

Tundra & Ice: History in Alaska's Arctic

2018 Alaska Historical Society Program Schedule

Friday, September 14, 2018

FRIDAY, 8:30-10:00AM

Museums Alaska Keynote: The Joy in Our Work, Marieke Van Damme, Old St. Joe's Hall

FRIDAY, 10:30-12:00

Session A: *Visions of Nome*, NWC Willow

Scooping up the Golden Sands: Ingenious Inventions and Jackass Machinery on the Nome Beach

If the indelible image of the Klondike Stampede was the stream of men hiking Chilkoot Pass, the corresponding reflection of the 1900 Nome rush was the line of beach miners spread out along the shore of Norton Sound and the junk yard of "jackass machinery" with which they had hoped to mine the Bering Sea shore. "The contraptions," one reporter wrote, "... are wonderful to behold." This presentation explores the geology, economics, and history of beach mining on the Seward Peninsula from 1899 to the present and examines the continuing allure of Nome's "golden sands" on the human imagination.

Terrence Cole is an Emeritus Professor of History at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and a long-time contributor to the work of the Alaska Historical Society.

From Nome to Seward, 1925: Frances Walker and Friends

Mentions of the Jesse Lee Home at Seward most often begin with the transfer of children from the Unalaska facility in 1925 and proceed from there, with no discussion of the contingent from Nome who undertook a longer voyage at the same time. Jesse Lee is also most often referred to as an orphanage, which is largely inaccurate except for the children from Nome who were cared for at the Lavinia Wallace Young mission after the 1918-19 influenza pandemic. I hope to help amend the historical record by introducing Frances Walker and others at this year's gathering.

Jackie Pels was born in Seward and reared mostly in coastal Alaska. As Hardscratch Press she has edited and published more than 30 books of personal and community history, and is the author of *Family After All: Alaska's Jesse Lee Home / Vol. II, Seward, 1925-1965*.

Historic Bars of Nome

Beginning as tents on the beach and developing into opulent palaces along Front Street, the bars

of Nome have a wild reputation and a storied past. Establishments with names like the Dexter, the Northern, and the Board of Trade thrived with the influx of men seeking their fortunes. The fire of 1934 destroyed all of the Front Street bars, and the subsequent realignment forever obscured their former locations. The presentation will provide a historical synopsis of some of the most famous bars of Nome from the pre- and post-prohibition years.

Doug Vandegraft is a former Alaskan and the author of *A Guide to the Notorious Bars of Alaska*, now in its second edition. He is the Chief of the Geospatial Services Division for the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

Session B: Prohibition and the Flu Pandemic of 1918, NWC Ptarmigan

The 1918 Influenza Goes North to Alaska

Called “Spanish Flu,” this pandemic killed more in a year than the Black Death did in a century and more in 24 months than AIDs in 24 years and more Americans than in World Wars I and II, Korea and Vietnam. Annual influenzas kill old and young; the H1N1 virus killed 18 to 40 year olds. As WWI was ending in October 1918, steamships delivered flu to Alaska; it put military fort soldiers in coffins and Alaska Natives in communal graves. Eighty years later, lungs of a Brevig Mission woman buried with 72 villagers provided pathologists DNA to make antivirals and vaccines for the 2009 flu.

Beverly Beeton lives in Seattle. She served as Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at two Universities of Alaska, and regularly speaks on subjects related to her research on the social history of Alaska around World War I.

A Dena’ina Perspective on the 1918 Flu Epidemic

For the Dena’ina of Southcentral Alaska the 1918 flu epidemic irreparably changed the traditional lifestyle as they would soon become the minority in their homeland. Although exact numbers are not available, it is estimated that in a two- to three-year period half of the Dena’ina population succumbed to the illness. Using oral accounts from the Dena’ina and those living among them we can see the ravages that this terrible disease wrought and how it played a part in shaping Dena’ina identity today.

Aaron Leggett lives in Anchorage and is a member of the Native Village of Eklutna and currently serves as its president. He works as the Anchorage Museum’s Curator of Alaska History and Culture and was an integral part in the exhibition and catalog *Dena’inaq’ Huch’ulyeshi*.

Enforcing the 1918 “Bone Dry” Law: A Nome Case Study

In a 1916 referendum authorized by the Territorial legislature at the behest of temperance activists, Alaskans voted 2-to-1 in favor of a “bone dry” law prohibiting the manufacture and sale of “intoxicating liquors.” Congress enacted legislation for Alaska implementing these terms on January 1, 1918—two years before the 20th Amendment to the U.S.

Constitution imposed prohibition nationally. Enforcement proved controversial and difficult, especially given Alaska's long and enthusiastic drinking history and greater threats to public health and safety that loomed on horizon. Nome's experience with the "bone dry" law in the early years reveals both the zeal and ambivalence that characterized the short-lived prohibition experiment.

Barbara Hood lives in Anchorage. She served as an attorney in the public sector for many years and was a long-time member of the Alaska Bar Association's Historians Committee. She has edited and photographed photo-text exhibits on addiction recovery for RuralCap's Homeward Bound.

Session C: Films: *Sayeik* and *Melting the Ice*, NWC Fireweed

Sayeik

This documentary film discusses three aspects of Alaskan place names, or toponyms. It explores the historical process of recording and choosing toponyms during 19th and 20th century exploration of Alaska, the anthropological relevance of place names to language revitalization, and the contemporary political process of place naming and appeals in Alaska.

Forrester Holton is studying at the University of Alaska Southeast and is conducting research with funding from the Undergraduate Research, Experiential & Creative Activities Program.

Melting the Ice: A History of Latter-day Saints in Alaska

Notwithstanding the frigid circumstances, a genuine warmth emanates from the Alaskan Saints. The match that lit this internal flame was the restored gospel of Jesus Christ, first striking the Alaskan borders at the turn of the twentieth century. They have subtly shaped Alaskan society, although composing less than five percent of the state's population. Their influence on Alaskan communities can be seen through their family values, humanitarian service, community projects, and family history centers. This film tells the story of the rise and influence of Latter-day Saints as they joined hands on their journey of "melting the ice."

Fred E. Woods is a professor at Brigham Young University in the College of Religious Education. This year he completed a book and a documentary on Mormons in Alaska.

FRIDAY, 12:00PM

Roundtable: Addressing the Crisis in Alaska's Archives, Polar Cafe

FRIDAY, 1:30-3:00PM

Session A: *Lives in the Far North*, NWC Ptarmigan

Excerpts from an Arctic Memoir

My parents Sylvester and Gertrude Mazon came to Alaska to teach in 1926, first in Selawik then Wales. I was born in Teller in 1928 and raised in Shaktoolik and Nome. Enduring the Arctic's bitter cold was part and parcel of daily life, like the time mom and my 10-year-old sister Constance traveled across Norton Sound by dog team and the time my dad fell through the ice while traveling by dog team from Wales to Teller. I will share these family stories with slides, many of which are part of my memoir entitled *Kiyonuk* being published by Hardscratch Press this year.

Sylvester D. "Kiyonuk" Mazon was born in Teller in 1928, with his first home in Wales, followed by Shaktoolik and Nome. He left Alaska in 1952, and, after a career in education and family counseling and after sailing around the Pacific, returned in 1998 and settled in Homer.

The Moore Journey: Alaska through the Pocket Kodak

This presentation will share photographs W. R. E. and Inez Moore took during their years in Alaska, 1922-40. They came to Alaska employed by the Department of the Interior to teach school and manage reindeer herding on the Lower Yukon and Kobuk rivers. They dabbled in mining, barge transportation, and managing a trading post at Ohogamute during the 1930s. They enjoyed keeping in touch via shortwave radio and taking photos with their Pocket Kodak camera.

Dorothy M. Moore is a retired social studies teacher and former Alaska Historical Society board member. She now enjoys organizing the photographs and papers of her grandmother who wrote under the pen name "Tugboat Inez of the Yukon."

Michael Francis Kazingnuk and the Eskimo History Story

This paper offers an overview of a manuscript written by Michael Francis Kazingnuk in the 1930s. Kazingnuk was from the Diomed Islands and documented many of his personal experiences as well as stories, songs, and other information from his elders, relatives, and others. Kawerak, Inc.'s Social Science Program recently transcribed this document, which is available on our website and at the Alaska State Library.

Julie Raymond-Yakoubian is an anthropologist and director of Kawerak Inc.'s Social Science Program. She works with the tribes and communities of the Bering Strait region.

Session B: *Commerce and Empire*, NWC Willow

The Argosy of the Alaska Commercial Company

During the final decades of the 19th century the Alaska Commercial Company operated the largest commercial fleet in Alaskan waters. Recently discovered material in a General Manager's Book comprehensively describes the entire fleet from Yukon River barges to ocean-hulled steamships. The details of each ship—sail, steam and paddlewheel—were cataloged with listings that included draft, keel length, year built, and capacity. The combined tonnage of the ships exceeded any other shipping company on the Pacific coast of the United

States in 1901. This paper discusses the ships and their unique contributions to Alaska's economic development.

J. Penelope Goforth is a photojournalist and writer with a background in the fishing industry out of the Bering Sea and Southeast Alaska where she worked on crabbers and sailed. She has written numerous articles especially about Alaska's maritime history.

Russian Colonization of Alaska—Continuing the Colonization of Siberia?

The creation of the multinational Russian Empire is connected to the colonization of wide open spaces of the Eastern territories. After colonization of Siberia, Russian pioneers needed more than a century to muster their strength, cross the North Pacific and colonize a part of North America. The Russian claiming of Alaska chronologically coincides with the second era of Great Expansion of the Capitalist World-Economy (1730-1840s). World-system analysis allows a wide-perspective comparative analysis of the colonization of Alaska and Siberia as well as the colonization led by other European countries that was carried out at the same time.

Pavel Pimenov is studying history at Ural Federal University with a focus on Alaska history. His research has been presented at conferences in Budapest and St. Petersburg.

Across the Arctic by Air: Alaska's Role in Polar Exploration Flights

When Roald Amundsen, Lincoln Ellsworth, and Umberto Nobile landed their airship *Norge* in Teller, Alaska on May 14, 1926, they linked the Eastern and Western Hemispheres through the first crossing of the Arctic by air. Although the territory supported and received polar aviator-explorers throughout the 1920s, including those of Amundsen and Australian explorer Hubert Wilkins, Alaska thrust numerous challenges upon flyers seeking to conquer the Arctic. By comparing and contrasting these expeditions to those launched elsewhere, this research analyzes how Alaska aided and challenged these efforts at polar flights.

Leanna P. Williams is a graduate student in the Arctic and Northern Studies Department at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and focuses on Arctic aviation history. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Fairbanks's Pioneer Air Museum.

Session C: Film, NWC Fireweed

When in Nome . . .

The Alaska State Library Historical Collections in Juneau and the Alaska Film Archives at the University of Alaska Fairbanks have teamed up to create a 30-minute compilation of motion picture scenes showcasing Nome's rich history. In keeping with the theme of "History in Alaska's Arctic," and in the spirit of conferencing, the compilation of historical film and video clips will emphasize the myriad ways in which people have joined together for events and activities in Nome over the past 100 years.

Angela Schmidt is film archivist with the Alaska Film Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Alaska Film Archives is celebrating its 25th year in 2018.

Damon Stuebner is with the Alaska State Library Historical Collections.

FRIDAY, 3:30-5:00 pm, NWC Willow

Alaska Historical Society annual business meeting

POSTERS (every day):

Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives New Online Portal

Thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library at University of Alaska Fairbanks is now able to provide detailed online access to unique collections from the Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives (APRCA). This poster presentation will offer information about accessing the portal, items contained on it, plans for the portal, and will introduce the development team and cover technical development aspects. APRCA houses the world's most extensive collection of materials about Alaska and one of the leading collections on Polar Regions.

Angela Schmidt is film archivist with the Alaska Film Archives, Alaska and Polar Regions Collections & Archives, University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Arctic Arts Summit, Harstad Norway, June 21-22, 2017

Eight countries—the United States, Canada, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia—inhabit the Arctic Circle and share similar concerns about global warming and retaining distinct Native cultures. As the only freelance journalist from Alaska, I had the privilege to report on this momentous event. One of the results of my experience was this poster, which was juried and displayed at College Art Association Conference, February 2018, in Los Angeles.

Jean Bundy is a writer/painter living in Anchorage, presently with *The Anchorage Press*. She serves on the Board of Directors of the International Art Critics (AICA-International) and shows paintings at Pleiades Gallery, New York City.

Celebrating the Success of Alaska's Digital Newspaper Project

Since 2016, the Alaska State Library has been participating in the National Digital Newspaper Program. The program is a collaboration between the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress designed to digitize and provide free access to historical newspapers from across the United States in *Chronicling America*, the text-searchable online database. By August 2018, the Alaska State Library will have digitized

100,000 pages of Alaskan historical newspapers from across the state ranging in date from 1898-1922. This poster will describe the hard work and dedication of Alaskans who recognize the power of newspapers as a history research tool.

Anastasia Tarmann is a librarian with the Alaska State Library's Alaska Historical Collections and has been instrumental in selecting and digitizing Alaska's historical newspapers.