiring about the interpretation of that record," said Lerman, who first touched down in Anchorage in 1982 for a planned one-year stint and now is marking four decades in the 49th state.

Raised in Denver and Nashville, Lerman earned a bachelor's in "British Studies" at Brandeis University, a cross-disciplinary major grounded in history and English. After earning a law degree from Boston's Northeastern University School of Law in 1982, she headed to Alaska for a clerkship in the Anchorage Superior Court. She was soon joined by then boyfriend Sen Tan. They married, raised two children and became active in their community and state.

"I've always viewed history as a way to answer questions, by establishing an honest factual record and inquiring about the interpretation of that record."

Lerman practiced law for 30 years, first as a civil litigation lawyer, and then as a public criminal defense attorney with the Office of Public Advocacy and Federal Public Defender.

"My professional focus was representing indigent Alaskans who sought relief from questionable convictions," she said. Tan served as a Superior Court judge until his recent retirement.

Since her 2011 retirement, Lerman focuses her energies on writing a book about the murder trials of the last two men executed in Alaska. Both African-Americans living in Juneau, Austin Nelson was tried first, for killing a grocer at 2:30 a.m. in December 1946.

After he testified at Nelson's trial, the second man, Eugene LaMoore, was arrested on a questionable perjury charge. LaMoore was subsequently charged with assisting Nelson in the crime at 12:30 p.m., two hours earlier than the time identified in Nelson's trial. After woefully inadequate defenses, each man was hastily convicted. Nelson was hanged in 1948, LaMoore in 1950.

"Unlike the action of the judge in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, no Atticus Finch was appointed to protect the fair trial rights of the unpopular men who were charged," Lerman said.

"The cases illustrate some of the reasons why some criminal convictions cannot be viewed as reliable arbiters of truth—the same factors historians must also weigh in interpreting primary source evidence: bias, mistake, and unequal access to reliable sources and investigative resources," she added.



Former AHS President Averil Lerman has returned to the board to help advocate for access to historical records. Photo courtesy of Averil Lerman.

First joining the society board in 2014, Lerman helped AHS oppose the transfer of Alaska's federal archival records to Seattle. She continued that fight with the AHS against the Trump administration's efforts to close the Seattle archives repository. She served two years as AHS president, 2017-19, before terming out in 2020.

Now back on the board, Lerman advocates for access to historical resources and for encouraging the extension of society membership and participation to people from minority communities. She is helping craft the society's annual conference, kicking off this year Oct. 6 at the Anchorage Museum.

In their free time, she and her husband enjoy visiting their grown children in southern California and Seattle, taking in the sights across Alaska and the Lower 48 in their RV, and attending rock and roll concerts, including performances by "the Boss," Bruce Springsteen (who, she notes, is touring this winter).

—David Ramseur



"History from a Dogsled: The Yukon and the Stakes of Telling the Past" is the title of keynote speaker Bathsheba Demuth's Oct. 6 lecture.

Conference news

Continued from page 1

teaching the landmark Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, preceded by a presentation about the society's guide to sources about ANCSA and teaching curricula about the law. Another panel discussion focuses on public outreach and history.

There is a virtual workshop on the storage and preservation of paper records and photographs, especially aimed at those on a shoestring budget. In addition, there is a virtual tour of the Atwood Archives at the Anchorage Museum.

Two in-person Anchorage tours also are planned. At 7 p.m. Friday, Oct. 14, Alaska bar expert Doug Vandegraff will lead a walking tour of downtown Anchorage bars. At 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 15, Anchorage Museum Curator of Alaska History & Culture Aaron Leggett will conduct a driving field trip to recently installed Dena'ina signage around Anchorage which reflects the region's Native roots.

Registration for the conference is \$50 and can be completed on the AHS website: go to www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org, and click on the Conference Information button. Registration for in-person tours is also available at that site for \$25 each.

—Rachel Mason,
Conference Committee Chair

CONFLICTING VISIONS of ALASKA HISTORY

Alaska Historical Society 2022 Virtual Conference

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

6-7 p.m.	OPENING RECEPTION » In-person event at the Anchorage Museum Atrium
7-8 p.m.	KEYNOTE LECTURE » Bathsheba Demuth – History from a Dogsled: The Yukon and the Stakes of Telling the Past (In-person/online event)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

9-10:30 a.m.	CONTESTED FIGURES & EVENTS IN ALASKA HISTORY » Russ Vanderlugt – Dean of Alaskan Experts? The Conflicting Legacies of William Dall and Ivan Petroff » Betsy Longenbaugh and Ed Schoenfeld – Viewing History Through the Lenses of Murder
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	CONFLICTS OVER ALASKA NATIVE SOVEREIGNTY » William Schneider - The Struggle for Recognition of Sovereignty and the Federal Government's Responsibility to Alaska Natives » Stephen Haycox - Competing Visions of Tribal Sovereignty in Alaska
2-3 p.m.	ANCSA GUIDE » Sue Sherif, William Schneider, and Karen Brewster
4-5:30 p.m.	PANEL DISCUSSION: TEACHING ANCSA » Charleen Fisher, Michael Hawfield, Jennifer Romer, and Michael Hoyt

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

9-10:30 a.m.	REFLECTING ON ALASKA THROUGH CANVAS AND PEN » Doug Capra – The Turbulent Genesis of Rockwell Kent's <i>Wilderness: A Journal of Quiet Adventure in Alaska</i> » Sheila Sparks Ralph – Vic Sparks, Skagway's Sourdough Artist
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TO UNIQUELY ALASKAN CHALLENGES » Spencer Abbe – The Committee Discusses Prophecy: City Planning for Earthquake Recurrence after 1964 » Leslie McCartney – Kotzebue Communities of Memory Project Jukebox » Daniel Monteith – Time Capsule, Treasure Trove: Alaskan Voices of Living on the Land, 1972-1979
2-3:30 p.m.	CANNING SLIPPERY SALMON » Katie Ringsmuth – "How to Eat Canned Salmon": The Salmon Industry and the Rise of National Advertising » Virtual tour of Mug-Up exhibit at Alaska State Museum
4-5:30 p.m.	DIFFERENT WAYS OF PRESENTING HISTORY » Sabena Allen – Climate Change, Oral History, and Conflicting Notions of Knowledge: A Methodological Approach » Rachel Mason – Anthropology and History: Different Postulates about the Possibility of Objective Truth » David Reamer – Public History Practice in Alaska: Lessons Learned from Eager Consumers

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13

9-10:30 a.m.	CONFLICTS OF COLONIALISM AND RACE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adam Kersch – Infectious Diseases, Race, and Settler Colonialism on Sheet'ká Kwáan » Lauren Peters – Colonialism and Racial Capitalism in the Pribilofs
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	ATWOOD RESOURCE CENTER AT ANCHORAGE MUSEUM TOUR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Virtual tour with Heather McClain, Chloe Nielsen, and Monica Shah
2-3:30 p.m.	CONFLICTS IN ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH & EDUCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Mary Ehrlander and Hild Peters – Health Conditions among Alaska Natives in the Early 20th Century » Benjamin Jacuk – A Reindeer in Caribou's Clothing: Sheldon Jackson's Alaska Boarding Schools and Structural Violence » Taiyoh Itoh – The Cornerstone on Troth Yeddha': Alaska Native Activism in Higher Education
4-5:30 p.m.	RUSSIA & ALASKA: A CONFLICTED HISTORY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ian Halter – Suspicion and Triumph: Remembering Alaska's Cession in Russia and the United States » David Ramseur – The Thaw and Refreeze of the Alaska-Russia Ice Curtain » Brandon Boylan – Alaska in the Context of Russia's War on Ukraine

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14

9-10:30 a.m.	ENVIRONMENTAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Heather Feil – To Preserve Unimpaired ... Evolution of Alaska's National Parks » Ava Martin – The Historic Environment and Best Practice in Scotland and Alaska
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	WORKSHOP: PRESERVING PAPER DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS ON A SHOESTRING BUDGET <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Virtual workshop with Rachel Cohen
2-3:30 p.m.	ANNUAL AHS MEETING, AWARDS, AND MEMORIALS
4-5:30 p.m.	HISTORY AND PUBLIC OUTREACH PANEL DISCUSSION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Moderated by Ian Hartman
7-9 p.m.	ANCHORAGE BAR TOUR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In-person tour with Doug Vandergraft, starting at Anchorage Museum

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15

9-10:30 a.m.	CONFLICTS OVER TRADE AND COMMERCE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Christopher Petrakos – Violence on the Yukon: Traders, Trappers, and Imperial Contestation on the Alaska-Yukon Borderlands, 1847-1870 » J. Penelope Goforth – The Alaska Commercial Company: Corporate Villain or Benevolent Enterprise?
11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	CONFLICTS OVER TRANSPORTATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Mark Moore – Researching R. G. LeTourneau's Overland Trains: Stories from the North » Leanna Prax Williams – Altering Course: Alaska's Aviation Industry and the 1938 Civil Aeronautics Act » Philip Wight – Whose Haul Road? How the Dalton Highway Became Public, 1968-2001
2-3:30 p.m.	EXPLORERS, OLYMPIANS, AND DRINKERS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Jim Barnett – Looking Again, Re-examining the Legacy of Captains Cook and Vancouver in Alaska » Pierce A. Bateman – "Our Anchorage, an International Host:" A History of Alaska's Bids to Host the Winter Olympic Games, 1942-Present » Douglas L. Vandergraft – Bars and Alcohol in Alaska: Conflict and Controversy
4-6 p.m.	DENA'INA INDIGENOUS SIGNAGE TOUR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In-person tour with Aaron Leggett, starting at Anchorage Museum

AHS annual business meeting scheduled for October 14

The Alaska Historical Society board is encouraging all AHS members to participate in this year's business meeting, scheduled on Friday, Oct. 14, as part of the annual conference.

The primary agenda item is consideration of changes to AHS bylaws, which have not been updated since 2009. The board is requesting members approve changes to permit electronic voting and circulation of information, among other issues.

The annual business meeting is scheduled for 2-3:30 p.m. on Oct. 14, via Zoom. The Zoom user number and passcode to participate in the business meeting will be included in the mailing that members will receive later this month with the ballot for election of directors.

Members unable to attend the meeting may vote by proxy and a form will be included in the mailing.

The meeting also will have reports of the past year's activities, 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. There 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 undertake.

Register now for our fall conference

THEME: Conflicting Visions of Alaska History

DATES: Oct. 6-8 & Oct. 13-15

REGISTER AT:
www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org

CONFERENCE FEE: \$50

OPTIONAL IN-PERSON TOURS:
 \$25 each

NOTE: The keynote lecture can be attended in person and will be preceded by a reception at the Anchorage Museum.

VALDEZ

Pioneer postmistress Gloria Day turns 100

Gloria Day turned 100 in January of this year. She came to Valdez in her 20s and was the postmistress at the original Valdez townsite. Her other jobs included working at Gilson's Grocery and serving as bookkeeper at the cannery her family owned, calling the site "Dayville." Later, Gloria and her husband Walt owned several businesses in Valdez, including clothing and shoe stores and a realty company. She has long been a strong advocate for preserving local history.

ANCHORAGE

Dena'ina place names installed at Anchorage public sites

The Alaska Historical Society is honored to endorse a project to designate places important to the Dena'ina who lived in today's Anchorage area with interpretive signs that share Dena'ina names for those places. The project will help more Alaskans and visitors learn about the Indigenous people of Southcentral Alaska. The Dena'ina Place Names Project has installed a sign at Anchorage's Westchester Lagoon for "Chanshtnu," the Dena'ina name for Chester Creek which means "grass creek." The English name Chester Creek is possibly an effort to pronounce Chanshtnu. A tour of Dena'ina place name markers in Anchorage, including the Chanshtnu sign, led by Aaron Leggett of the Anchorage Museum, is planned for October 15 as part of the Alaska Historical Society's 2022 conference.



Photo courtesy Anchorage Park Foundation.

JUNEAU

A fascinating tale of Alaska newspapers

Alaska Territorial Governor John Troy published the *Alaska State Empire*, a Juneau newspaper, for 25 years, including during his first term as governor—causing a conflict of interest that was partial cause for his removal from office. Daughter Helen Troy Bender Monson ran the newspaper for two decades. Helen returned to Alaska with her husband Robert Bender in 1932, before her father took office. Gov. Troy's wife lived outside Alaska for health reasons, so Helen took the role of hostess at gatherings at the governor's house. Robert Bender first took on the job as *Empire* editor. As his

alcoholism progressed, Robert left the territory for treatment and died while Outside. Helen took over in 1937 as editor of the newspaper. Beleaguered by the Department of Interior for opposing a tax hike on gold and fearing conflict of interest charges, John Troy resigned as governor in 1939, in the middle of his second term. In ill health, he died in 1941.

Helen, then married to pilot Alf Monson, continued to run the paper. In 1947, she bought the *Alaska Sunday Press*, a competitor of the *Empire*, and leased the *Press* to Spencer and Ann DeLong. That arrangement ended when Ann DeLong publicly criticized Helen for her anti-statehood stance. Helen's sister Dorothy Pegues took over editing the *Press*, but the weekly newspaper died in 1951. Helen perpetuated her father's conservative views in the *Empire*. She so detested Governor Ernest Gruening that she reportedly banned his name from the paper. In 1952, Gruening and two other officials successfully sued the *Empire* for libel for implying that they had misused public funds. In the face of the lawsuit, a printer's strike, and steady decline of revenue, Helen and Dorothy sold the *Empire* to an outside publisher in 1955.

CHICKALOON

Here come the Chickaloones!

Chickaloones: First Frost is a comic book based on Ahtna legends passed down through generations living in Chickaloon Village. It tells the story of two friends who go on a quest to become great storytellers, relying on the teachings of their grandmother to help them through the trials and adventures of their journey. Dimi Macheras, who created the comic book with Casey Silver and Melissa Shanginoff, learned Ya Ne Da Ah ("Ancient teachings" in Ahtna) from his grandmother, Katherine Wade, and mother, Patricia Wade. The team partnered with Dawn Biddison of the Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center to expand the scope of their work. They have developed

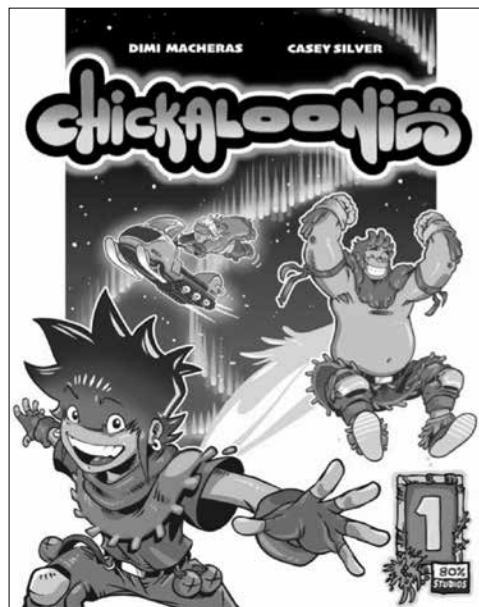


Image courtesy Dimi Macheras and Casey Silver.

instructional materials on Indigenous comic art, with activities inspired by Athabaskan pieces in the Smithsonian's Living Our Cultures exhibit at the Anchorage Museum.

COOPER LANDING

Donation allows museum to “cover the Cat!”

The Cooper Landing Museum received a big donation from the Thornton family: a 1928 Caterpillar, still in working order! Caterpillars are good at working in treacherous weather and rugged terrain. They were the equipment of choice in the building of the Alcan Highway in 1941. The museum is planning to build a cover for the Cat so it can be displayed to tell about the early days of Cooper Landing. Until then, it is temporarily parked in front of Katie Feichtinger’s beautiful mural map of the Kenai River and the west end of Kenai Lake.



Caterpillar in use while building Alcan Highway. Photo courtesy www.caterpillar.com.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Native leader and lawyer William Paul also a reputable territorial newspaperman

William Paul is well known as an early leader of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and a Tlingit lawyer, writer and legislator. In 1921, Paul became the first Alaska Native to earn a law degree. At that time, Natives were not allowed to vote or hold office in Alaska. Three years later, in 1924, Congress granted citizenship to Indigenous people. The same year, Paul became the first Native elected to the Alaska Territorial Legislature.

It’s less known that Paul established and operated several newspapers which he used to report on the legislature and to comment on political issues.

In 1923, Paul started the *Alaska Fisherman* out of Juneau. He moved the paper to Ketchikan a few months later, billing it as “A Paper For the Common Folk Treating Subjects of Labor and Fishing and Taxes Without Fear or Favor.” After he was elected to the legislature, Paul used his paper as a bullhorn for his political views and to endorse candidates. In 1926, he moved to Petersburg and launched another newspaper, *The Alaskan*. Within a month, a rival paper, the *Petersburg Press*, emerged, launching attacks on Paul and calling him a “breeder of racial hatred.” Paul was re-elected to the legislature that year, but never after that, despite three attempts.

HOPE

Historical society celebrates local families

The Hope and Sunrise Historical Society has developed signage with information about the Dena’ina people who lived and traveled around Turnagain Arm for some 1,500 years before the arrival of European explorers and traders. The Dena’ina were organized into semi-nomadic bands, traveling seasonally for fishing, hunting and other subsistence activities. During the winter of 1900, the U.S. Census reported 14 people living in four cabins on Bear Creek. These were the Tut’uht’ana band, or “headwaters people” who considered Knik their home. They had a summer settlement near Sunrise on the west side of Six Mile Creek. Before 1910, an epidemic struck the Bear Creek settlement. After, the survivors moved away and the four cabins were occupied by squatters and eventually burned down.

Some of the first settlers of Hope were men who came from Outside to mine and who married local Dena’ina women. One, Canadian Joseph Richard, arrived in 1898. He married Alexandria Petroff from Tyonek and built a large log house on the corner of First and B streets in Hope. The couple lived there until the 1940s. Their son George moved to Anchorage, married, and had a long life. The house no longer stands, but George’s grandchildren continue to visit the place where he grew up.

The society has developed the Hope Virtual Museum, www.HopeVirtualMuseum.org. The site has a number of online videos, an interactive map of the museum grounds and an interactive slide show. Check it out, and connect with them on different social media platforms to keep in touch.

KETCHIKAN

Remembering high school days

Early Ketchikan families sent their children to the Lower 48 to attend high school until 1915, when the first four-year high school program was offered in the community. Classes were at the original Main School downtown, and elementary and high school students shared the school for several decades. After the town’s population boomed with the opening of the Ketchikan Pulp Mill in 1954, a high school was built on Fourth and Madison Streets. The high school yearbook, *Kayhi*, was first published in 1921. The original polar bear mascot (shown here in the 1941 yearbook) was later replaced by a king salmon.



Kayhi yearbook. Photo courtesy www.alaskaweb.org.

Honoring Ketchikan's aviation history

Commercial aviation came to Ketchikan in 1922, connecting the community to the rest of the world. Pilot Roy Jones and mechanic Gerald Smith landed in the Tongass Narrows on July 17, 11 days after leaving Seattle. Jones flew a Curtiss F-6-K Seagull, an open cockpit biplane equipped with a Hispano-Suiza 180 HP engine. They had several mechanical breakdowns and some bad weather en route. From this flight to the establishment of regular service and continuing today, aviation has been integral to the island. The Ketchikan Museum has created a virtual exhibit about the last 100 years of the community's aviation history that includes videos. Check it out at ketchikanmuseums.org

KODIAK

Asphalt Art celebrates Dancing in the Rain

In a project sponsored by the Kodiak History Museum, Kodiak is one of 26 U.S. cities selected to receive an Asphalt Art Initiative grant from Bloomberg Philanthropies. The grants are intended to fund creative art projects to improve street safety, revitalize public spaces and engage community residents. Kodiak's artwork is being painted on Marine Way in front of Discover Kodiak this month. The mural, designed by local artists Marina Thomas and Bonnie Dillard, is entitled "Dancing in the Rain."



Photo courtesy Kodiak History Museum.

KENAI PENINSULA

Historical association activities underway

The Kenai Peninsula Historical Association resumed its semiannual meetings last May with a gathering at Cooper Landing. The next meeting is to be hosted by the Kasilof Regional Historical Association in October with a tour of the Victor Holm Homestead at Coho, details to be on their Facebook page. The Kasilof museum is open afternoons this summer, and a recently donated cabin that served as the Coho post office has been added at the site. The group raises funds for its operations by selling perennial plants.

PALMER

Region once a major coal depot

Matanuska, a train stop six miles from Palmer, was once an important junction for the Alaska Railroad's coal supply. A branch line ran north from Matanuska to coal fields that provided enough fuel for all the railroad's locomotives. This was important for the railroad, since before the Matanuska area was tapped as a source all coal for the trains had to be shipped from Seattle. A coal mine at Moose Creek, about 12 miles up the Matanuska branch line, started operating in 1916. A year later, the railroad took over a working coal mine at Eska Creek. The branch line extended nearly 38 miles to Chickaloon, where a mine was planned but never opened.



Coal miners at Eska, 1918. Photo courtesy miningartifacts.org/Alaska-Mines.html.

PETERSBURG

Museum honors artist Polly Lee

In June the Clausen Museum hosted "Last Call," the final art show of works by Polly Lee, who will be 100 in October. Lee has lived in Petersburg since 1945. The show and art sale featured works spanning decades including over 130 ceramic and clay pieces, canvas hangings, woodblock prints, watercolors, oil paintings and torn-paper collages. Lee taught as an adjunct faculty member of the University of Alaska Southeast at Wrangell, Petersburg and Juneau for many years. She was appointed to the first Alaska State Council on the Arts by Governor Egan and served for 12 years. She received Governor's Lifetime Achievement Awards from the Alaska State Council on the Arts in 1982 and 2009. Her works are at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Conoco Phillips offices in Anchorage, the Juneau Pioneer Home, the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal in Petersburg, and more places around the state.

SEWARD

Eads brothers build first marine railway

In its "Pages from the Past" section, the Resurrection Bay Historical Society's newsletter carried an article from an unknown Anchorage newspaper around 1962 with the headline, "Eads Brothers Ignore Local Critics, Build Seward's First Marine Railway." Bob and Mac Eads used considerable ingenuity and defeated all odds to build first a road to Lowell Point and then a marine railway there. They were unable to get government funding for the project, but they managed to complete the \$100,000 project (a fortune back in the early 1960s!) without any financial backing.

They struck a bargain with the Kenai Lumber Company to cut spruce trees at Lowell Point, and in return for half the trees the company cut them into timbers for the Eads brothers. They sal-

Non-profit makes historic newsreels available at no cost

Collaboration is one of the most important tools in motion picture archiving and the team at the Sherman Grinberg Film Library in Chatsworth, California, shares high-definition copies of historic newsreels with museums, libraries, archives and schools so that teachers, students and researchers can use the footage for classroom projects and research at no cost.

Visitors to the Sherman Grinberg Film Library website (www.shermangrinberg.com) can watch and download over 49,000 historic newsreels from the Paramount and American Pathé Newsreel Collections produced from 1897–1957, and more footage is added daily. The company hopes that by sharing the historic footage directly with organizations it can bring the footage back to the communities—to the “Eyes and Ears of the World”—where they will have the most impact.

There are more than 100 films on the website tied to the search term “Alaska,” with the earliest footage from 1926.

“I have been a media archivist for almost 30 years but I am not a historian,” says Lance Watsky, manager of Media Archives and Licensing. “So I truly appreciate sharing the historic footage with people and communities who understand its importance.”

For information about the Paramount and American Pathé Newsreel Collections, or to receive copies of the High-Definition footage, contact Watsky at Lance@shermangrinberg.com.

vaged railway wheels, a winch, and a diesel motor left over from World War II in the Aleutian Islands, traveling 1,200 miles to Adak to get the wheels. They scavenged parts and rebuilt motors or built them from nothing. The result was a marine railway that enabled vessels up to 100 feet to be brought to shore for service. Many years later, in a 2010 interview conducted by Karen Brewster and Rachel Mason for the National Park Service, the Eads brothers reminisced about how difficult it was to carve out the road, using dynamite and Caterpillar tractors, in 1961. The interview can be accessed at <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/bob-and-mac-eads-interview.htm>.

SOLDOTNA

Interpretive signs direct visitors

The Soldotna Historical Society installed interpretive building signs last summer, then spent the winter transferring their card catalog to a PastPerfect online database and compiling an inventory of the historical cabins and buildings at their site. This summer the group is adding signage to direct visitors to the museum from Centennial Park. The group invites folks to visit their Facebook page and website to learn more about them—and plan a visit.

CORDOVA

Early bank building rescued

The First Bank of Cordova building, constructed in 1920 and “on the brink of demise” in 2022, is being rescued by Ken Jones, a local home-grown entrepreneur. The building was noteworthy for its decorative cornice and columns, damaged by a fire in 1963 that destroyed nearly a block of buildings across the street from it. Plans include restoring the original entry and the distinctive multi-pane windows that had been replaced with plate glass windows.



Photo courtesy Cordova Historical Society/Bertha Smith collection.

FROM CANADA

Piece of Yukon aviation history restored

A DC-3 that carried cargo and passengers around Yukon territory in the mid-20th century is being restored to its past splendor. The last time it flew was about 10 years ago, and it was considered too dilapidated to continue as a commercial workhorse. A group of pilots and mechanics purchased the plane and has been working on it in Maryland for the past three years. It was particularly difficult to find someone to do sheet metal work on the vintage plane. Finally, a skilled sheet metal worker was located in California, and he made three trips to Maryland to do the work. More recently, the plane suffered damage from a storm. It has now been repaired and repainted with the gold and green Air North colors. The plane will keep its name, the Yukon Sourdough.



Photo courtesy Yukon News.

—Rachel Mason and Jo Antonson

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AN ODDMENT

Tips to take a hot ice bath in the Arctic zone

William P. Hall of Davenport, Iowa, wrote this about bathing in Alaska:

"They dig a trench in the ice two or three feet deep with axes, then take a hand spike and drill a hole through to the water, the ice being four or five feet thick. The water bubbles up into this trough, and they throw into it heated stones and are soon ready to take a plunge into water warm enough for anyone. Blankets are put up for a windbreak and spread on the ice for a carpet and after one has completed his ablutions some of the water is dipped out and other stones are thrown in to heat the fresh water that bubbles up. This continues until all are accommodated.

"They make their toilet [grooming and dressing] by the fire which heats the stones and it is not as bad as it might be, after all. This information is given for the benefit of prospective Klondikers, who might be pleased to learn that they will not be obliged to dispense with the luxury of a hot bath."

*From Sterling Evening Gazette (Illinois),
October 19, 1897.*

—Chris Allan



Left: You got this! Walter Harper is depicted extending a hand to fellow Denali climbers in a new statue in Fairbanks. **Below: Snow Ball, one of the expedition dogs, is also portrayed in the installation.** Photos courtesy Ron Inouye.



New statue honors young Native explorer

A new Fairbanks statue, "A Hand Up," portrays 20-year-old Koyukon Athapascan Walter Harper helping others also achieve the 1913 first Denali summit. The other explorers were Archdeacon Hudson Stuck, Harry Karstens and Robert Tatum, along with dog Snow Ball, acknowledging the key role of dogs in the expedition. By Gary Lee Price, the larger-than-life statue faces Denali from Doyon Plaza overlooking the Chena River in downtown Fairbanks.

Dedicated July 19, 2022, the work is inspired by University of Alaska Fairbanks Emeritus Professor Mary F. Ehrlander's book, *Walter Harper, Alaska Native Son*. Statue organizers and funders included Native and non-Native organizations, the Harper family, and numerous businesses and individuals.