

Message from the Program Chair, Juneau 2016

he vast Pacific Ocean exists as both barrier and thoroughfare, fostering cultures in isolation and allowing astonishing journeys of exploration and imperial ambition. Please join us in discovering how Alaska's past can be better understood by examining its role in the history of the Pacific world. This complex region offers us the chance to employ disciplines as far ranging as environmental history, indigenous studies, global history, and (of course) maritime history, while also remembering that for many Alaskans, then and now, the ocean is a local place, a place we call home.

This year's conference is organized by the Gastineau Channel Historical Society, Juneau-Douglas City Museum, Sealaska Heritage Institute, and the Alaska State Library, Archives and Museums. Our host location will be the newly completed Father Andrew P. Kashevaroff State Library, Archives, and Museum facility. We are also thrilled to announce David Igler, author of *The Great Ocean* (2013), as our keynote speaker. Dr. Igler's work on the history of the Pacific and the American West illustrates how much human drama has played out on this boundless blue stage. This year's theme—*Exploring Alaska's Past in the Pacific World*—invites presentations on all topics related to Alaska history, with special emphasis on events that unfolded on the world's greatest ocean.

- You are invited to submit proposals for papers, panels, and poster sessions. Paper presentations are limited to 20 minutes. Presenters must be registered for the conference.
- Proposals are due May 1, 2016 and should be sent to Chris Allan, Program Chair, sprucetip105@gmail.com.

Message from the President: "[In the record of words]...we glimpse a world alien and unimaginable...

"The Indian in his native state has everywhere been found to be savage, an uncivilized being, when measured by the white man's standard."

—Opinion, Federal District Judge Royal Arch Gunnison, Juneau, January 29, 1908, Davis et al. v. Sitka School Board.

On January 25, 1906, a handful of Native children had been turned away from Sitka's public school. Rudolph Walton, the stepfather of two of the children, Tillie and Dora Davis, brought suit against the Sitka School Board.

The law in 1906 was that public schools were open to white children and to children of "mixed blood who lead a civilized life." Since all the students at the school were "of mixed blood," at issue was the definition of "civilized" for the children who were turned away, all of whom lived in the Village area of town. The judge decided that any Native association, whether of diet, custom, or residence, made one not "civilized."

The trial seems to have been an exercise in racist ideology, and of small-town spite between long-time residents W. P. Mills, a leading merchant and member of the school board, and Governor Brady, his wife, sister-in-law Cassia Patton, and Sitka mission school superintendent William Kelly, all Presbyterian proponents of Native education. The trial testimony, collected at Sitka, offers a window into Alaska of a century ago. What is surprising is not the vehement racism of W. P. Mills, but that the views of others fall in a range of opinion far to the racist end of the spectrum today.

E. W. Merrill, the famed photographer, is asked, "Don't you consider that Walton's being educated at the Training School would entitle him to be classed with civilized people?" Merrill responds, "It depends upon one's view regarding a civilized person."

This is the value of our libraries, archives, museums, and history programs, which care for these records, images, and artifacts—like Rudolph Walton's silverwork and Governor Brady's printing press. This record of words spoken by ordinary people pushes us beyond what we think we know and assume. We move beyond a simplified picture of the past, with good guys and villains, that is disconnected from the present. We glimpse a world alien and unimaginable, and yet familiar, and inextricable from our lives today.

-Rebecca Poulson, President

"One of the most interesting features of the mission work at Sitka is the model cottages and the families dwelling in them...The cottages, eight in number, are neat frame houses generally of four rooms each arranged along two streets...the inmates are all Christian Native young men and women who have had the training of the mission school."

—The Alaskan, August 3, 1895

Residents of the cottage community were required to declare that they would keep the Sabbath, provide a school education for their children, maintain public health, abstain from alcohol and gambling, and avoid "heathen" festivities and customs...

> —Above (abridged) from Early Views: Historical Vignettes of Sitka National Historical Park by Kristen Griffin



Cottages on Metlakatla Street, Sitka Alaska.

Notes from around the state Sikugaa umiaq: "Ice is forming on the boat."

"Until I was about four years old, both my mother and my father spoke Iñupiaq, but my mother could speak English. So [my siblings and I] became bilingual. My mother made sure that we understood English because she knew what was coming in school—that we would be forced to speak in English. So I was ready for kindergarten, and my teacher was my aunt, so that helped. There was a policy by the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the Department of Interior to force us to speak only English in the classroom, and that brought on a lot of hardship for us, for our classmates who were physically punished for saying even one word in Iñupiaq. It was a very tough time in elementary school until you learned English. And the ironic part of it was that while we were being punished for speaking Iñupiaq in our schools, our parents were learning to read and write in Iñupiaq—right next door in the Presbyterian church!"

— Dr. Edna MacLean, President emeritus, Ilisagvik College, Barrow, Alaska. Author: Iñupiatun Uqaluit Taniktun Sivunniugutiyit (North Slope Iñupiaq to English Dictionary) The **Anchorage Museum** newsletter has news on photographs of the nomads of the Northern Hemisphere and Alaska Native artists' contemporary work, both on display through the summer. They also have started construction of an addition with gallery space for their permanent art collection, and are working on new exhibits in the history gallery.

No visit to Kodiak would be complete without a trip to the **Alutiiq Museum**. Your visit to the community will be much enhanced when you see the many objects on display that honor the people who have lived on the island for thousands of year. .Try www.alutiiqmuseum.org (don't forget that double "ii" in Alutiiq and it will be just fine), and you'll whiz over there to learn about special exhibits and their educational programs that include classes to learn the Alutiiq language.

The **Baranov Museum** repeated its *Arts and Crafts: Felt Ornament* program in December as the previous month had shown the program to make an embroidered felt bird by older children and an embroidered felt ornament by the younger ones was one of the most popular ever.

Deg Hit'an masks were once the mark of Anvik Village dances and songs until the repeated epidemics destroyed the village. Ironically, the masks were collected by many people and museums in places other than Anvik for around a hundred years, but the **Anvik Historical Society** has only a few replicas. They are pleased to note that many of the masks can be seen at museums. (*Editor's note: wouldn't it be great if at least one private owner or museum would part with one mask for them?*)

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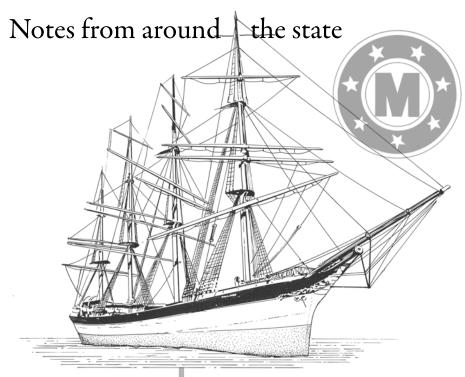
Did you know the town of Chugiak wasn't founded until February of 1947 when nine families were living in the area between Peters Creek and Eagle River? By December another dozen or so families had moved in, adding to the twenty-three residents. Hardy souls all, as there was no electricity or telephone service, and the road from Anchorage to Palmer was a two-lane gravel affair. The founders had formed a Community Club that met that month and voted for a Christmas party to be held at the Chugiak Coffee Shop, participants to bring a potluck casserole. Ambitious plans included selecting gifts from Santa, who would attend the December 23rd affair, and making and filling stockings for twenty children. Also, fifty-cent

gifts would be given to Santa for each adult. All went as hoped for; the tree and tables were decorated for the season and games were played until Santa arrived and distributed gifts. Coffee and cake followed and festivities lasted until midnight. As the newsletter was the Christmas issue, other decorations from the past were described and the newsletter ended with a 1962 chilling reminder about deadly driving. All this is courtesy of the **Chugiak-Eagle River Historical Society** winter newsletter.

1915 was a banner year for Juneau, Douglas, and Treadwell merchants the **Gastineau Channel Historical Society** newsletter reports through quotes, photographs, and ads from local merchants that year. The newsletter also had a humorous cartoon about Christmas shopping in Juneau, drawn by cartoonist, as she was occasionally then, and later internationally famous local artist, Rie Munoz.

A trend your editor must begin accustoming herself to is shown by the winter newsletter of the **Palmer Historical Society**. While it is nicely printed in color, there are references to printing out the newsletter or adding the organization to your address book. You can use ptownhistoricalsociety@gci.com or www. palmerhistoricalsociety.org to see the newsletter or subscribe. However, they are kind to the slow and add that their Colony House and society address is P.O. Box 1935, Palmer, Alaska 99645.

The newsletter of the Tongass Historical Society and Totem Heritage Center of Ketchikan has a charming tribute to long-time museum curator Peter Corey who came with his master's degree in historical museum procedures to Alaska in 1969. In 1972 Corey arrived in Ketchikan, when the Totem Heritage Center was being constructed, to work as curator and install the original totem poles for preservation and display. In 1977 he moved to Sitka to work as curator of the Sheldon Jackson Museum, where he served until he retired in 2002. His personal collection of Northwest Coast art, Native American basketry, and silver, books, and masks from Bali was massive, but, a true curator, he had detailed and thorough records and information on them all. He died in September of 2015, willing the vast majority of his collection to remain in Alaska. Some very beautiful items were given to him by famed master weaver and friend, Selina Peratrovich, and he specified they go to the Ketchikan museums.



After 21 years as a British merchantman, the Falls of Clyde is purchased by the U.S. company Matson Navigation to work the San Francisco/ Hawaii route. In 1907 the Falls is converted to an oil tanker, her hull fitted with ten large steel fuel tanks. In this configuration she transports, still under sail alone, kerosene to Hawaii, returning with molasses for cattle feed. In 1927 the vessel is sold to the General Petroleum Company. She is ignobly stripped of her yards, topmasts and royals, then towed to Ketchikan, Alaska. There, the vessel operates as "a floating filling station... securely moored to the dock...she goes up and down with the tides, a convenient platform for servicing fishing boats in need of fuel." In 1963, having outlived her usefulness, she is to be sold and scuttled as breakwater. A former mate, Captain Fred Klebingat (and others, including Hawaiian schoolchildren) raise the funds to have the Falls towed to Hawaii. The vessel is restored and opened to the public in 1968, but afterwards declines into a poor state of repair. As of 2008, the ship has been under the care of the nonprofit group Friends of the Falls of Clyde. In 1989, the National Park Service had entered The Falls of Clyde into the National Register of Historic Places and declared the vessel a U.S. National Historic Landmark.

Above: Rendering of *Falls of Clyde*, HABS/HAER, National Park Service Maritime Initiative and the Hawaii Maritime Center, 1989. Above right: logo of Matson Navigation company.

The newsletter also reports the Ketchikan Museum will open an exhibit of photographs of famous and infamous Ketchikanites this coming April. And there is a report about the famous *Falls of Clyde* sailing ship, based in Ketchikan from 1922 to 1959, now being restored in Hawaii.

This winter an exhibit, Cabinets of Curiosity, will open at the Resurrection Bay Historical Society. There is a temporary exhibit on the S.S. Yukon as it is the 70th anniversary of its sinking February 4, 1946 at Johnstone Bay south of Seward. It took three days to get the 493 survivors to safety. Eleven people died. In other news, the society helped fund a new Founders Monument plaque for Seward. And a full-size bronze statue of musher Jujiro Wada, pioneer of a practical trail to the Iditarod country in 1909, is being planned. A former Seward resident visited last fall bringing photographs he had taken of the town seventy years ago. And the December newsletter included a newspaper clipping from 1941 detailing the November 24th fire that nearly wiped out Seward's downtown.

In early January, a completely local New Year's Eve Gala raised an astounding nearly \$66,000.00 towards the Sitka Historical Society's goal of \$585,000.00 for the new **Sitka History Museum** wing being added to Harrigan Centennial Hall. The project is the first expansion of the facility since its construction for the 1967 Alaska Purchase centennial. It is scheduled open in spring 2017.

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"When I die, it will be a shipwreck, and as when a huge ship sinks, many people all around will be sucked down with it."

—Pablo Picasso



Postcard view, S.S. Yukon, Alaska Steamship Company.

News & Information

ROSSIA (Russian Orthodox Sacred Sites in Alaska) has a "final push" fundraising campaign underway to get the remaining funds needed for a fire suppression system to protect the Holy Assumption Church in Kenai. The group has also helped St. Nicholas Church in Juneau with restoration of its dome. If you want more information or wish to donate contact the group at P.O. Box 212315, Anchorage, AK 99521, www.rossialaska.org.

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The latest **Museums Alaska** update has news about grants to various museums around the state, followed by reports about current projects at them. Well worth reading about caring for skin clothing, consulting and learning from Native weavers, and overall improving a small museum.

Our sister organization just across the border, the **Yukon Historical and Museums Association** has moved into the digital world. Now they send out regular E-Bulletins with updates on activities and events. Some include Alaska, such as inviting American artists as well as Canadians to join the *Chilkoot Trail Artist Residency* (www.yukonartscentre.com/ programs/chilkoot_trail_artist_residency_program) sorry deadline was February lst, but there's always next year). They also reported on the improvements at the **Sheldon Museum** in Haines, and a December program *Through the Lens: the Changing Seasons of the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve*, Info about the E-Bulletins at info@heritageyukon.ca. If you're a bit of a fuddy-duddy, the postal address is 3126 3rd Avenue, Whitehorse, YT, Canada YT Y1A 1E7 (but don't forget the postage to Canada can be expensive.)

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The next ROSSIA project is to help the Ascension of Our Lord Chapel (middle-foreground below), constructed in 1888 at Karluk on Kodiak Island.

Architecturally, the church is beautifully designed with a prominent bell tower and an octagonal cupola. Research indicates that the structural components of the church are log covered with horizontal wood siding. The remarkable site, high on bluffs overlooking the Shelikov Strait and the Village of Karluk, contributes to the beauty of this iconic Russian Orthodox chapel.

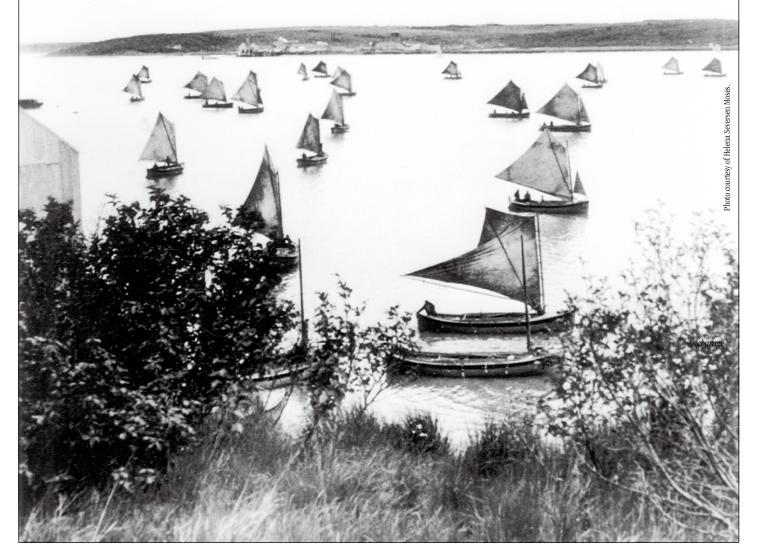
With the help of a Rasmuson Foundation grant, a site visit and assessment for the Ascension of Our Lord Chapel is scheduled for the summer of 2015.

News & Information

Below: Part of the salmon fleet heads down the Naknek River, circa 1930. The cannery in the background is Alaska Portland Packers at South Naknek. The photograph was probably taken from Red Salmon Canning Company in Naknek, looking southeast. This is an unusual image of double-enders using jibs, in addition to their mainsails. It was reported that Italian fishermen frequently used jibs. Red Salmon cannery along with Diamond NN and PAF-Warren were known to have large numbers of Italian fishermen from California, just as Nakeen and Graveyard Koggiung canneries had a preponderance of fishermen of Scandinavian origin. (Allan Aspelund, Sr. interview: March 2007) Image (below) and text from The Canneries, Cabins and Caches of Bristol Bay, Alaska by John B. Branson, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve.



The Alaska Historic Canneries Initiative, a special project of the Alaska Historical Society, announces its first grant awards. Bob King and Katie Ringsmuth received an award to survey and assess the Diamond NN cannery at South Naknek in Bristol Bay. The Kodiak Historical Society's award will produce an exhibit, Kodiak's West Side Stories, and publish transcripts of oral histories with longtime fishermen and cannery workers associated with the west side of Kodiak Island. The Sitka Historical Society will produce three episodes of its Sitka History Minute radio program on the town's seafood industry. And the Tenakee Historical Collection will catalog and accession its collection of materials from the Superior Canning Company. The Alaska Historical Society is pleased to support these projects which advance the vision of the initiative to document, preserve, and educate people about the history of Alaska's seafood industry.



News & Information

Don't forget the organization that keeps former and current Alaskans in touch with each other. If you live in the Seattle area, regular meetings are held. Yes, it is the dependable **Alaska Yukon Pioneers Newsletter**. Contact Joyce Penman, and send your \$20.00 yearly subscription to 27833 85th Dr. NW, Stanwood, Washington 98292, telephone (253) 709-0158 or go to your trusty computer and send an email to - olwomn@wavecable.com. The group appreciates donations for its scholarship program--Joyce can tell you more.

COLLEGE STUDENTS AND NEW-TO-ALASKA-HISTORY PROFESSIONALS:

It is time to apply for the Alaska Historical Society's scholarships to attend the fall Alaska Historical Society/ Museums Alaska conference in Juneau, September 21-24, 2016. The awards provide a conference registration and up to \$750 for travel costs. Information on eligibility and the application process are



on the AHS website, alaskahistoricalsociety.org, and the application deadline is May 15, 2016. For more information contact Michael Hawfield, AHS Awards Committee, mchawfield@kpc.alaska.edu

A great gift for a friend, relative, local school or library is a year's membership in the Alaska Historical Society. Your gift includes the newsletter and journal Alaska History, and supports important activities and programs. It's easy ... go to the AHS website, www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org and then click on "membership and giving."

M embership lapsed? Renew today to celebrate yesterday!

Visit our website:

www.alaskahistoricalsociety.org



We welcome your letters, news and pictures. Please send them to the editor: Dee Longenbaugh The Observatory, ABAA 299 N. Franklin St. * Juneau, AK 99801 Tel: 907/586-9676 * Fax: 907/586-9606 Email: deelong@alaskan.com

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Dee Longenbaugh, Editor, Alaska History News, deelong@alaskan.com

Judy Bittner, *Alaska Office of History and Archaeology*, judy.bittner@alaska.gov

Linda Thibodeau, *Alaska Libraries, Archives, Museums*, Linda. thibodeau@alaska.gov

Anjui Grantham, Canneries Initiative, anjuligranthum@gmai.com

P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, AK 99510-0299 Tel: 907/276-1596 Email: members@alaskahistoricalsociety.org www.alaska.historicalsociety.org 49history.blogspot.com or find us on Facebook

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It's quick, it's easy, and you receive the semiannual journal *Alaska History*, the quarterly newsletter *Alaska History News*, and discounts on publications.

As interest and writing on Alaska history seem to be sprouting like fireweed in the spring, a useful and popular book is the society's *The Alaska 67* with annotated recommendations of good books on Alaska history. Order it through the website!

Send your application for memberhsip to Alaska Historical Society, P.O. Box 100299, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-0299; or join through the website: *www.alaskabistoricalsociety.org.*



"An Invalid is Raised from His Bed and Shown a Statue of Aesculapius." Note snake curling upward from the urn at left-bottom. It is said that Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing, learned the medicinal arts from watching a snake heal another (wounded by Aesculapius himself) with a herbal potion. (Aesculapius is most often portrayed with a staff, or rod, around which a serpent is entwined [see statue atop pedestal above].) The god Zeus, concerned that Aesculapius could reanimate the dead through his healing, struck Aesculapius with a thunderbolt, ending his life. [There are numerous variations of the myth.] Engraving by Jean Jacques Barre, after Pierre-Narcisse Guérin, ca. 1820.

hat are Alaskan winters really good for? Well, no comments needed if you are a skier, snowshoer, or an ice skater. But what if you tire of winter sports and right now are also weary of sitting by the fireplace/stove/heater or find the baseboard heater ridiculous as you have to sit on the floor?

Well, you can always go outside and throw snowballs at the pesky neighbor's cat, or perhaps a passing car, or just aim for distance.

Or, if you're inclined, you can take to your bed (assuming there's someone in the house you can order around), and play invalid. That could be fun for around a weekend.

Best of all, you can volunteer for something you haven't done before: teach school once a week, volunteer for something new at the museum, put up someone who is come to lecture in town (make sure you find out first how long the person is staying--a weekend sounds good). Or you can think of something else; like throwing snowballs at the pesky neighbor's dog.

Until spring,

8 Alaska History News

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