

Keynote presenters



SAM MIHARA

*Mass Injustice Against Japanese
Americans During WWII*

Friday, October 9, 9 a.m.



PAUSAURAQ JANA HARCHAREK

*The Inupiaq Learning
Framework: What We Learned*

Saturday, October 10, 8:30 a.m.

NEW DIRECTIONS *in* Alaska's History

ALASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY • 2026 CONFERENCE

with the DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, KACHEMAK BAY CAMPUS,
KENAI PENINSULA COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
HOMER, ALASKA • OCTOBER 7-10, 2026

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7

5:30–7:30 p.m. CONFERENCE REGISTRATION & WELCOME RECEPTION – Porcupine Theater, 106 W. Pioneer Ave.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8

8–8:30 a.m. CONFERENCE REGISTRATION – Kachemak Bay Campus

9–9:30 a.m. HAYCOX FESTSCHRIFT
» Dagmar Phillips – My Husband, Steve Haycox

9:45–11:30 a.m. FESTSCHRIFT: Honoring Steve Haycox
» Annalisa Claydon – Of Shearwaters, Whales, and Seals: Some Entanglements of the Bering and Tasman Worlds, c. 1850-1900
» Will Schneider – Wickersham, Dimond, and Gruening: Roots of the Government-Native Relations in 20th Century Alaska
» Holly Guise – “Frontiers” and Inclusion in Alaska Native History
» Pierce Bateman – The Politics of Alaska’s Cold War Subnational Diplomacy
SESSION 1: Land Transformation and Brown Rat Dynamics
» Doug Capra – If You Can Remember the Sixties: The Back-To-The-Land Movement and the Hippie Invasion of Alaska
» Meeri Kataja – Hard Climate, Tough Soil: Developing Alaska Agriculture with Northern European Knowledge
» John Branson – From Tanalian to Port Alsworth
» Christopher Setzer – That Ratting of Alaska: A Cross-Pacific History

11:30–1 p.m. LUNCH on your own
» 12:15 p.m. – Alaska Oil & Gas Historical Society – Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline startup commemoration plans
» 12:15 p.m. – Tim Troll – Sailing Back to the Bay Project

1–2:30 p.m. FESTSCHRIFT: Honoring Steve Haycox
» David Ramseur – Alaska-Russia Relations: The Vital Role of Alaska Native Peoples
» Andrei Znamenski – Alaska in Geopolitical Imagination of Current Russia
» Lisa Weissler – Oil and Alaska Politics: Learning from History
» Phil Wight – Myths and Materialism: Alaska’s Energetic Past and Fractious Future
SESSION 2: Borders, Trade, and Currency
» Viktor Shmagin – The Russian-American Company Against Tokugawa Japan, 1806-07
» Gretchen T. Bersch – Use of Civil War Scrip in Alaska
» Brandon Boylan – Alaska’s Role in Foreign Policy

2:30–3 p.m. BREAK

3–5 p.m. FESTSCHRIFT: Honoring Steve Haycox
(continued on next page)
» Leanna Williams – Flight, Fame, and Frontier Alaska Aviation in the Popular Imagination, 1926-1938
» Charles Wohlforth – First Drafts: The Changing Role of Journalism in Recording Alaska’s History and Establishing its Cultural Narrative
» Ross Coen – Still Searching for that Usable Past
» Bathsheba Demuth – Thinking with Alaskan Land: or Why Alaska is the Best Place to Write Environmental History
» Ian Hartman – Steve Haycox: The Making of an Alaska Historian

3–5 p.m. (continued)	SESSION 3: Trailblazers of the North » Karen Brewster & Judy Bittner – From Seward to Nome: Protecting the Iditarod National Historic Trail » Tyler Kirk – Dogsled Diplomacy: Toward a Visual History of the Intercontinental Hope ‘91 Sled Dog Race and the End of the Cold War » Forest Wagner – Inhabiting the Interior: Winter Ultra-Athletics and the Evolution of the Alaska Trail Experience
5–5:30 p.m.	FESTSCHRIFT – Phil Wight – Presenter and conference attendees roundtable discussion

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9

9–10:30 a.m.	KEYNOTE PRESENTATION » Sam Mihara – Mass Injustice Against Japanese Americans During WWII –
10:30–11 a.m.	BREAK
11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	SESSION 4: Guardsmen and Grand Slams » Joshua Millard – Baseball’s Northern Front: The Military Influence on Fairbanks Baseball and Alaska’s Most Iconic Game » Kristie Swain – The Alaska Territorial Guard and the Canadian Rangers: Historical Comparison and Contemporary Relevance » John Fournelle & Hilary Hilscher – Herb Hilscher and OSS’s “Black Radio” Aleutian Operation SESSION 5: Stories of Resilience and Recognition » Mary Ludwig – Through the Eyes of a Child: Northern Colonial Intersections » Rebecca Poulson – The Mission: The First Forty Years of Sitka’s Presbyterian Native Boarding School, 1881–1921 » Jane Anvik & Pam Kendrick – Honoring and Preserving the Contributions of Women in Alaska through the Alaska Women’s Hall of Fame
12:30–2 p.m.	LUNCH on your own » 1:15 p.m. – Douglas L. Vandegraft – Historic Bars of Homer
2–3:30 p.m.	SESSION 6: Carvings and Communities » Mark D. Foley – Joe Kakarook’s Scrimshaw Mastodon Tusk: Created for the Alaska Commercial Company » Adam Dunstan – Alaska Native Histories of Cooper Landing, Alaska » Chloe McKay – Latin Cultural Spaces in Anchorage, 1970–Today SESSION 7: Rails, Wings, and Waterways » Larry Talley – Alaska Mailboats » Bryan Taylor – Alaska’s Pioneer Access Roads Program on the Kenai Peninsula » Cynthia Wentworth – Alaska Railroad: Alaska’s Lucky Break » Christie Ericson – Pioneer Aviator Ingrid Pedersen: “A Rare Bird”
3:30–4 p.m.	BREAK
4–5 p.m.	ANNUAL AHS BUSINESS MEETING (in-person and remote)
6:30–9 p.m.	BANQUET at The Kannery, 451 Sterling Highway
9 p.m.	HOMER HISTORIC BARS TOUR – Douglas L. Vandegraft

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10

8:30–10 a.m.	KEYNOTE PRESENTATION » Pausauraq Jana Harcharek – The Iñupiaq Learning Framework: What We Learned
10–10:30 p.m.	BREAK
10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.	SESSION 8: Top-Down History » Tom Kizzia – Birthright Citizenship and the Fourteenth Amendment » Jo Michalski – The Smithsonian Perspective SESSION 9: Preserving the Past, Honoring the Land » Katie Ione Craney & Klara Maisch – C’ulc’ena’ Łuu’ / Gulkana Glacier » Dierdre Bryan & Tom Davis – Exploring Anchorage’s Places and Spaces: Introducing the Public Historic Resources Database » Kaitlin Armstrong, Jeran Pelagiom & Lisa Griswold – Contaminated: The Legacy of Lands Conveyed Under ANCSA
12 p.m.	CONFERENCE CLOSING – Jeff Meyers, Rich Mattson

Annual business meeting set for October 9

The annual business meeting of the Alaska Historical Society will be held at 4 p.m. Friday, October 9, 2026. It will be at the University of Alaska’s Kachemak Bay Campus, 533 East Pioneer Avenue in Homer, during the society’s annual conference. All members are invited and encouraged to participate. 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 ballot will be sent to members in early September. There will be a special discussion on the future of the Alaska History Day program and the Alaska Historical Society’s role with it.

Links to the agenda for the meeting and to participate by Zoom will be on the home page of the AHS website, www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org. The meeting Zoom address is www.tinyurl.com/AHS-2026-1, password is AHS2026.

After conference, stay for the Ritz

The Pratt Museum’s signature event, Ritz Under the Sea, will be Saturday evening, October 10, at the Porcupine Theater. The fundraiser will make a splash with live entertainment, food and drink, and a live and silent auction. Proceeds from the event support the museum’s education programs, community-centered workshops and interdisciplinary special exhibits.

Tickets are \$100. There will be a 10% discount code for AHS conference attendees who stay for the event.