



The 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill prompted widespread community protests against Alaska's oil industry, including this one in Homer. At a time when oil development provided the vast majority of state revenues, the protests are another example of conflicting visions of Alaska's history, which was the Alaska Historical Society's 2022 conference theme. Photo: Doug Loshbaugh.

## After successful '22 conference, focus on 2023

Emerging from the Covid pandemic, this year's Alaska Historical Society hybrid conference was a resounding success, based both on our internal assessment and participant reviews.

With the theme of "Conflicting Visions of Alaska History," AHS partnered with the Cook Inlet Historical Society and Anchorage Museum to start with an in-person event at the museum, followed by virtual meetings and two tours.

We were fortunate to have Bathsheba Demuth, author of the award-winning *Floating Coast: An Environmental History of the Bering Strait*, as our keynote speaker. The Brown University professor kicked off the conference with a talk entitled "View from A Dogsled: The Yukon and the Stakes of Telling the Past." Thanks to the Atwood Foundation, we hosted a reception at the

Anchorage Museum before the talk.

The conference's 18 virtual sessions, spread out over two weeks, included about 30 papers, two panel discussions, a workshop and a tour of the Anchorage Museum's Atwood Resource Center. Because members said they particularly enjoyed the 2021 sessions about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), we devoted several sessions this year to Alaska Native land claims and sovereignty, and had a panel discussion about teaching ANCSA. One session introduced the AHS's project, the ANCSA research guide.

From the many compelling presentations, it's impossible to pick a favorite. I particularly enjoyed David Reamer's paper about his audience-engaged practice of public history, and Pierce Bateman's review of Alaska's bids to host the winter Olympic games.

The panel on the conflicted history of Russia and Alaska was timely in the context of Russia's current war on Ukraine. Another relevant topic was the history of Alaska Native education. Next year, we'd like to have a panel on Alaska Native boarding schools as part of a larger theme.

The last weekend of the conference featured two in-person tours. The Anchorage Bar Tour, led by Doug Vandegrift, focused on Fourth Avenue bars ending at Darwin's Theory. Aaron Leggett led a Dena'ina Indigenous Signage Tour, starting at the Dena'ina Woman statue at Ship Creek and including viewing installations at Westchester Lagoon, Earthquake Park and Potter Marsh.

Thanks goes to members of the AHS conference committee, especially Carol Gales who designed the program; Anchor-

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Ambitious agenda targets advocacy, outreach, education

There's been no resting on the laurels of our successful 2022 conference as the Alaska Historical Society's Board of Directors is embarking on an ambitious 2023 agenda of preserving and educating Alaskans about our state's history.



I'm honored to be elected board president for a second year, supported by our capable executive

team of vice president Rachel Mason and treasurer Erik Johnson, both Anchorage-based National Park Service historians, and University of Alaska Fairbanks film archivist Angie Schmidt, secretary.

We're grateful to be joined by three new energetic board members, Kaila Pfister, director of communications with the Alaska Children's Trust; Molly McCammon, a journalist and scientific non-profit manager; and UAF history professor Phil Wight. Thanks to outgoing board members Karen Brewster of Fairbanks, Patuk Glenn of Eagle River and Ian Hartman and Sara Piascecki of Anchorage.

After two years of mostly virtual conferences forced by the Covid pandemic, this October's conference was a hybrid. Keynote speaker Bathsheba Demuth presented to an in-person audience at the Anchorage Museum which was also available live online via CrowdCast. Offering conference presentations both ways has the added advantage of reaching a broader audience, plus on-line sessions are taped and available for future viewing.

Those of us who heard Demuth in-person and participated in the two tours – historic bars and Alaska Native placenames – were reminded of the many benefits of reconnecting with old friends. So the AHS is focused on an in-person 2023 conference with at least some sessions on-line. We're entertaining proposals from communities around the state which may want to host our conference next fall, and also welcome suggestions for a conference theme.

A new initiative for the Society is launching a lecture and education series focused broadly on the role of history in a civil society. As envisioned by former AHS president William Schneider, the goal is to help Alaskans engage constructively in civil discourse on timely topics such as the Americanization of Alaska after the purchase, conservation vs. development, Native sovereignty and Alaska's role in the Cold War. We hope to partner with public school history and civics teachers and other non-profits to make the presentations by both national and Alaska experts widely available.

Also on our agenda for the coming year are two issues in which we believe the state of Alaska should play a larger role. One is Alaska History Day, a statewide competition for students in grades 6-12 on historical topics, ideally Alaska history. The program is at risk without both a permanent administrative home and funding.

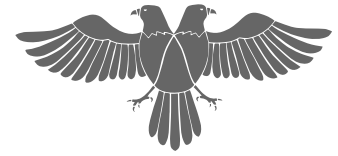
The second issue is the national commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Many states have state commissions to oversee this effort, along with state funding. Currently, the state of Alaska has not passed a resolution of support or created a commission. The AHS has initiated talks with several legislators to gain state support for both Alaska History Day and the semiquincentennial anniversary.

Those of you who use social media noticed a recent up-tick in posts about Alaska history and the society. That's thanks to Cordova board member Wendy Ranney who is working aggressively with our social media team to raise AHS's profile and spread the word about fascinating aspects of Alaska history.

In addition to setting the 2023 agenda at our annual meeting in October, the membership approved the first significant revisions to our bylaws in 13 years which primarily allows us to operate more efficiently in this Zoom era, with electronic voting and meetings.

Thanks for reading this newsletter, commenting on our social media, and look for our soon-to-be-refreshed website and revamped *Alaska History* journal.

—David Ramseur



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# AHS pushes federal archives digitization, agrees to house Alaska History Day

Historic federal Alaska records at the National Archives in Seattle spanning issues from court proceedings and fish and game management to those affecting Alaska Native peoples are among the Alaska Historical Society's top priorities for converting to digitized records.

That was the message recently delivered to William Bosanko, chief operating officer of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). At his invitation, several AHS board members and former Alaska federal archivist Bruce Parham met via Zoom with Bosanko in early October to get a progress report on Alaska records already digitized and hear of the agency's plans for future digitization work.

In 2014, Alaska's federal records were transferred from the Anchorage facility which NARA closed to its Seattle facility where the agency started digitizing them to make them more accessible to researchers. The total volume of records is approximately 11,000 cubic feet or an estimated 27.5 million pages.

Bosanko reported that in 2021 some 3,600 cubic feet of records, about 10 million

pages, were moved to the National Archives in Maryland for digitization. They will be transferred back to Seattle when completed. They include those from agencies including the Census, Indian Affairs, National Park Service and Geological Survey.

Parham produced and provided Bosanko a 13-page memo detailing priority records for future digitization covering millions of pages and scores of federal agencies.

AHS will continue to monitor NARA's digitization work and welcomes suggestions from historical researchers about specific records that should be digitized. In 2020, the Society joined with a broad coalition of Pacific Northwest historical groups and Native American tribes to kill an effort by the Trump administration to close the Seattle facility and move the records even further from Alaska.

## Alaska History Day

The Alaska Historical Society has agreed to serve as the "affiliate" for Alaska History Day (AHD) for the coming year to keep the program alive while working to find a permanent home for it.

Alaska History Day is a statewide competition and the qualifier for National History Day, a competition in June. Alaska students grades 6-12 compete by researching and writing papers, producing video documentaries, designing websites, creating exhibits or giving performances on historical topics, ideally Alaska history. This year's competition theme is "Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas," topics familiar in our state.

In recent years, AHD was administered by the Alaska Humanities Forum, which opted to end its affiliate status after 2022. The Forum agreed to provide the affiliate fee of \$2,550 for 2023.

The AHS is working with two coordinators of the Fairbanks History Day competition, Fairbanks journalist Rebecca Heaton and UAF history graduate student Leanna Prax Williams, to run AHD this year.

AHS plans to propose to the new Alaska state administration and legislature that the state provide ongoing support through an annual appropriation, as is typical in many other states. We also encourage our

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## Conference

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age Museum's Adam Baldwin and Cody Carver, who served as hosts and technicians; and to the Atwood Foundation for funding the keynote lecture and reception.

After two years of virtual conferences, it was great to see colleagues at the opening reception and keynote lecture and participate in the tours. Despite the success of the virtual conferences, we're probably all ready to return to an in-person conference. That said, we want to continue to offer at least some sessions virtually.

We are seeking invitations from local historical societies or organizations which would like to host next year's conference.

In case you missed the 2022 conference or want to hear one of the presentations again, the recordings soon will be available on the AHS website.

—Rachel Mason,  
Conference Committee Chair



**Two in-person elements of the hybrid 2022 AHS conference included a Dena'ina Indigenous Signage Tour of Anchorage, led by Aaron Leggett, Anchorage Museum senior curator of Alaska history and indigenous cultures, and the keynote address by Bathsheba Demuth. Above left, Leggett and tour group view a newly installed Dena'ina language sign at Anchorage's Point Woronzof. Above right, Demuth is interviewed by KTUU-TV before her presentation at the Anchorage Museum. Photos: David Ramseur.**

# In memorium: 17 Alaskans honored for enormous contributions to our state

*Editor's note: At its annual conference in October, the Alaska Historical Society celebrated the lives of Alaskans who died during the year who contributed to our state's history and betterment. Enormous thanks to Ron Inouye and Angela Schmidt for compiling these summaries of lives well lived.*



**LARUE ANNETTE OLSEN BARNES (1955-2022), CORDOVA** Ordained minister LaRue Barnes and husband Gary pastored the Little Chapel in Cordova for more than 30 years. Raised in Cordova, LaRue worked at the Cordova Museum and advocated development of the Ilanka Cultural Center and Museum. She was a member and president of Museums Alaska

and served as consultant for the Alaska display in the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian.



**MARJORIE COCHRANE (1924-2022), EAGLE RIVER** Violinist, reporter, writer and librarian Marjorie Cochrane was active in the Eagle River community. From Idaho, she reported for the *Chugiak-Eagle River Star* and immersed herself in Alaska history. She authored *Between Two Rivers: The Growth of Chugiak-Eagle River* (1983), *Three Dogs, Two Mules & a Reindeer* (2009),

and *Bold Women in Alaska History* (2014). She was a member of the Anchorage Symphony Orchestra until she and husband Byron retired to Nahcotta, Washington.



**NANCY JANE RAMEY LETHCOE (1940-2022), VALDEZ** Water and Prince William Sound drew the full attention of Nancy, husband James, and family. A competitive swimmer, Nancy won a 1956 Olympic silver medal in Melbourne, and in 1958 set world records in both the 100- and 200-meter butterfly races. Anticipating interest in sailing and ecotourism in Prince

William Sound, the Lethcoes created Alaska Wilderness Sailing Safaris (Whittier and Valdez). They authored numerous books: *History of Prince William Sound* (1994), *Valdez Gold Rush Trails of 1898-99* (1997), and *Cruising Guide to Prince William Sound* (first published 1984 and now in its fifth edition). Nancy published *An Observer's Guide to the Glaciers of Prince William Sound, Alaska* (1987).



**WILDA KOCH MARSTON (1930-2022), ANCHORAGE** Teacher Wilda Marston loved Alaska and Northwest exploration history. She met future husband Brooke in a University of Alaska Fairbanks Alaska history class and they continued her history interest. Wilda served numerous Anchorage civic organizations and provided leadership on the Loussac Library board, the Anchorage Museum Foundation and on numerous municipal, state, university and historical preservation committees. She was in the inaugural class of the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame.



**LAEL WARREN MORGAN (1936-2022), ANCHORAGE & FAIRBANKS** Raconteur, sailor, reporter, writer, Epicenter Press publisher, UAF journalism instructor and certified detective were Lael Morgan's roles. She wrote for newspapers in Juneau, Anchorage, Fairbanks and Los Angeles and freelanced for the *Washington Post*, *New York Times* and *National Geographic*.

Whether reporting for the *Tundra Times* or teaching, she was always researching and writing on varied topics. Among the books she wrote are *Art and Eskimo Power: The Life and Times of Alaskan Howard Rock* (1988) and *Good Time Girls of the Alaska Yukon Gold Rush* (1998) which garnered her the AHS's Alaska Historian of the Year award.



**PHYLLIS DEMUTH MOVIVUS (1946-2021), FAIRBANKS** Consummate quilter Phyllis Movius discovered writing and research after careers with the Red Cross and United Way. She authored *When the Geese Come*, documenting Ella Romig's personal and nursing career (1898-1905) in Southwest Alaska, and *A Place of Belonging*, biographies of five founding women of

Fairbanks (1903-1923). Phyllis and husband Jim Movius retired to Montana in 2012 and Phyllis sadly experienced five years of Alzheimer's dementia.



**GARY HOLTHAUS (1933-2022), ANCHORAGE** Raised in Iowa, Gary Holthaus was an ordained minister in Montana where people and landscape captured him. He moved to Alaska in 1964 and became the founding and 20-year director of the Alaska Humanities Forum. A writer, teacher and social justice activist, he received the 2017 Governor's Award for Lifetime

Achievement in the Humanities. Departing Alaska in 1991, Gary taught and consulted for organizations such as the Center of the American West. He returned to minister for the Anchorage Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (2012-2017) then retired to Red Wing, Minnesota.



**THEODORE "TED" RYBERG (1927-2020), FAIRBANKS** A position as director of libraries for the Alaska Statewide System of Higher Education brought Ted Ryberg to Fairbanks from New York state. He successfully worked with the U.S. Department of Education and the Alaska Legislature to create what is now the UAF Rasmuson Library. Following a stint at the University

of South Florida during which time he met his partner Bob Williams, he returned to Alaska. Ted co-founded the Alaska Library Association. His previous personal and military international travel defined his retirement interests in teaching ESL to immigrants, working with Global Volunteers and teaching English in Indonesia.



**LANCE MACKAY (1970-2022), FAIRBANKS** Four-time winner of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and twice back-to-back winner of the Yukon Quest, Lance came from a mushing family. Beset by health scares and troubled with drug abuse, his mushing dedication and doggedness carried him through until throat cancer finally intervened at age 52. The 2015 documentary

*The Great Alone* chronicled his difficult life. In 2014 *Outside Magazine* called him "the world's toughest athlete."



**GARY C. STEIN (1947-2022), FAIRBANKS & ANCHORAGE** Historian Gary Stein's Alaska research and teaching career (1975-1992) included the University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Park Studies for ANCSA cultural resource management and preservation of sites, Alaska Department of Natural Resources historic inland waterways uses and Bureau of Indian

Affairs acknowledgement of Indian tribes. His research interests included the Tetlin Indian Reservation and U.S. Revenue Cutter Service in Alaska. His post-Alaska career focused on the regulatory functions of the pharmaceutical industries and teaching.



**GORDON L. PULLAR (1944-2022), ANCHORAGE** Although born and educated in Bellingham, Washington, Gordon returned to Kodiak to connect with his Sugpiaq Native identity. With a University of Washington MPA in tribal administration, he became involved with tribal self-determination, artifact repatriation and cultural revitalization. Gordon served

multiple terms as President and CEO of the Kodiak Area Native Association and taught 20 years in the University of Alaska Fairbanks' rural development program.



**ARLISS STURGULEWSKI (1927-2022), ANCHORAGE** Arliss Sturgulewski survived the Great Depression and changed perceptions about women in society. Discouraged from higher education by her father, she nonetheless put herself through the University of Washington. After coming up the Alcan on vacation in 1952, she never left. After her engineer husband was killed

in a plane crash, she chose to raise her son in Anchorage. Active in school and government policy, Arliss served on numerous local and state boards and commissions. She served in the Alaska Senate (1978-1993) working on legislation to inflation-proof the Alaska Permanent Fund, and to establish conservation easements. She also worked on issues related to mental health trust lands. She was the first Alaska woman to head a major party ticket as the Republican candidate for governor in 1986. She was inducted into the first class of the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame.

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**EDWARD "ED" RASMUSON (1940-2022), ANCHORAGE** Banker and philanthropist, Ed Rasmuson provided leadership in his family's National Bank of Alaska and establishment of the Rasmuson Foundation. Raised in the tradition of his father's banks in numerous Alaska communities, Ed watched that industry significantly change with automation, regional/national

consolidation and global economic shifts. Through the Rasmuson Foundation, Ed and his family have provided significantly toward Alaska's arts, education, charitable projects, non-profit organizations and community projects.

## In Memorium

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**CLEM TILLION (1925-2021), HALIBUT COVE** Born in Brooklyn, Clem Tillion served in the South Pacific during WWII, then arrived in Kachemak Bay, settling in Halibut Cove as a fisherman where he raised his family. Interested in fisheries, he was elected to the State House in 1962 and was appointed to the State Senate in 1975.

During his two decades in Alaska politics, he worked on fishery policy when subsistence and commercial interests and biological/international issues roiled the industry. He worked with Gov. Jay Hammond in establishing the Alaska Permanent Fund and dividend system.



**JOSEPH "JOE" EMIL USIBELLI (1938-2022), FAIRBANKS** Born and raised in Suntrana, Joe Usibelli attended a one room school, continuing his education in Fairbanks through to Stanford graduate studies. At 24, he unexpectedly assumed leadership of the Usibelli Coal Mine founded by his father. During his tenure the mine became one of Alaska's most prominent and prosperous

businesses. Joe was acknowledged for his problem-solving ingenuity and generosity to his family, employees, and community. His many interests included aviation and scuba diving. He was an advocate and major donor to the University of Alaska through scholarships and faculty awards and through contributions to the museum.



**WILLIAM "BILL" B. WORKMAN (1940-2021), ANCHORAGE** Archaeologist Bill Workman came to Alaska in 1962 as a University of Wisconsin graduate student to research on Kodiak Island. His long Alaska career also included research and publications on Kachemak Bay and the Alaskan and Canadian interiors. Bill taught at Alaska Methodist University and

University of Alaska Anchorage and published extensively on northern anthropology. Known for his dry humor and demeanor, Bill guided many students and co-founded the Alaska Anthropological Association.



**JULES WINSLOW WRIGHT (1933-2022), FAIRBANKS** Born and raised at St. Mark's Mission in Nenana, Jules was the sixth of seven Wright brothers who became leaders. Living a subsistence lifestyle he was drafted into the Army, then embarked on an entrepreneurial career in mining and construction. He built and operated Manley Hot Springs Resort. An advocate for

Native employment and local businesses, Jules became president of the Fairbanks Native Association, and served on the boards of Seth-De-Ya-Ah (Minto) Corporation and Doyon Ltd. He was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives in 1967 and served one term.

## Historical KUAC radio programs now available online

The Oral History Department at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has had 241 historical KUAC radio programs professionally digitized and added to their collection, thanks to a Recordings at Risk grant through the Council on Library and Information Resources. The radio programs include *Chinook*, *Homefires*, *I Didn't Know That*, *Conversations with Susan McInnis* and *Sundays at Noon*.

You can now listen to all these fantastic radio programs online through the UAF Rasmuson & Mather Libraries Library Catalog (<https://library.uaf.edu/home>) or through the Historical Audio section of the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives Digital Repository (<https://archives.library.uaf.edu/islandora/objects/eerl-historical-audio>).

Although originally created for and aimed at an Alaska audience, this collection will be of interest to historians, scientists and researchers around the globe. Topics covered are of national and international significance, with Alaska hosts interviewing leading experts on Arctic policy, Native corporations, village corporations, Aleutian issues, rural education, Native health issues and Inuit Circumpolar Conference recordings.

Alaska Native themes figure prominently, with programs focused on whaling, dog-mushing, boat racing, Athabaskan ways of life, riddles, songs and storytelling, Alaska Native leadership, religion and interviews with well-known Native leaders.

A number of programs highlight

women and the political process, documentation of Native languages, Elders conferences, teen pregnancy fitness and infant care.

Others feature interviews with prominent authors, musicians and scientists covering an array of topics from activists such as: South African journalist Donald Woods, banned from 1978 to 1990 for his writings against apartheid; Geshe Tsultim Gyeltsen, spiritual master and found of the Center for Tibetan Buddhist Studies in Los Angeles; John Massey Stewart on the topic of Siberia; and Nigel Allan on the geography of Afghanistan; to women in science.

For more information contact, Leslie McCartney, curator of Oral History at: [lmccartney@alaska.edu](mailto:lmccartney@alaska.edu).

# Former Park Service interpretive ranger brings high-tech communications skills to AHS board

Newly elected to the Alaska Historical Society Board of Directors, Kaila Pfister brings a wealth of communication skills and a passion for using storytelling to connect people with the past.

“If you don’t see yourself in the stories being told, it’s hard to be excited about them,” Pfister said in a recent interview.

The 30-year-old is relatively new to Anchorage—about two years—and to Alaska—on and off for the past five years.

Much of that time was spent as an interpretive ranger for the National Park Service, in units ranging from the Statue of Liberty National Monument to Denali and Wrangell-St Elias National Parks in Alaska to Pu’uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park in Hawaii. Those jobs allowed her to live in beautiful places and help visitors develop a connection with them.

“I loved being a ranger and the opportunity it afforded me to learn about and inspire others to connect with the history of a site,” she said, and still misses that.

Now she has new challenges in her current position as director of communications for the Alaska Children’s Trust, which she has held the past two years. The trust is a non-profit and the statewide lead organization in the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

There she has honed her skills in website development, social media, writing and public relations. She hopes to use many of these skills on behalf of the AHS. She’d like to see the AHS logo and website updated, and publications and social media outreach expanded to reach new demographics.

Pfister also has been actively involved in the advocacy efforts of the Alaska Children’s Trust, and would like to enhance AHS advocacy efforts as well, especially with efforts to revitalize Alaska Native place names locally in Anchorage and statewide. As a young professional, she would like to broaden the society’s membership to include more young people.

A passion for history wasn’t the only reason for Pfister to reach out to the AHS. New to Anchorage, she was also looking for ways to develop deeper roots in the community after several years of moving around with the Park Service. A friendship with AHS



*An advocate for the Alaska Children’s Trust by day, Kaila Pfister is passionate about all things outdoors in Alaska’s wilderness including hiking and back-country skiing. Photo courtesy of Kaila Pfister.*

board member Erik Johnson, also a previous employee at Denali, led her to seeking out volunteer opportunities with the AHS.

Pfister grew up in New York City and received a bachelor’s degree in history and a master’s in public administration with an emphasis on non-profit management,

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“If you don’t see yourself in the stories being told, it’s hard to be excited about them.”

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both from Binghamton University, located in the Southern Tier of upstate New York. She came to Alaska five years ago, smitten by an earlier visit to McCarthy with its natural beauty, mining history and rich Ahtna indigenous culture. She was then able to land her first Alaska-based interpretive ranger position at Wrangell-St Elias National Park and Preserve.

Pfister’s interests outside of work include all things outdoors: hiking, backcountry

skiing (in fact, *all* kinds of skiing), often joined by her boyfriend and his daughter. She’s also interested in genealogy, an interest piqued by her time at Ellis Island, part of the Statue of Liberty National Monument, and has traveled to Lithuania, Poland and Scotland in search of family roots.

She has maintained her New York connections by continuing to co-run the Matthew Potel Foundation, a non-profit that provides opportunities for NYC kids to experience nature.

Kaila is also an EMT, and has worked with the Anchorage Safety Patrol, an experience that has given her a deeper understanding of the historical and generational trauma experienced by many Alaska Natives.

She frequently reflects on the importance of understanding history and its role in everyday life for many Alaskans as well as the direct ties it has with preventing child abuse and neglect. “So many Alaskans don’t know the rich history of Alaska and its peoples,” she said. “I’m happy to be part of an organization working to change that.”

—Molly McCammon

# Society recognizes 10 Alaskans, groups for outstanding contributions to history

Longtime Alaska journalist and author **Tom Kizzia** was named 2022 James H. Ducker Historian of the Year by the Alaska Historical Society when the society's annual awards were presented in October.

A former *Anchorage Daily News* reporter and author of *Cold Mountain Path*, Kizzia was recognized both for his current book and his long career documenting Alaska history.

"Through lyrical writing and solid historical research, the book tells the story of McCarthy, one of Alaska's boom towns gone bust in the mid-20th century," the AHS said. It was also impressed that Kizzia directed some of the book sale proceeds to the McCarthy-Kennecott Historical Museum.

Kizzia's award is named for longtime Alaska historian James Ducker, who served for 30 years as editor of the society's journal, *Alaska History*.

Other 2022 awards include:

## THE EVANGELINE ATWOOD AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

was given to Anchorage attorney **Donald Craig Mitchell**. The award remembers a founder of the Alaska Historical Society and author of several works on Alaska history. The award is given to an individual for significant long-term contributions to Alaska history. Mitchell was recognized for his books contributing to our understanding of Alaska Native history, the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and specifically his most recent book, *Tribal Sovereignty in Alaska: How it Happened, What it Means*.

**THE ESTHER BILLMAN AWARD** went to the **Anchorage Museum**. This award is given to a society, museum or organization for a project contributing to the preservation and understanding of Alaska history during the past year. It honors the longtime curator of Sitka's Sheldon Jackson Museum.

The Anchorage Museum was recognized for its long-standing commitment to preserving Alaska history and presenting it to Alaskans and out-of-state visitors alike in compelling and innovative ways.

**THE BARBARA SWEETLAND SMITH PATHFINDER AWARD** was given to Fairbanks historian **Karen Brewster**. Smith was a long-time historian, archivist and exhibit curator who specialized in documenting Alaska-Russia history.

Brewster was recognized for her diligent and excellent work as editor of the society's landmark *Guide to Sources for the Study of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*. She spent hundreds of hours fact-checking, verifying sources, proofreading and editing the contributions of many others for the 1,000+ page guide.

## THE ELVA SCOTT LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARD

was given to the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society of Juneau**. This award recognizes an historical society or museum for its programs, newsletter, publication or a significant recent accomplishment. Scott was a founder of Homer's Natural History Society and Pratt Museum, and then active member and long-time editor of the Eagle Historical Society's newsletter.

The Juneau-based society was recognized for the current edi-



**Tom Kizzia, longtime journalist and author, was named James H. Ducker Historian of the Year for 2022**

tion (Volume 27, No. 1) of its *Gastineau Heritage News*, which highlights the dozens of newspapers published on both sides of the Gastineau Channel over the past 135 years.

**THE CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALASKA HISTORY AWARD** was presented to three people. This category recognizes individuals or groups for projects, publications and other efforts that have significantly promoted and added to understanding Alaska history.

- Historian **Katherine J. Ringsmuth** of Eagle River was recognized for seven years of work creating and directing the NN Cannery History Project to document cannery work, people and place. Her culminating exhibit, entitled "Mug Up: Language of Cannery Work," was at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau this past summer.

- **Diane Olthuis** of Hope was recognized for her years of dedicated service as director of the Hope & Sunrise Historical and Mining Museum, president of its historical society and president of the Kenai Peninsula Historical Association. Olthuis is the author of several books, one on local trapper Harry Johnson and another a survey of the buildings of Hope.

- Archivist **R. Bruce Parham** of Anchorage was recognized for his work on the society's *Guide to Sources for the Study of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act* and for the guide to Alaska materials he helped prepare for the centennial of women's suffrage in the United States. Parham also has been active with the Cook Inlet Historical Society for years, serving as its secretary, helping with its monthly programs and special conferences, including the one commemorating the Anchorage Centennial, and authoring biographies of significant Anchorage residents for the society's website.

## THE TERRENCE M. COLE STUDENT AND BEGINNING PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

was awarded to University of Alaska Anchorage senior **Ava Martin**. She presented a paper at the AHS annual conference entitled "The Historic Environment and Best Practice in Scotland and Alaska," drawing on

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## 2022 AHS awards

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her year-long study of the heritage, tourism and historic preservation practices in Scotland. The award is named for the longtime UAF history professor and author of several books.

**THE MORGAN AND JEANNE SHERWOOD AWARD** for best article published in *Alaska History*, AHS's semiannual journal, was awarded to retired UAF professor **William Schneider**. His article, "When a Small Typo Has Big Implications," looked at the federal trust responsibility to Alaska Natives, initiated in 1867 when the U.S. acquired Alaska. The late Professor Sherwood was a longtime Alaska historian and he and his wife endowed this award with a \$500 annual prize.

**SPECIAL CERTIFICATES** AHS awarded special certificates to recognize two individuals who contributed to Alaska's history over their careers:

• **Patience Frederiksen**, newly retired director of the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums, was recognized for enormous assistance to AHS, making staff available and providing important background information on state budget issues.

• To the family of the late **Gary C. Stein**, a certificate was presented recognizing his research and writing about Alaska's past. He published numerous articles and book reviews in the society's journal and just before his death his seminal work on Dr. James Taylor White of the U.S. Revenue Marine Service in Alaska was published. Gary was a past president of AHS.

**THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD** was awarded to William Schneider for his ground-breaking initiative on the *Guide to Sources for the Study of the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act*, and his overall contributions to the AHS, where he has been a longtime board member and former president. The award, presented by the AHS president, is better known as the "beaver log award" because it is an authentic log felled by an Alaska beaver. This year's log came from the Upper Yukon River.

## Booklets highlight first-person accounts of history

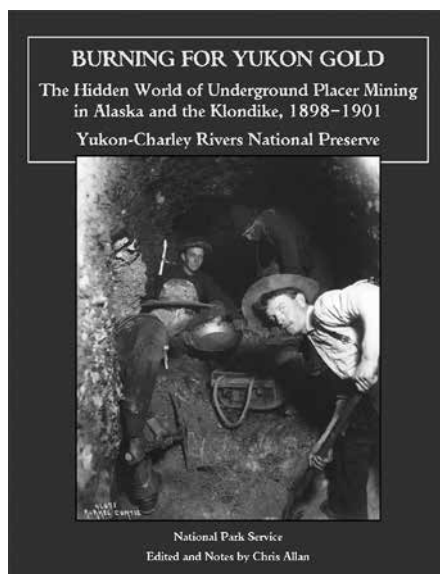
*Editor's note: A new volume in the Eyewitness Booklet Series has just been completed by Chris Allan, historian for the National Park Service. It is Eyewitness Series #8: Burning for Yukon Gold: The Hidden World of Underground Placer Mining in Alaska and the Klondike, 1898-1901. The collection of photographs and first-person accounts reveals how gold miners risked their lives for buried treasure.*

Here, Allan explains how he produced the series. He has generously allowed the Alaska Historical Society to share all the booklets on our website.



I began the Eyewitness Booklet Series out of frustration. After years of research and writing on Alaska history topics, I was often left with more than I could use—mainly photographs and first-person accounts from journals or newspapers—and it seemed like this material deserved to be seen.

When the Alaska Historical Society asked for contributions related to the Alaska Purchase, I wrote about newspaper reporters scrambling to scoop the story of the October 18, 1867, flag transfer ceremony at Sitka (see *Alaska History*, Fall 2017). When I was done I realized I had 16 first-person accounts related to the ceremony and that each one had a different perspective about the transfer of power from Russia to the United States. When arranged side-by-side, these accounts shed new light on a pivotal moment in Alaska



history and provided a tool for illustrating how historians do their work, such as using multiple sources to create a single narrative. I called it *As the Old Flag Came Down*.

My next experiment with the booklet format was related to my work for Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Eagle City, founded during the Klondike gold rush, had long been important to the NPS because the preserve has its field office and visitor center there and because travelers often begin their Yukon River journeys in the town. Eagle's history is also intertwined with the history of the nearby parklands.

The earliest days of Eagle City as a town had been little documented, so I as-

sembled 21 accounts by gold-seekers and other early residents. Again, the juxtaposition of multiple stories showed how events unfolded, including real estate scandals, a shooting that wounded Eagle's first newspaper editor, and the exiling of the real estate swindlers. To this I added photographs and maps from the period and called the booklet *The American Side of the Line*.

By then I was hooked. The format was easy to design, inexpensive to print and, best of all, the booklets allowed readers to hear the voices of the past and see the world with a photographer's (or an artist's) eye.

The booklets that followed included Juneau's origins as Alaska's first gold mining boomtown (*A Rough and Tumble Country*, a collaboration with Mark Kirchhoff), a collection of photographs and drawings by Yukon River travelers in the 1880s (*A River's Many Faces*), a pictorial history of 1930s mining operations in Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve (*Of Gold and Gravel*), a pictorial history of the Army's Fort Egbert in Eagle City (*In the Shadow of Eagle Bluff*), and a collection of photography and architectural drawings from Sitka during its first year as an American possession (*On the Ragged Edge of Empire*).

The latest in the series is called *Burning for Yukon Gold*, examining, with photographs and written accounts, the hidden world of underground placer mining in the Klondike goldfields.

—Chris Allan

## KETCHIKAN

### *Brass ladle focuses on Chinese cannery workers*

The Ketchikan Museums' Artifact of the Month for September was a brass ladle found in the 1920s in the ruins of a Chinese bunkhouse at a cannery in Boca de Quadra, a fjord about 36 miles south of Ketchikan named after an early Spanish explorer. Boca de Quadra has enormous salmon runs, and between 1883 and the early 1930s several canneries and salteries had thriving operations there.

The ladle was used by Chinese workers, who came to Southeast Alaska from West Coast ports each year to work in salmon canneries. Most of the sites, like Boca de Quadra, were in remote locations. Workers were trapped for several months during salmon season, working long hours when the fish were in, and with little to do other than eat and sleep during their off hours. Chinese workers had separate bunkhouses and mess halls from other cannery personnel. By the 1920s, due to anti-Chinese immigration laws, the Chinese cannery labor force had dwindled to include only elderly workers. This humble cooking tool serves as a reminder of the Chinese workers who once dominated the seasonal cannery work.



*Brass ladle from Boca de Quadra Chinese bunkhouse. Photo: Ketchikan Museums.*

## SEWARD

### *Giant local potato wins fans in New Mexico*

In 1949, the *Seward Seaport Record* ran a story about a famous potato grown by Leon Urbach in Seward. The potato weighed more than four pounds and was 7.5 inches long. Urbach gave the potato to Mrs. J.B. French, who mailed it to her cousin in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to show him the size of Alaska potatoes. Her cousin was so impressed he put it on display in the window of the Albuquerque National Bank, where it drew a great deal of startled attention, reports the Resurrection Bay Historical Society newsletter.

### *Seward's first TV station a huge challenge*

The Marathon Television Company was founded in 1957. With approval from the city of Seward, the company's owners started building a road to reach the relay site, located at the 4,700-foot level. The Forest Service granted permission to build the road, but they wouldn't grant a special use permit for the land until Marathon TV received an FCC license. After the station was constructed and the transmission tested, the Forest Service ordered the city to cut off the power to the site, since it was still lacking an FCC license. The FCC would not grant the license until a special congressional committee examined the company's operation and decided whether to permit or prohibit the relay station. Finally in September 1960, a law passed allowing the use of VHF translators, and Marathon TV was ready to operate.

Helicopters brought the larger equipment to the site, and the rest was brought up the mountain and put together by hand labor. Two months later, television came to Seward. This was not the end of Marathon's problems, however. Heavy winter snows on the ridge of Mt. Wolcott sometimes interfered with reception. In December 1963, a snow slide at the site tore apart large stretches of cable. Repairing the cable was difficult in the winter, as climbing was nearly impossible and helicopters expensive. Seward and Moose Pass residents donated cable for repairs and the workers trekked up the mountain or landed with a helicopter so they could restore the translator. A more mundane challenge, but a constant one, was collecting enough funds to operate the TV system. The company operated through voluntary subscriptions, which did not cover expenses. (From page 245, Vol. III, of Mary Barry's history of Seward, via the Resurrection Bay Historical Society newsletter.)

## JUNEAU

### *Info sought on first Alaska Native nurses*

A nurse historian is seeking information on the first Alaska Native nurses, says the *Gastineau Heritage News*. Dr. Phoebe Pollitt has mostly written about nurses in Appalachia, where she lives, but has researched and published articles about Chinese-American nurses and currently, Asian-American/Pacific Island nurses. The earliest Alaska Native nurses who can be documented are Nan Palan, "a full-blooded Eskimo," and Inupiaq Jennie Brower. Newspaper articles were published about them when they were students in 1928 and 1932, respectively. However, very little additional information has been found.

Pollitt is also researching eight Alaska Native nurses who graduated from Sage Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Ganado, Arizona: Aleut Elizabeth Hamilton, 1934; Eskimo Cornelia Phillips, 1935; Haida Genevieve Ross Soboleff, 1936; Juanita Beaver, 1939; Harriette Loretta Young, 1939; Anna Grace Johnson, 1939; Haida Anna Beyler, 1942; Hilda Charlotte Jacobson, 1950; and Elaine Abraham, 1951.

Those with additional information or who may wish to collaborate with Dr. Pollitt, in particular to ensure proper and appropriate cultural attributions, may email her at [phoebeann@bellsouth.net](mailto:phoebeann@bellsouth.net)

## State welcomes new SLAM director

Dr. Amy Phillips-Chan is the new director of the State Libraries, Archives and Museums (SLAM). Chan has been the director of the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum in Nome for the past seven years. She is known to many AHS members for organizing the wonderful 2018 Alaska Historical Society/Museums Alaska conference, the society's first meeting in Nome. Amy has been a teacher in rural Alaska, held a fellowship with the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, written books on Nome's history through photographs and on engraved drill bows with stories from the Arctic and reviewed books for AHS's journal.

## Corrections

In the Fall 2022 AHS newsletter, the name of the Juneau newspaper referenced was the *Alaska Daily Empire*, not the *Alaska State Empire*. And in a short about long-time female Juneau journalist Dorothy Pegues, she was not Helen Troy's sister. Dorothy Troy married a Fairbanks legislator and moved away from Juneau.

## HOPE

### Museum reports tales of working rich Polly Mine

The Hope and Sunrise Historical Society newsletter reports the Polly Mine on Mills Creek was started in 1885 by John Renner and Robert Michaelson and several other miners. Named after Renner's wife, Polly, the mine was the first such operation in the Turnagain Arm Gold Rush and for many years was the richest claim in the district. Between 1885 and 1922, the mine produced about \$200,000 worth of gold. Renner and Michaelson bought out their partners and worked it together for a few years. In 1922, Renner sold out to Michaelson and went to work for the Alaska Railroad.

Michaelson persisted on his own, working the mine's 12 claims by himself for eight years with little success. At that point, he moved to South Dakota to live with his daughter Stella Buom and her family. According to a 1930 newspaper account, Michaelson and his daughter had been separated for 34 years. His wife, an Alaska Native, died when the girl was 4 years old, and Michaelson sent Stella back to the States to be raised by relatives.

### Program honors local Filipino culture

In October, Alma Manabat Parker of the Ketchikan Wellness Coalition gave a Museum Midday presentation at the Tongass Historical Museum about a new program aimed at the Filipino community in Ketchikan, reports the Ketchikan Museums newsletter. "Sama Sama Tavo sa Kalusugan—Healthier Together," funded by a grant from Community Solutions for Health Equity, aims to ensure that Filipino residents of Ketchikan have access to and make use of the best health care services available. The program will celebrate and honor Filipino culture and the history of Filipinos in Alaska. Most Filipinos who came to Ketchikan in the early 20th century were "Alaskeros" who arrived seasonally to work as fish processors. Today the city's population is about 10 percent Filipino. Watch a YouTube of the Museum Midday presentation at: [www.tinyurl.com/FilipinosKetchikan](http://www.tinyurl.com/FilipinosKetchikan)

## METLAKATLA

### Tsimshian photographer took stunning images

Benjamin Alfred Haldane was one of the first professional Native photographers on the Northwest Coast, according to the Ketchikan Museums newsletter. Using glass plate images, he captured stunning images of Tsimshian men, women, children and families in the early 1900s. Haldane was born in 1874 in British Columbia and was part of the resettlement to Metlakatla led by missionary William Duncan. Expelled from Duncan's school at the age of 15, Haldane pursued photography. He began work as a professional photographer at 16, and at 25 opened his own studio.

Even as he worked within European culture to create photographs, Haldane always represented the Tsimshian spirit and sought to capture that spirit in his subjects. University of Alaska Southeast assistant professor of Alaska Native Studies Mique'l Dangeli was born and raised in Metlakatla and wrote her master's thesis on Haldane. In an article in the *Juneau Empire* printed Nov. 16, 2016, she is quoted as saying that Haldane's self-portrait shows his connection to both the European and the Tsimshian world. "He chose to visually connect to his body a model totem pole with his Lax Gibou (Wolf Clan) crest represented by the bottom figure," she wrote. "Both physically and metaphorically, he is supported by Tsimshian cultural values and beliefs and gazes directly at the viewer to assert their importance." Haldane and more than 30 other Native American, First Nations and Métis photographers will be featured in a forthcoming exhibit at the Minneapolis Institute of Art set to open in 2023.



Self-portrait of Benjamin Haldane. Photo: Ketchikan Museums

## SOLDOTNA

### Museum winter activities underway

The Soldotna Historical Society reports winter activities at their museum are underway. Work is being done to transfer oral histories of Soldotna pioneers to a digital format, conduct more oral history interviews, and add to their "Then and Now" slideshow. They hope to hold a strategic planning meeting early in 2023.

## SITKA

### *Rear admiral recalls tales of Revenue Service*

The U.S. Revenue Cutter Service was established in 1790 as an armed maritime customs enforcement service. During Alaska's territorial days many remote coastal communities depended on Revenue Cutter visits—sometimes only once a year—for supplies, mail, medical and dental care and officials to perform weddings and baptisms. In 1915, the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service became the U.S. Coast Guard. In October, invited by the Sitka Historical Society and Museum, Coast Guard Rear Admiral Nathan Moore gave a presentation entitled “Tales of the U.S. Revenue Cutter Service and U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska.” Moore drew on the long history and strong connection between the Revenue Cutter Service and Alaska communities to bring to life colorful stories of service and sacrifice.

## PALMER

### *Drag racing's early start in Mat-Su Valley*

The Palmer Historical Society newsletter reports that in 1964, Lee and Fern Nelson and their sons opened a quarter-mile drag-strip, the Polar Raceway, at Mile 10.5 of the Old Glenn Highway. The Lackey family bought the business in 1998 and have operated it since as the Alaska Raceway Park. Races are conducted every weekend from Mother's Day through Labor Day. In September, the Palmer Historical Society's History Night presenters were Earl Lackey and Dan Roche, who shared photos and stories about the past and present of drag racing in the valley.



Lee Nelson and Gov. Bill Egan at the Polar Raceway in 1964. Photo: Palmer Historical Society.

### *Flying Beef from Chirikof Island*

The Palmer Historical Society sometimes gets requests from people curious about Alaska history. One such query came from David S., who was looking for photos of the B-18 Bolo Bomber that used to fly beef from Chirikof Island to Palmer. The PHS research team came up with several fascinating bits of information, but couldn't find any additional pictures of the bomber.

The origin of the wild cows of Chirikof Island is uncertain, although we know that Russians introduced cattle to Alaska during the colonial period. Genetic studies have shown the cattle are a mixture of British (Hereford) and Siberian breeds. In 1950, the cows were owned by Jack McCord. A Palmer cold storage company entered into partnership with a wholesale meat packer in Washington to buy beef from McCord and transport it to Palmer for processing and freezing. Sig Staveland, the pilot, flew an old B-18 Bolo Bomber named “The Flying Bull,” bringing a load of eight to nine thousand pounds of beef on each trip. The choice parts of beef were sold in retail stores, and the rest of the carcasses were boned, ground and frozen into blocks of hamburger.

In 1980, Chirikof Island became part of the Alaska Maritime Refuge, and today it is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The plane was eventually wrecked on the beach at Chirikof Island and the wreckage is still there. If you have any photos of the plane or have leads to them, please contact the Palmer Historical Society.

## FAIRBANKS

### *Author recalls cold case murder mystery*

“The Alaskan Blonde” was the title of a lecture James T. Bartlett presented in Fairbanks in October for the Tanana Yukon Historical Society. The subject was the murder of Cecil Wells on October 17, 1953, a case that baffled authorities for nearly 70 years. The victim's beautiful and much younger wife, Diane, claimed they were victims of a home invasion. Suspicion turned to Diane's alleged lover, Johnny Warren, who left town the night of the murder, but nothing was ever proven. Bartlett, a journalist, uncovered new evidence while tracking down and interviewing people who knew the protagonists in the case. Bartlett published a book with the same title earlier this year.

### *Mining Hall of Fame gets new home*

The Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation had an opening reception at its new home at 406 Cushman Street in downtown Fairbanks in October. The museum has displays of mineral samples, photos, maps, and plans for a research area with archives. The group has a publication called *The Paystreak* that features biographies of the individuals they have inducted. Back issues are on the organization's website [www.alaskamininghalloffame.org](http://www.alaskamininghalloffame.org) and will fill an evening with interesting reading.

## KODIAK

### *Museum opens Native identity exhibit*

The Kodiak History Museum opened a new exhibit November 9 entitled “Fissions of Native Identity: Who is Native, and who decides?” Produced in partnership with Native community members, the exhibit features topics such as colonization, blood quantum and boarding schools.

### *Correction*

In a past statewide news item about the late archaeologist Donald Clark’s donations to the Kodiak History Museum and to the Alutiiq Museum, we got Clark’s birthplace wrong. Clark was born in Portland, Oregon.

## VALDEZ

### *Arab American doc impacts Last Frontier*

Dr. David Hasan Sleem was the subject of the Valdez Museum’s October Tuesday Night History Talk, presented by Marvin Wingfield. Dr. Sleem was born in Syria in 1860 and joined the Gold Rush in Alaska and practiced medicine in Seward and Valdez. In Valdez he invested in the rich Cliff Mine and other promising sites, but he never became wealthy from the mines. In 1912



he was chosen as the Valdez Health Officer and led a vigorous public health campaign to promote public sanitation and eradicate infectious diseases that were threatening the community. When he died in 1913, he was a widely respected community leader, known throughout Alaska.

**David Sleem. Photo: Valdez Museum & Historical Archives.**

## NAKNEK

### *Historic boat recalls Bristol Bay history*

Last summer, a 29-foot sailboat set out from Homer and traveled to Naknek to celebrate the history of Bristol Bay’s sockeye salmon industry. The double-ender sailed across Cook Inlet, traversed a 17-mile Pile Bay Road to Lake Iliamna, visited villages around the lake, and maneuvered through the sandbars of the Kvichak River to get to Naknek. The boat is a restored 1936 Bristol Bay double-ended gillnetter of the type that pioneered the lucrative fishery in 1884. According to Tim Troll, executive director of the Bristol Bay Heritage Land Trust, the sailboat’s journey was meant to draw attention not only to the past and present successes of the fishery, but also to acknowledge the exhausting grind of fishing and the dangers of storms and shipwrecks.

## ANCHORAGE

### *Nike Hercules missile finds new home*

A Nike Hercules training missile used in Alaska during the Cold War will soon be put on display at Nike Site Summit, which overlooks Arctic Valley near Anchorage. The Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry, which has been storing the missile since it was donated by the U.S. Army, is transferring it to Friends of Nike Site Summit, an organization that works to preserve and restore Nike Site Summit and conducts public tours during the summer months. After volunteers restore and reassemble the Nike Hercules training missile, it will be displayed at one of the two launch bunkers at Site Summit. Between 1959 and 1979, the U.S. Army deployed the 41-foot Nike missiles at eight locations around Anchorage and Fairbanks.



**Nike Hercules missile. Photo: Nike Site Summit website: <http://nikealaska.org/bay/SiteBAY.html>**

### *Muybridge film set for Anchorage Museum*

The film *Exposing Muybridge* will be shown at the Anchorage Museum December 1 and the director, Marc Shaffer, will be there to talk about making the film and answer questions. Perhaps best known as a pioneer in motion pictures, Edward Muybridge is important in Alaska history for taking some of the earliest photographs of Southeast Alaska and the Native inhabitants in 1868. Shaffer put together an exhibit of 16 stereo views from Muybridge’s Alaska trip that was shown in Haines and Anchorage, sponsored by the Atwood and Rasmuson Foundations, several years ago.

# New AHS comprehensive guide to ANCSA getting attention

The Alaska Historical Society's first-ever comprehensive guide to historical sources about the landmark Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) is receiving wide circulation and some of its most important findings will be the subject of a special edition of the Society's *Alaska History* journal.

Alaska's three largest newspapers—*Anchorage Daily News*, *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* and *Juneau Empire*—all ran guest columns about it in September. A senior executive of the Calista Corporation, Thomas Leonard, presented a summary of the project at this year's Alaska Federation of Natives annual convention in October. And hundreds of flyers about the guide were widely circulated at AFN and electronically to interested Alaskans and out-of-state institutions.

The many fascinating findings unearthed during preparation of the guide will come to light in a special edition of AHS's semi-annual journal. The special issue will feature items such as an early

letter from Athabascan chiefs to the government protesting the impact of settlers on their subsistence.

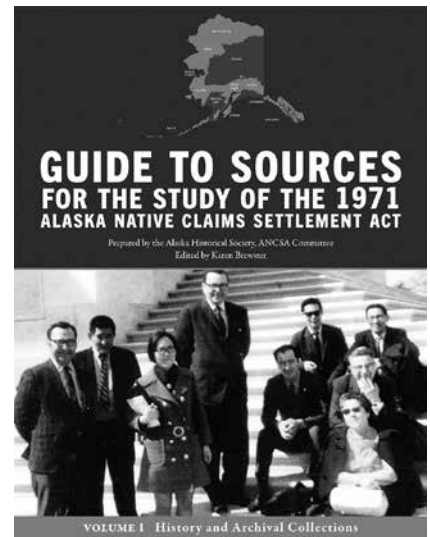
It also will highlight a portion of the Alaska Native Brotherhood record in which James Wickersham and William Paul sought approval to press the Tlingit-Haida land claims in Southeast Alaska. A message from then AFN President

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The three-volume, nearly 1,200-page guide identifies the vast majority of documents in existence about ANCSA.

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Janie Leask on the importance of the 1991 Amendments to ANCSA will be included. And President Nixon's address to Congress on the New Indian Policy of his administration is likely for inclusion. The deadline for submitting a draft for peer review is December 2022, with



publication and release scheduled for about a year from now.

The three-volume, nearly 1,200-page guide identifies the vast majority of documents in existence about the legislation which are located in archives, libraries, personal collections and online from Alaska to Washington, D.C.

Further information is available from project director William Schneider at [wsschneider@alaska.edu](mailto:wsschneider@alaska.edu). The guide is available on the AHS website at: [www.tinyurl.com/ANCSAguide](http://www.tinyurl.com/ANCSAguide)

## AHS advocacy update

*Continued from page 3*

members to consider a financial gift to the AHS to offset the costs of running the program as we find a permanent home for it.

### *Candidates respond to AHS campaign questionnaire*

Nearly two dozen candidates for Alaska governor, Senate and House responded to the Alaska Historical Society's campaign questionnaire posing five questions about issues important to Alaska historians.

The responses were posted to the Society's webpage in mid-October to provide members information about the candidates' views. Questions asked about funding for federal archives and digitization of federal records, state cultural programs, the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, Alaska History Day and state public education standards for history and social studies.

Former Gov. Bill Walker was the only gubernatorial candidate to respond, along with nine Senate candidates and 11 House candidates. None of the candidates for U.S. Senate or House responded. The responses can be found on the Society's webpage.

### *Alaska's U.S. senators fail to commit to civics education*

Neither of Alaska's U.S. senators committed to supporting federal legislation designed to expand civics education in America and access to U.S. history. In July, the Alaska Historical Society wrote both urging their support of the Civics Secures Democracy Act (Senate Bill 879), which also 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 believe our free society depends upon well informed citizens who are prepared to defend our freedom through rea-

soned and fact-based dialogue," the AHS wrote. "The defense of freedom begins with civil discourse. Many Americans, including many Alaskans, are uninformed and easy prey to unsubstantiated media."

The bipartisan bill was introduced in 2021 and would authorize \$985 million for civics education grant programs.

In September, Senator Dan Sullivan responded without committing to support the bill. "It is important that we strive to teach young Americans about the founding principles of this country so that they may practice their civic duty of self-governance to the fullest extent," he wrote.

In October, an aide to Senator Lisa Murkowski, responding by noting that her boss "shares your concern that many young people do not have a deep knowledge of our nation's history, nor a working knowledge of U.S. civics." She said Murkowski supports a national civics education program, *We the People*.

—David Ramseur

# Lands act veterans detail battles in new book

*Editor's note: Two key figures in Alaska's 1980 lands battle and conservation movement, brothers Jon and Destry Jarvis, recently published their book, National Parks Forever: Fifty Years of Fighting and a Case for Independence.*

*In an extensive chapter about their Alaska experiences, the two describe the historic battle behind what became the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. The landmark legislation added 43.6 million acres to the national park system, including 10 new Alaska units and significant additions to Denali, Glacier Bay and Katmai.*

*Below are excerpts from the chapter entitled: "Alaska: Doing it Right the First Time."*



*Here Destry Jarvis, a major player in the national conservation community, describes the behind-the-scenes lobbying required to achieve congressional passage of ANILCA:*

Throughout 1979 and into early 1980, direct lobbying in the Senate by Coalition members, including me, often accompanied by influential Board members of Coalition organizations, intensified in an effort to sway votes to support Coalition amendments in Committee. One of my most memorable lobby days was escorting a National Parks Conservation Association Board Member, Mrs. W.L. Lyons (Sally) Brown, to see her home State Senator, Wendell Ford (D-KY) who was a member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, where mark-up (amending and voting) on the bill was occurring.

Senator Ford was hesitant to support the Coalition's strengthening amendments, preferring Chairman Scoop Jackson's middle ground compromises. At one point in the tense meeting, Sally shook her finger in the Senator's face and said, "My family controls one-fifth of the economy of Kentucky, and you will do what I say." Senator Ford thereafter supported most of the Coalition's amendments, though we still did not have enough votes to prevail in the Committee on the final vote to report the bill.

Chairman Jackson, in a highly unusual move, allowed Alaska Senator Stevens to fully participate in Committee hearings, including questioning witnesses, and debates, more than a dozen multi-hour Committee mark-up sessions, and offering his own amendments, even though he was not a member of that Committee (he did not get to vote in Committee).

*Here Jon describes his first days as superintendent of Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve, a position he held between 1994-99. He went on to become the 18th director of the National Park Service, the only NPS director who ever worked in Alaska.*

As much as I wanted to be, I was not in the first wave of Na-

tional Park rangers who were dispatched to bring some sense of management to the new areas of Alaska. In 1980, I was offered a ranger position in Kotzebue, but when I suggested this to my wife Paula she said, "be sure to write." It took 14 more years to convince her that this would be fun!

Those first rangers, sent to enforce [President Jimmy] Carter's proclamation, were not greeted warmly by the local residents who had been accustomed to a pioneering lifestyle with little to no regulations on the use of what was formerly open public lands. They especially railed against getting permits from the NPS to do things they had done for decades without oversight.

In the newly established Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, where I would come in the mid-nineties, the hostilities bordered on violent, with the first ranger station at Slana mysteriously burning to the ground soon after construction, and the rangers' patrol airplane was set on fire while the rangers were eating dinner in a restaurant in Tazlina.

Signs stood outside most restaurants and gas stations in Glennallen that said "NPS not served here," and bumper stickers, with

a misunderstanding of biology, announced that "Park Rangers are blood sucking maggots." When an African American park ranger stopped in Glennallen to get gas, the attendant shouted "we don't serve your kind here!" The ranger responded "just how far north do I have to go!"

In 1980, ANILCA passed the Congress and was signed by the President—which somewhat resolved the hunting issues, but did not resolve the local opposition or controversies.

Living in the bush, I had to walk the fine line between the demands of the Republican Alaska delegation that the NPS should leave or not enforce even the basic rules of a national park, and the conservation community demands that we implement ANILCA as they had hoped it would have been written and how they interpreted it. Caught in the middle was the local community, of which I considered myself a member and contributor. I also noted that not a single traditional conservation advocate lived in the bush like I did. While they often chastised me, or encouraged me to take a strong stance against the delegation or community, they were never out there to back me up.



*Reprinted with permission from National Parks Forever: Fifty Years of Fighting and a Case for Independence, by Jonathan B. Jarvis and T. Destry Jarvis, published by The University of Chicago Press. © 2022 by Jonathan B. Jarvis and T. Destry Jarvis. All rights reserved.*



**Jon Jarvis in the backcountry of Wrangell St. Elias National Park in 1998.**  
**Photo: Jon Jarvis.**

## AN ODDMENT

# Alaska Gold Rush whisky smuggling secrets disclosed

As Alaska's Collector of Customs during the Klondike gold rush era, Joseph W. Ivey, had the unenviable job of trying to enforce Alaska's liquor laws. He did not drink and did not abide lawbreakers—but he faced hostile saloon owners, crooked politicians, and cunning smugglers. When a reporter asked, "How does the whisky usually come in?" he responded,

*It comes in bottled up as Nervine, as patent medicines of all sorts, in sterilized milk cans as milk, in small kegs in the center of barrels of pork or pickles, in oyster, tomato and corn beef cans, in sugar barrels, sauerkraut and in barrels of pitch. Sometimes it comes in coffins shipped to an imaginary undertaker. Ten cases of eggs came in the other day, consigned to a local newspaper man. I thought it strange that eggs should be coming to him, so I had the cases opened. On top were two layers of eggs. Under these in each case, were 12 bottles of fine old Scotch whisky. One lot a few months ago came in long tin cans buried in 12x12 timbers, hollowed out from the end. We can usually detect the swishing or gurgling sound of the whisky by shaking an innocent barrel or box.*

This information appeared in the May 22, 1898 issue of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

—Chris Allan



Smuggler's Cove between Skagway and Dyea long served as a convenient depot for illicit goods. *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, April 27, 1898

## In search of a great gift idea?

A perfect gift for a friend, relative, local school or library is a year's membership in the Alaska Historical Society. Your gift includes our quarterly newsletter and journal *Alaska History*, and supports important activities and programs.

It's easy! Visit [www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org) and click on "membership and giving."

