

SELDOVIA STUDENTS AMONG ALASKA CHILDREN RECEIVING FEDERALLY FUNDED EDUCATION. Seventeen years after the U.S. purchased Alaska, the government began providing a fledgling education for Alaska children. The 1884 Organic Act directed the Secretary of Interior to provide that education "regardless of race" but resources were modest. Here Indigenous students (likely Alutiiq/Sugpiaq) attend the Angagkitagnuuq/Seldovia school with two white teachers standing and one teacher writing on the chalkboard. Photo courtesy Anchorage Museum, Crary-Henderson Collection B1962.1.801.

Registration open for October Kenai conference

Nearly three dozen compelling presentations on subjects ranging from gunboat justice and early aviation to historic challenges with Native education are on tap for the Alaska Historical Society's annual conference that will take place in the Central Kenai Peninsula Oct. 5-8.

Registration is open now for the two-and-a-half-day event actively co-sponsored by the Kenai Peninsula Historical Association.

Scheduled mostly at the Kenai Peninsula College, presentations speak to this year's broad theme of "Connections and Disconnections in Alaska History," which references historical processes that have created wealth and opportunity for some while causing profound loss of lands and livelihoods for others.

Keynote speaker Diane Hirshberg, director of the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute of Social and Economic Research, will speak Friday morning with a focus on Alaska education, especially that affecting Indigenous and rural youth.

While statistics show students struggle to succeed in school across the state, Hirshberg says many factors are to blame: high teacher turnover, poor facilities and inadequate teaching methods. She argues too many policymakers, researchers and educators fail to critically examine how historic colonization and assimilation efforts in Alaska created and propagated the current situation.

The conference opens Thursday (Oct. 5) with a customized tour of Kenai's Russian

Orthodox Church, a National Historic Landmark. The Salamatof Drummers dance group, local dignitaries and refreshments courtesy of the local company, Nutrien US LLC, will greet conference attendees from 5-7 p.m. at the Kenai Visitor Center.

Following Hirshberg's presentation, Friday (Oct. 6) sessions focus on education, life in Alaska over the centuries and prominent Alaskans including Alaska flag designer Benny Benson, conservation hero Charles Tanqiilnguq Hunt and the role of the Presbyterian Church in Tlingit America.

The AHS annual business meeting is scheduled for 4:15 p.m. Friday. The day's presentations conclude with an evening

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Immersion in "old world" history offers lessons for Alaskans

There's something about standing under the ornate ceiling of a cathedral whose roots



date back to the year 850 to make one appreciate history. That's where I found myself last month in the northeastern Italian town of Belluno, the southern entrance to the Dolomite Mountains.

I was in Italy with 13 other aging Anchorage athletes to hike 75 miles over the Alta Via 1, the main trekking route established in the 1800s. We witnessed ruins from World War I battles between Italy and the crumbling Austro-Hungarian empire and overnights in mountain hut "refugios," the highest at nearly 10,000 feet.

Over eight days of hiking and a couple of days in gateway communities at either end of the trail, I was constantly reminded how deeply Europeans treasure and capitalize on their history while Alaskans do not. I readily acknowledge Italy—and Europe broadly—has a lot of history to boast about. But the trip hit home for me that we Alaskans should do a much better job emphasizing our history to residents and visitors alike.

Our visit started in Venice's Marco Polo (how's that to tickle your historical funny bone?) airport where visitors are barraged with posters, brochures and even art pieces celebrating the region's deep history. From there we started our hike near the Dolomite village of Cortina, site of the 1956 Winter Olympics which is gearing up to host the same games in 2026. In a similar setting as Girdwood, thousands of international visitors spend millions of euros to ski and hike there.

In addition to the challenge and beauty of the Alps, a chief reason for hiking there is Europeans make it so convenient. You can't hike more than a few hours without encountering a clean, well-appointed refugio for a cappuccino, steaming plate of pasta or comfortable bed while being tended to by multilingual staff.

By contrast, a handful of Alaskans are trying to capitalize on our own spectacular

wilderness by encouraging development of a 500-mile Long Trail connecting Seward and Fairbanks. Their successful efforts to garner legislative support were undercut last year when Gov. Mike Dunleavy killed most of the funding.

Our trip concluded in the ancient city of Belluno, surrounded by towering mountains not unlike Anchorage. There weary hikers can mosey through hundreds-years-old churches and museums and enjoy a double gelato under the evening stars. By contrast, Anchorage's arguably most historic building, the 4th Avenue Theatre, was leveled last year.

The Alaska Historical Society continues to advocate for recognition and promotion of our state's history on multiple fronts. Elsewhere in this issue please read about this fall's compelling annual convention in Kenai.

We're also thrilled to be kicking off our four-part critical issues lecture and panel discussion series. The first session, scheduled for Oct. 19 at the Anchorage Museum, focuses on the topic "Alaska Native sovereignty and equality for all."

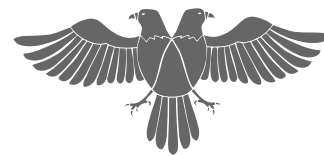
One area where we're not making the progress we'd like is Alaska's participation in America's 250th birthday. Most states already have created entities to work with a federal commission on the anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, to occur between July 4, 2026 and the end of 2027.

As I detailed here earlier, we initiated talks with Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom, who chairs the state Alaska Historical Commission, in February. After my presentation to her and the commission in June, she offered to work with Gov. Dunleavy to appoint a task force to help oversee Alaska's "semiquincentennial" celebration.

Despite repeated inquiries, there's been no word from the State. We believe Alaska has played a vital role in the nation's development. Alaskans should be able to rely on our state government to help develop and spread that message.

During our two weeks in Italy last month, every person of every nationality we encountered was wowed by Alaska's aura. It's up to us to share that mystique with Alaskans and visitors alike.

—David Ramseur



ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Alaska students succeed at National History Day

Twenty of Alaska's youngest historians shared a successful week at the National History Day competition in June in College Park, Maryland. The group brought home three special awards for outstanding research.

The weeklong national competition gave students an opportunity to present their research before a panel of judges, meet with Alaska's congressional delegates, tour the nation's capital and network with future historians. For three Atka students, the competition week was especially worthwhile when the Smithsonian Institute invited them to participate in a repatriation ceremony for Unanga̋ remains.

What started with a book club in a small Atka village school became an award-winning History Day project. Anyisia Dushkin, Evelina Snigaroff and Nadia Dushkin won the History of Place award sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities for their website *A Geopolitical Frontier: The Aleutian Islands, Home of the Unanga̋ People*. Their teacher, Dena Royal, a nine-year veteran of History Day, introduced the competition to her students when she began teaching at Yakov E Netsvetov School in Atka in March 2022.

According to Royal, students began their journey reading aloud and discussing the historical fiction book *Aleutian Sparrow* by Karen Hesse.

"The students had spoken to me about the forced removal of the Unanga̋ people from the Aleutian Islands during World War II, as well as the negative experiences of their grandparents with BIA schools," Royal said. "I encouraged them to research these historical tragedies in depth, and to



Atka students Anyisia Dushkin, Evelina Snigaroff and Nadia Dushkin received the "History of Place" special award from the National Endowment for the Humanities for their junior group website "A Geopolitical Frontier: The Aleutian Islands, Home of the Unanga̋ People." Pictured at left is Anthony Mitchell, senior deputy chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities, and at right is the organization's chair, Shelly C. Lowe. Photo courtesy Dena Royal.

use this history to educate others."

Students created a timeline dividing Atka's history into the Russian Era and American Era, and analyzed the lasting impacts of key historical events. They also got a taste of the challenges historians sometimes face in the process.

"It was very real and personal," Royal said. "The students were able to interview impacted family members. It was sometimes a challenge to balance their anger with creating a balanced project."

Atka students faced additional challenges, having to build a website from

scratch with limited access to primary sources. They used the National History Day's free website tutorials, available to all contest participants, to learn the medium. And thanks to the Alaska State Library, Archives & Museums, students were able to work with digitized resources needed to build a competitive online exhibit.

"Everyone was very surprised and elated when they won the special award," Royal said.

Two members of the National Endowment for the Humanities, including an Indigenous board member, presented the award, which was an additional highlight for the Alaska team on the final day of the competition.

Perhaps most inspiring was the chance for these students to see how the study of history provides a public service. With the help of the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of Natural History and its director, Kirk Johnson, Atka students participated in a repatriation ceremony of Unanga̋ remains while in Washington. They were also given a private tour of the museum. Royal described the event as powerful and emotional, but also fun.

The Atka team's award-winning junior-level website is available here: <https://00-31515058.nhdwebcentral.org>.

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Help AHS support Alaska History Day students

Currently, the statewide competition gives three sponsored special awards: on Alaska history, naval history and women in history. The support of new special awards would encourage more participation for students in our statewide competition, especially those unable to afford to participate at the national level. In 2023, many of our finalists and their teachers, though eligible, were unable to compete at the national level due to travel costs. Members wishing to support a special award can reach out to co-coordinator Leanna Williams at lprix1@alaska.edu.

AHS members can support Alaska History Day by donating to the Alaska Historical Society, specifying that the funds go to support Alaska History Day. These gifts will help support programming, teacher training, outreach, and participation at the national contest.

For more information, or to get involved, please follow us at <https://www.facebook.com/AlaskaHistoryDay>.

Focus on Native sovereignty launches 4-part lecture series

To help raise the level of civil discourse across Alaska, the Alaska Historical Society will launch in October a four-part lecture and panel discussion series focused on major public policy issues facing Alaska.

The first session of the Critical Issues Lecture Series, scheduled for Oct. 19 at the Anchorage Museum, will feature three of the nation's top experts on Alaska Native sovereignty and equality: Attorney and Alaska Native Justice Center Chief Operating Officer Alex Cleghorn; legal scholar and author David S. Case; and Tlingit scholar and anthropologist Dr. Rosita Kaaháni Worl.

"By demonstrating how knowledge of history can inform and improve current public policy debate, we hope to raise the level of discussion so an informed public can encourage decision makers to draw on history to make fact-based policy which serves the broadest diversity of Alaskans," said William Schneider, University of Alaska Fairbanks professor emeritus and recent AHS past president. Schneider will moderate the first panel discussion.

The AHS received a generous grant from the Atwood Foundation to help cover costs. The society is partnering with the Cook Inlet Historical Society, Anchorage Museum, the League of Women Voters, the University of Alaska Anchorage Seawolf Debate Program and OLÉ!, an Anchorage-based nonprofit

which offers educational classes.

Each session will feature a small panel of experts who will discuss the topic at hand and take questions from both a live and online audience. Alaska students are encouraged to participate.

The kickoff event, entitled "Alaska Native Sovereignty and Equality for All," will consider the history of the relationship between Native groups and the federal government. The landmark 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was broadly seen as the settlement of long-standing Alaska Native land claims while others point out the act greatly limits Native sovereignty. Others point to Native assertion of sovereignty in self-government and active management of vital services such as health care delivery.

Cleghorn, of Sugpiaq descent and a tribal citizen of Tangirnaq Native Village, previously served as assistant attorney general and special assistant to the Alaska attorney general, where he led and coordinated efforts to build collaborative relationships between the state and Alaska tribes.

Case's book, written with David A. Voluck, *Alaska Natives and American Laws*, was originally published in 1978 and is now in its third edition. It is cited and quoted by scholars and the courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court.

Worl, president of the Sealaska Heritage Institute, has conducted research

throughout Alaska and the circumpolar Arctic. Her current research contributions have focused on the role of Native corporations and the issues surrounding cultural inclusion and ways Native corporations represent cultural values.

Subsequent sessions will address:

- **The "Americanization of Alaska."** Starting in 1867 with the transfer of Alaska from Russian to American control, the federal government extended its administration over the territory. Americanization had both enormously positive and negative impacts which continue today.

- **Historic examples of how conservation and development can co-exist.** Alaska is recognized as a state with rich natural resources vital to the nation. Since Statehood in 1959, resource development has been vital to the state. Conservation advocates and their organizations have played a role to ensure responsible development. This session will assess the historic record with examples that apply to present and future development.

- **Alaska: the canary in the coalmine for climate change.** Many scientists consider Alaska Ground Zero for predicting the direction and impacts of climate change. This session will examine research produced in Alaska and how it speaks to climate change today.

—David Ramseur and Will Schneider

National History Day

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More Alaska winners

Teams from Anchorage and Fairbanks also returned home with multiple special awards for their projects. Two entries were recognized as Outstanding Affiliate Winners.

- Elias Sandberg, Quinn Lester, and Koen Hopewell of Romig Middle School in Anchorage, were recognized for their Junior Group Documentary *William Shakespeare: A Legacy Through the Frontier of Language*. The team was led by teacher Adam Johnson.

- Nate Elsner of West Valley High School in Fairbanks received an award for his Senior

Individual Exhibit *The Race Into Space: A Competition Between Two Cold War Rivals*. He was led by teacher Nicholas Graves.

- South Anchorage High School students Jeremy Narus and Rowan Wollrich's exhibit *The Permanent Fund: A Living History* was selected for the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's exhibit showcase. Their teacher is Todd Heuston.

Looking to the future

The Alaska Historical Society played a key role in saving the statewide competition this year with the help of the Alaska Humanities Forum, the Ted Stevens Foundation, the National Park Service and an anonymous donor from the Cook Inlet Historical Society. Prior to 2022 the com-

petition was sponsored by the Alaska Humanities Forum. AHS members served as state-level contest judges and provided the thoughtful comments needed to help our students succeed at the national level.

Looking forward, the Alaska History Day program is committed to encouraging students to study Alaska topics, with the help of the state archives and repositories around the state. Developing a low-cost way to access primary documents in Alaska would encourage more comprehensive research, especially for remote schools that lack access to "mainland" university libraries. History Day coordinators are pursuing grants to help support this goal and outreach to more students and teachers.

—Rebecca Heaton

Sitka artist, researcher, Native language student strives to separate historic myths from truth

Rebecca Poulson's passion is to help people engage with history.

Poulson, a resident of Sitka since her parents bought the *Daily Sitka Sentinel* in 1969, is no stranger to the Alaska Historical Society. She served two 3-year terms on the board of directors from 2013 to 2019, including as president from 2014 to 2016 and vice president from 2016 to 2019. She returned to the board in 2020.

Notably, Poulson has given presentations on her research into Sitka's history, Sheldon Jackson School and education in Alaska at a number of conferences. During her earlier service, Poulson was part of the society's efforts to promote awareness and discussion of history around Alaska's Sesquicentennial in 2017.

Poulson describes her passions as these:

Art. She is a printmaker and produces an annual calendar of art and poetry celebrating Southeast Alaska's outer coast; teaches at the Sitka Fine Arts Camp; and does scenic design for the Fine Arts Camp's Musical Theater Camp and for Sitka Community Theater. Poulson learned wood engraving from wood cut and wood engraving artist Dale DeArmond and went on to earn an MFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia.

Historic preservation. Work after college repairing wood fishing boats led Poulson to help found the Sitka Maritime Heritage



AHS board member Rebecca Poulson searches for a spot from which to paint, on Biorka Island near Sitka. Photo by James Poulson.

house built in 1879 or before. She also is a member of the Alaska Historical Commission, the review board for historic preservation programs in the state.

Historical research. That passion started back in 1990 when curiosity about the origin of local fishing boats led Poulson to discover that many had been built in Sitka, most by Alaska Native men, many of whom were also involved in the Alaska

primed her interest in history. This led to primary research around the founding of the mission, which depended on the support of certain Native leaders. She is now working on a book, with the Sitka mission as a focal point for a look at the past 250 years of Alaska history.

In her free time, Poulson enjoys harvesting and preserving Alaska's wild berries and fish, spending time with her husband and daughter and son, both attending East Coast colleges, and learning the Tlingit language.

So why be on the AHS board again? Because Poulson really appreciates AHS and its board, especially "the way they step up to make awareness and knowledge of our history part of day-to-day life, helping Alaskans understand the issues of the present."

But she warns, "When you start diving in and looking at primary sources, you often find out that it is 180 degrees different from the accepted narrative. Actual history makes much more sense than the myths. But you hear them repeated over and over, it's both a frustration and a motivation, which I'm sure I share with others working in the field of historical research."

—Molly McCammon

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Actual history makes much more sense than the myths."

Society, dedicated to preserving the region's rich maritime history and restoring the World War II Japanski Island Boathouse as a working boat haulout and workshop and maritime heritage center. She also has been involved in preserving the Sheldon Jackson School National Historic Landmark.

Her dad, *Sitka Sentinel* editor Thad Poulson, owns several historic buildings which her brother is restoring. Poulson and her husband and two children live in a

Native Brotherhood and with ties to the Sheldon Jackson School.

After the college closed, and the Sitka Fine Arts Camp took over the buildings in 2011, she and a friend interviewed dozens of former students and staff of both the college and high school (closed in 1967). The interviews upended her expectations, with graduates describing the affection they had for their time at the school.

Family friend Bob DeArmond also



Keynote speaker Diane Hirshberg, director of the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute of Social and Economic Research, will deliver an address focused on Alaska education, especially that affecting Indigenous and rural youth.

AHS annual business meeting set for October 6

All members are invited and encouraged to participate in the 2023 annual business meeting of the Alaska Historical Society at 4:15 p.m. October 6, 2023, at the Kenai Peninsula College in Soldotna. A call-in option will be available via Zoom.

The meeting will include a review of the past year's activities, review of financial affairs and announcement of the results of the election of new members to the Board of Directors. The new Critical Issues Lecture Series, new logo and plans for redesign of our journal *Alaska History* will be introduced.

The meeting agenda and link to participate by Zoom will be on the home page of the AHS website, www.alaskahistoricalociety.org.

Ballots for the board of directors election will be mailed before the end of August. Members, please vote!

CONNECTIONS & DISCONNECTIONS in ALASKA HISTORY

Alaska Historical Society 2023 Conference
with the Kenai Peninsula Historical Association

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 5

3:30-5 p.m.	TOUR » Holy Assumption Orthodox Church, Kenai
5-7 p.m.	WELCOME RECEPTION » Kenai Visitors and Cultural Center

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 6

8:30-10 a.m.	KEYNOTE ADDRESS » Diane Hirshberg – From Sheldon Jackson to the Fight for Tribal Schools: The Unfinished History of Colonization's Impact on Alaska's Schools and Students
10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.	SESSION 1: Alaskans Who Shaped Our History » Marcia Biederman – The Courage of a Haida Woman: How Agnes McAlpin Won Her Human Rights in Divorce Court » Michael Livingston – Benny Benson's Bilking and Diminution (remote) » Ray Hudson – The Best People on Earth: Connections and Disconnections in the Writings of Philemon Tutiakoff (remote) SESSION 2: Building Alaska through Industry & Education » Taiyo Itoh – Development of Alaska Native Programs at the University of Alaska Anchorage » Bridget Groat – The Boom and Bust of Bristol Bay's Commercial Salmon Fishery » Matt McIntosh – Oral Histories of Workers' Knowledge on the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System
1-2:15 p.m.	SESSION 1: Unorthodox Contributors to Alaska History » Cynthia Wentworth – Charles Tanqiinguq Hunt and the Village of Caniliaq: Yup'it and Non-Natives at the North Mouth of the Yukon River 1937-1945 » Diane Rodill – One 1915 Alaskero Has a Name (remote) » Russell Vanderlugt – The Continuing Mystery of Mr. Petroff's History, Part II SESSION 2: Paving the Way to Statehood » Ethan Hartwig – Reassessing the Alaska Native "Transition" Thesis Between Statehood and ANCSA » Paul Dauphinais – Structures, Skills, and Statehood: How the Second World War Made Alaska Statehood Possible » Kristi Swain – The Legacy of Canadian-American Military Cooperation in Alaska
2:30-3:45 p.m.	SESSION 1: Colorful Characters in Early 20th Century Alaska » David Greenham – The Last School Teacher in Council, Alaska » Jackie Pels – From Big Delta to the Kenai » Leanna Prax Williams – Altering Course: Alaska's Aviation Industry and the 1938 Civil Aeronautics Act SESSION 2: Gunboats, Missions and Tourism » Dan Monteith – From "Gunboat" Frontier to "Civil" Control: The Beginning of Social Injustice for the Tlingit in Southeast Alaska » Rebecca Poulson – Presbyterians in Tlingit America » Bill Youngs – Early Alaska Tourism and the Encounter with Alaska Natives
4:15-5:45 p.m.	ANNUAL AHS BUSINESS MEETING
6:30-8 p.m.	FILM » Steve Kahn and Anne Coray – <i>Rebuilding Brown</i>

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 7
KENAI PENINSULA DAY

8-9:30 a.m.	SESSION: Planes, Trains and Power <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Pierce Bateman – The Air Passenger Crossroads of the World: Anchorage in the Age of the Jet Set, 1946-1991 » Ian Hartman – Reflections on 100 Years of the Alaska Railroad » Philip Wight – Children of the Midnight Sun: A History of Alaskan Electrification
10 a.m.-12 p.m.	KENAI PENINSULA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cooper Landing, Hope, Kasilof, Kenai, Nikiski, Seward, Soldotna historical societies
12-1 p.m.	FILM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Jeanette Pedginski – <i>Nourishing the Kenai</i>
1-3 p.m.	SESSION: Living on the Kenai Peninsula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Adam Dunstan – Exploring the Relationship Between Salmon and Kahnuht’ana Dena’ina Communities in the Nineteenth Century: A Cultural Keystone Species Approach » Jonathon Ross – Tikahtnuht’ana Elnena: Qbelnenqultses (Cook Inlet Dena’ina Territory: From When Things Have Been Happening to the People) » Doug Baily – The Tanker <i>Rebecca</i> Incident: Alaska Comes of Age as an Oil State » Joshua Wisniewski – “Fish Aren’t Money”: Stories of Stewardship, Responsibility and in Defense of an Alaskan Small Boat Fishing Way of Life » Marilyn Sigman – Shifting Baselines and Response to Ecological Change in Kachemak Bay, Alaska
3:30-5 p.m.	SESSION: Alaska Place Names <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Roger Pearson, Gregory Weissenberg and Michael James Letzring – Russian Alaska: Toponymic Perspectives » Gerritt Veerbeek – Choss Lore – An Atlas of Geographic Naming History in Southcentral Alaska » James Kari and Gerard M. Smith – Discussion of the Kari-Smith Atlas of Alaska Dene Place Names
6-9 p.m.	BANQUET <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Paradiso’s Restaurant, Kenai » Awards and Memorials

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8

8-9:30 a.m.	SESSION: Lost Alaskans and Project Jukebox <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Cynthia Ganley and Shir Lev Bach – Finding the Lost Alaskans: Volunteer and Researcher Experiences with the Morningside Hospital History Project » Karen Brewster – Conversations About Change: Observations of Environmental Change and Effects on People at Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Skagway, Alaska, and Bering Land Bridge National Preserve in Nome, Alaska
9:45-10:45 a.m.	SESSION 1: Workshop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Freya Anderson – Copyright Q & A SESSION 2: Early Cartography and Commercialization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Jared Freedline – Early Alaskan Identity: Views from Early Alaskan Cartography » Pennelope Goforth and Leslie Fried – From Purchase to Prosperity: The Jewish Founders of the Alaska Commercial Company and Their Contributions to the Acquisition in America’s Last Frontier
11 a.m.-12 p.m.	AHS – Going Forward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » William Schneider, Bathsheba Demuth, Ian Hartman, Molly McCammon – An Introduction to the Critical Issues Lecture Series » David Ramseur – 2024 Alaska Historical Society Conference

Kenai conference

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film about early Lake Clark settler Brown Carlson and restoration of his cabin.

Saturday (Oct. 7), “Kenai Peninsula Day,” will include presentations by local historical societies from Hope, Soldotna, Cooper Landing, Kasilof, Nikiski, Seward and Kenai. With this year the 100th anniversary of the Alaska Railroad, a session will explore various aspects of Alaska transportation, including the railroad.

The day will conclude with a banquet at Paradiso’s Restaurant in Kenai. The banquet program will include the society’s awards and memorial tributes to colleagues who have contributed to the state’s history and died the past year.

Sessions on Sunday morning (Oct. 8) include presentations on territorial life and a workshop on copyright. The conference will conclude with a discussion of the society’s new critical lecture and panel discussion series. The first program will be Oct. 19, just 10 days after the conference.

As in previous in-person AHS conferences, this year will feature a book fair and auction of historic materials.

Members of Kenai area historical societies have been invaluable in helping organize the conference and securing local support. Two conference hotels, the Kenai River Lodge and Duck Inn, are offering attendees special rates.

The early registration fee is \$150, which covers admission to all presentations, the opening reception, banquet and book fair. For members of Kenai Peninsula historical societies, registration is \$100. After Sept. 15, the in-person registration fee goes up \$25. The conference is available remotely online for \$50. For those able to attend just one or two sessions, the rate for one day only is \$15.

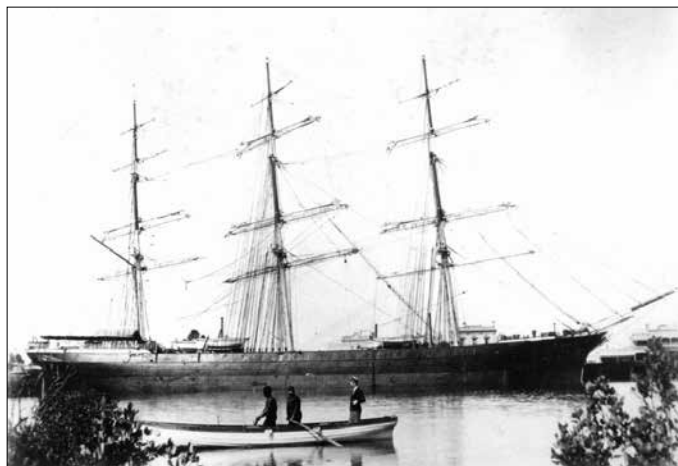
Please register as soon as possible to enable conference organizers time to make final decisions about meals and space assignments for presentations.

—David Ramseur & Rachel Mason

WRANGELL

Star of Bengal podcast wins award

Wrangell History Unlocked, a multimedia project that makes podcasts focused on elevating the history of Wrangell, has won a Leadership in History Award of Excellence from the American Association for State and Local History. The award-winning podcast, *Rise & Fall of the Star of Bengal*, is a five-part documentary about the wreck of the *Star of Bengal* on September 20, 1908, near Coronation Island that killed 111 of the 138 people on board, mostly Asian cannery workers. The podcast's producer, Ronan Rooney, spent almost a year researching the ship's history and piecing together eyewitness accounts of the tragedy. Episodes, transcripts, and photos can be found at www.WrangellHistoryUnlocked.com.



Star of Bengal. Photo courtesy State Library of Queensland.

SKAGWAY AND DAWSON

Album focuses on Gold Rush sex workers

Juneau-based musician Annie Bartholomew released her album "Sisters of White Chapel" in July. The nine songs tell stories of the women who did sex work during the Klondike Gold Rush. Some of the women were adventurers with an entrepreneurial spirit; others turned to prostitution for survival when their fortunes took a downturn. Some of the songs tell sad stories, but others are more cheerful. Bartholomew's inspiration for the project came in part from taking a tour of the Red Onion Saloon in Skagway, which included a visit to a Gold Rush-era bordello. She drew upon Lael Morgan's *Good Time Girls of the Alaska-Yukon Gold Rush* (2003) and other sources to compose the songs on the album. Bartholomew, a recipient of an AHS Student and Beginning Professional Award, attended and performed at the 2019 annual conference in Kodiak.

PETERSBURG

Tent City campground focus of exhibit

Petersburg's Tent City campground, a place of transient workers and adventurers that has existed for decades, is the subject of the Clausen Memorial Museum's new exhibit. The exhibit looks at ways the campground impacted the economy and character of the community.

ANCHORAGE

Historical society speaker series launches

The Cook Inlet Historical Society Fall 2023/Winter 2024 speaker series is starting Sept. 14 with a presentation by Talis Colberg on M.D. Snodgrass, founder of five federal agricultural experiment stations and the state fair in Alaska. Snodgrass left Kansas for Alaska at age 31. During his 60 years in Alaska he was a territorial legislator, on the first University of Alaska Board of Regents and was one of the first three electors when Alaska became a state. Colberg's dissertation for his Ph.D. from the University of Alaska Fairbanks is on Snodgrass. For the next four lectures in the series, CIHS is partnering with the Alaska History Society to present its Critical Issues Lecture Series that will discuss current public policy topics important to Alaskans and add a historical perspective to them. (See page 4 for more information.)

KODIAK

Donald Clark collections more accessible

The Kodiak History Museum recently received a grant for collections care from the Museums Alaska Collections Management Fund to catalog artifacts from ancestral Alutiiq settlements excavated over 50 years ago. Archeologist Donald Clark conducted excavations in Monashka Bay and Kizhuyak between 1957 and 1962 with sponsorship from the Kodiak Historical Society, and the objects have been stored in the care of the KHM ever since. The artifacts are mainly stone and bone tools that date to the last 1,200 years of Alutiiq history. The collections care project will be done in collaboration with the Alutiiq Museum, whose staff will inventory and catalog the objects and provide site documentation. As a result, these collections will become searchable and accessible to the public for the first time.

New museum director sought

The Kodiak History Museum is searching for a new executive director. Sarah Harrington, who did a terrific job hosting the Alaska Historical Society and Museums Alaska conference in Kodiak in 2019, resigned this summer. Best wishes to Sarah! Rob Stauffer is serving in the interim.

Objects Uncovered will be this fall's exhibit at the museum. Focus groups will look at objects from the collection and answer and discuss questions about them. The stories and comments will be used to show the many ideas and interpretations each object elicits.

NOME

New museum director selected

The City of Nome selected Cheryl Thompson to be the new director of the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum. Cheryl started working at the museum more than 20 years ago, cataloging museum artifacts and photos, diaries, letters and other archival materials during the celebration of Nome's centennial. She knows the museum's collections, helped with the move to the new building and is a long-time resident. Congratulations Cheryl!

FAIRBANKS

Mining museum hosts lectures

The Alaska Mining Hall of Fame hosted a series of lectures with fascinating subjects over the summer. In July, Joan Skilbred gave an illustrated lecture entitled "Wimbush & Cooper – A Gilmore Creek Murder Story," about an early 20th century tragic event in Fairbanks' history. The talk featured crime scene photos and images of trial documents along with discussion of local politics at play. In late July, Tom Bundtzen spoke about the floating bucket line stacker dredges that worked in Alaska's mining districts over the past 125 years and their economic significance. In addition to gold, dredges recovered tin, tungsten and platinum at mines around Alaska. In August, James Deininger gave two video presentations. The first was a 2006 video of drift mining on Linda Creek, north of Wiseman. Two generations of the Hall family worked the mine and enjoyed their self-sufficient lifestyle. The second video, made in 1993, showed how two miners used turn-of-the-last-century mining equipment and techniques with modern hydraulic and compressed air equipment to mine deeply buried unconsolidated frozen stream gravels in the Tofty Mining District for gold.

PALMER

Info on Bodenbug Butte spiders sought

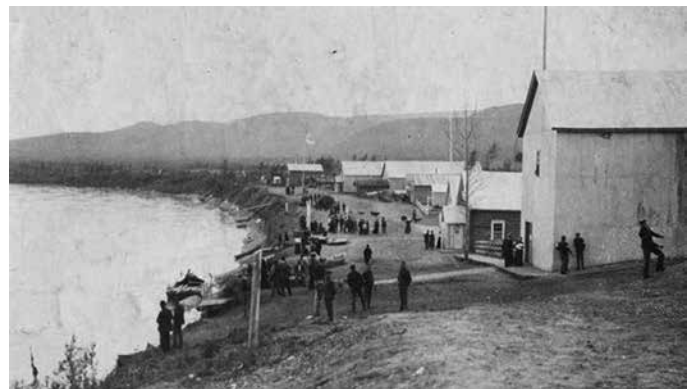
Bodenbug Butte is a familiar hiking destination to Palmer residents and others. Few know, however, that it was the home of a rare spider species, *Erigone bodenburgi*, in 1945. The Palmer Historical Society has been working with the UAF Matanuska Experiment Farm and the UA Museum of the North to develop a comprehensive spider species list for Alaska. Spider collections in Alaska over the last century have often been happenstance. A single female specimen, about 2mm in length, was collected by entomologist J.V. Chamberlain when he was working for the USDA at the Matanuska Experiment Farm. The label, dated June 2, 1945, simply lists Bodenbug Butte as the location.

In connection with this mysterious spider, Jozef Slowik of the Palmer Historical Society is seeking information about access to Bodenbug Butte in the 1940s. Was it accessible to the public? Was there more than one trail? Did people climb the butte for recreation, or was Chamberlain's visit in June 1945 a rare occurrence? If you have any information to share about the history of Bodenbug Butte, and especially about its spiders, connect with Jozef Slowik, Insect Collection Research Affiliate at the Museum of the North, at jaslowik@alaska.edu.

EAGLE

The Eagle Wireless returns to increase visitors

The spring 2023 issue of the Eagle Historical Society & Museums' newsletter, *The Eagle Wireless*, was the first issue in quite a while. Tourist activity has taken a sharp downward turn in Eagle due to the loss of scheduled tours coming to the community, and as a result the EHS&M has been struggling to stay afloat. Over the summer they managed to give daily tours of historic buildings and Fort Egbert, maintain their archives, and offer research and retrieval as needed. They also accomplished or started some long-needed maintenance and restoration projects in Eagle. In a project headed by the Bureau of Land Management, all the Fort Egbert buildings were repainted. The EHS&M had to move a number of display items so they wouldn't get damaged during the painting. One happy result was that the horse-drawn grader was moved to a place where more people could see and marvel at this interesting item. Another project started this summer is the restoration of St. Paul's church. The church has not been open to tours due to several issues, including an unstable wall. The EHS&M acquired funds for a materials conservator to help preserve all the fabric items in the church, including clerical vestments and a very intricate moose hide drapery.



U.S. Army soldiers stationed at Fort Egbert wander around Eagle City's waterfront, 1900. Photo courtesy Alaska State Library, Wick-ersham State Historic Site Collection.

JUNEAU

Evergreen Cemetery walking tours offered

The Juneau-Douglas City Museum offered three walking tours this summer of the Evergreen Cemetery. The cemetery was established in 1891 in what was then a location outside downtown Juneau. The next year, volunteers constructed a road to connect the cemetery with the city. Now surrounded by neighborhoods, Evergreen Cemetery is the final resting place for more than 8,000 people, some of whom played an influential role in Juneau's history. Participants in the tour heard the stories of Walter and Frances Harper, Andrew P. Kashevaroff, John Olds, Genie Chance and many others.

SEWARD

Remembering Andy and Eva Simons

A “Pages from the Past” entry from the Resurrection Bay Historical Society’s May newsletter showcases an admiring 1972 article in the *Anchorage Times* by Raymond E. Naddy about Andy Simons, a well-known big game hunting guide who lived in Seward and held Badge No. 1 in Alaska’s list of registered guides. Simons was a Finnish immigrant who lived 1882-1962. Arriving in Seward around 1908, he built a house on the end of a point that jutted into Kenai Lake. He married Eva Lowell, whose parents Frank and Mary Lowell settled on the future Seward townsite in 1884. Andy and Eva’s house on Kenai Lake was destroyed as a result of the 1964 earthquake. A side note in the newsletter revealed that Simon family photographs, correspondence, and Andy and Eva’s wedding license were found along the railroad tracks between Seward and Anchorage after the earthquake.



Eva and Andy Simons, seated. Photo courtesy Resurrection Bay Historical Society.

Iditarod Trail blazer statue dedicated

Another member of the Lowell family, Eva’s brother Alfred, was a pioneering dog musher who traveled the Iditarod Trail out of Seward. Starting in the winter of 1905 he ran mail by dog team from Seward to Tyonek, via Knik and Susitna Station. He was known for the fast times of his runs. In 1909, Lowell and the famous Japanese musher Jujiro Wada made a dogsled trip from Seward to Iditarod and back to demonstrate the feasibility of the route, with the hope of bringing a large number of prospectors to Seward to take the trail to Iditarod. On June 19, 2023, the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers met at Mile Zero of the Iditarod Trail on the Seward waterfront to dedicate a bronze statue of Alfred Lowell and his dogs created by sculptor Patrick Garley.

100th anniversary of railroad celebrated

The Resurrection Bay Historical Society hosted an open house on Founder’s Day, August 28. The festivities included the society’s president, Sue McClure, playing the pump organ, as well as a slideshow recounting the town’s two-decade effort to get a railroad built from Seward to Fairbanks. The event also commemorated the centennial of completion of the Alaska Railroad and President Harding’s visit in 1923.

The society just acquired a copy of a 44-page document, “Strangling of the Alaska Railroad,” written by John E. Ballaine in 1923. “A narrative of connected events and secret manipulations extending over period of 20 years—three cabinet officers, a U.S. senator, two governors, and others in high station take part—an organized undertaking to transfer Alaska’s resources for private exploitation,” it says. Ballaine created the Alaska Central Railway Company in 1902 to build a railroad from tidewater to the interior. He is credited with founding the city of Seward when his party landed at the head of Resurrection Bay on August 28, 1903, but only 47 miles of track were laid before the company went bankrupt in 1908.

SOUTH NAKNEK

Cannery project garners national award

Well-earned recognition was given to the NN Cannery History Project with an award of excellence from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH). The award recognizes the project, created and led by Katie Ringsmuth, for preserving the history and representing the people and cultures of Bristol Bay’s processing industry. The Diamond NN Cannery in South Naknek had operated for more than 100 years when owner Trident Seafoods announced its closure in 2014. Ringsmuth, a historian and former worker at the cannery, launched the project a year later to document the history of the commercial fishery and the underrepresented people who participated in it. She involved historians Bob King, Tim Troll and Karen Brewster; Bristol Bay residents LaRece Egli and Andrew Abyo; and local students, Native corporations and tribal governments, the National Park Service and Trident. In what became a seven-year effort, projects included a digital storytelling project by local students, collection of oral histories (available on the University of Alaska’s Project Jukebox), documentation of the site for the National Register of Historic Places, and mounting a museum exhibit that was at the Alaska State Museum in 2022. Great work Katie and team!

SOLDOTNA

Cabin and caches builder celebrated

The Soldotna Historical Society’s museum, set up as a “homestead village,” suffered from last winter’s heavy snowfall when the structures housing their double-ender and dory collapsed. Rebuilding has continued through the summer. The society has a new interpretive sign about Johnny Parks, a popular local log cabin builder in the 1960s. Johnny also built log caches, sometimes to accompany a new cabin. He probably would have been very busy after a snowy winter like the last one!

DOUGLAS

The town next to Juneau profiled

The spring/summer 2023 issue of the *Gastineau Heritage News* was devoted to the “proud, resilient, loyal” city of Douglas. The city was named “Douglas” after the island it sits on, named by British explorer George Vancouver in 1794 for Scottish Anglican bishop John Douglas. The island’s original Tlingit name is X’aat’ka. Douglas began as a township grant in 1885, and the 1890 census lists 402 residents. By 1910, the community of 1,722 had more residents than Juneau. Many of them were workers in the Treadwell gold mines. By 1920, however, the population of Douglas had declined by almost half due to mine flooding and closures. Following a disastrous fire in 1937, only 500 residents were left. The population climbed back, however, and today about 3,000 people live in Douglas. The community was consolidated with Juneau in 1970, against bitter resistance by Douglas. This issue of the *Gastineau Heritage News* is packed with stories from Douglas’s history, including work at the Treadwell Mines, fires, prostitution, and the beginning of a borough. Rich Mattson researched and wrote many of the stories. A second newsletter issue will also be devoted to Douglas. If you have a story to share, please contact the Gastineau Channel Historical Society at juneauhistory@gmail.com.

HOPE

Delivering the mail 100 years ago

The Hope and Sunrise Historical Society winter newsletter detailed the challenging winter of 1922-23 for Hope’s post office. In October 1922, a fire on Hope’s Main Street burned three buildings, including the Mathison Mining Company that housed the Hope Post Office. Robert A. “Bob” Mathison was then serving as Postmaster. Mail came approximately once a month in the winter, delivered by Bob’s stepfather, Al Ferrin. Al mushed his dog team to the Sunrise Station train stop near Moose Pass and back to Hope, a round trip that took him about a week. Al and Lavina Ferrin lived in a log house across the street from the Mathison Mining Company building. During the winter following the fire, Bob likely sorted mail at his mother’s house and Hope residents picked up their mail there.

SITKA

World War II boathouse gets spruced up

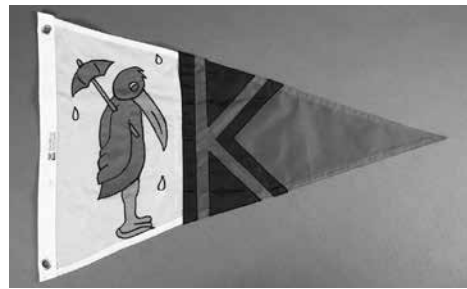
The Sitka Maritime Heritage Society, with new executive director Keith Nyitray, is having a busy summer. Helped by good weather in July, volunteers have been working Saturdays to repair and rebuild the walls on the southwest corner, and installed two restored doors on the east side. Eight students from the Outer Coast Summer Seminar volunteered several days to sand and paint siding boards, windows and trim. Contracts have been awarded for wiring, plumbing, insulating and sheet-rocking the new accessible addition and constructing access ramps, steps and decks. The volunteer work is a match for a grant from the federal Historic Preservation Fund administered by the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology. The society’s Sitka Sound WWII history and wildlife cruise in July sold out; the local Harry Race Pharmacy donated \$400 from their soda

fountain tip jars. Also in July the Society published *Sitka, Alaska: A Short History*, a short but well-researched account of Sitka over the past 300 years. The SMHS is also offering historical downtown Sitka walking tours through the end of the summer.

KETCHIKAN

A yacht club “burgee” flies freely

A yacht club in Ketchikan? Yes, the Ketchikan Yacht Club (KYC), founded in 1933, celebrates its 90th anniversary this year. The organization was founded to provide dedicated moorage and a meeting place for recreational boaters. At the time, any vessel that was not a full-time work boat could be considered a yacht. KYC members fly a special flag on their boats called a “burgee.” A burgee is a pennant that identifies a recreational boating organization. The KYC’s logo



A Ketchikan Yacht Club “burgee.”
Photo courtesy
Ketchikan Museums.

features the Ketchikan Rainbird holding an umbrella, along with the letter K. The Rainbird design was created by Bill Gabler, a commercial artist who worked in Ketchikan in the 1930s and 1940s. This burgee hung on a sailboat belonging to Louie Bartos, who with his wife Jean was a longtime member of KYC.

YUKON

Territory looks forward and back on its 125th year

This year is Yukon’s 125th year as an official territory of Canada. For the 2023 Yukon Heritage Symposium, to be held October 18, 2023, in Haines Junction at the Da Ky Cultural Centre, the theme is Looking Forward, Looking Back. “This Symposium seeks to explore what we are learning about and from our heritage, how we think about and conduct work in heritage and how these are changing, and how the heritage sector contributes—or could contribute—to building a better future.” For more information email Lianne Maitland, Yukon Historical & Museums Association, at info@heritageyukon.ca

As part of the commemoration of the anniversary, as well as to pay tribute to Yukon communities, heritage and cultures, the Government of Yukon and the YHMA made grant awards of up to \$7,500 for 62 projects to 13 Yukon communities. Projects include restoring the Yukon Theatre’s neon sign, a street mural reflecting on the impacts of colonialism and a historical horticultural brochure with a seed list and planting schedule. A full list of projects is at www.heritageyukon.ca/Yukon-125.

—Rachel Mason & Jo Antonson

REGISTER NOW for the Alaska Historical Society's fall conference in Kenai!

THEME: Connections &
Disconnections in Alaska History

DATES: Oct. 5-8, 2023

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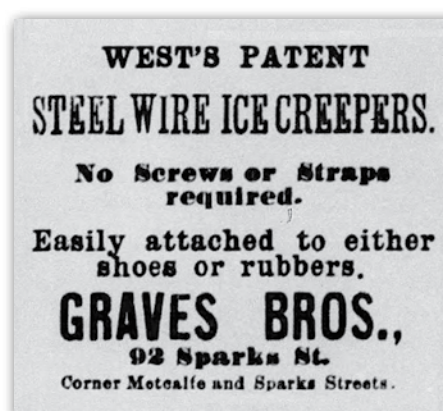
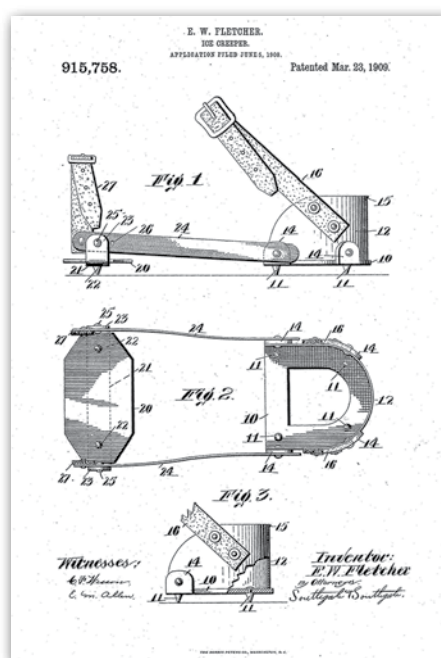
Ice creepers for the people

Call them what you will—ice cleats, traction shoes, creepers, or trekkers—they are essential equipment if you want to move about in a frozen world. The Vikings used wooden ones, the Inupiat carved them from ivory, and gold stampeder on Alaska's frozen rivers sang their praises. Beginning in the 1870s inventors filed patents for all sorts, but the victors were the designs with toe and heel straps and spikes or cables underneath. As one hardware store ad proclaimed in 1884, "Why fall and break your neck, when you can get a pair of ice creepers at Hume's for a quarter?" Why indeed!

During the Klondike gold rush a good pair of ice creepers was an essential item in a stampeder's outfit. Many who crossed the notoriously steep Chilkoot Pass mentioned how the innovation saved their lives. When Jasper Wyman and his fellow prospectors set out to find gold in the central Brooks Range along tributaries of the Koyukuk River they all had ice creepers strapped to their boots. Wyman—seen here at front with camera trigger in hand—is "necking" a 400 pound sled along the icy Ptarmigan Creek during a multi-week prospecting trip. In his journal on November 7, 1898, he wrote, "Weather fair, 32 below zero. It is very cold this morning and the click of our ice creepers on the ice as we travel ring out clear and sharp."

—Chris Allan

Source: *Evening Tribune* (Lawrence, Kansas), January 3, 1884.



TOP: Jasper Wyman and fellow prospectors head for the Klondike wearing ice creepers. Photo courtesy Anchorage Museum, Jasper N. Wyman Collection B1989.024.093. LEFT: 1908 E.W. Fletcher ice creeper patent illustration. ABOVE: Advertisement in the *Montpelier, Vermont, Argus and Patriot*, Jan. 14, 1885.