

# PRESERVATION NOTES



A quarterly newsletter brought to you by

## PRESERVATION ALASKA

ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A nonprofit with a mission to protect and preserve Alaska's built heritage

Fall 2023

Vol 41 No 3

## Should You Hire a Professional?

By Emily Potter

Once you've decided whether you need to restore or rehabilitate your historic house, the next step is deciding whether you want to DIY it or hire a professional.

Taking on a restoration or rehabilitation project can be enjoyable if you like hands-on work, whereas hiring a professional can save you time. Or, you might want to do a little of both, where you work on the projects you're passionate about and contract experts to finish the rest.

Whatever approach you take, the decision involves knowing how much time and money you want to spend, what your interests are, and what skills you're looking to hire someone for. This list of questions will help you explore different types of professionals who can help you, plus important things to consider before hiring them.

### Should I contract with a historical researcher?

A historical researcher typically provides the homeowner with a written report detailing the history and architecture of the house, along with biographical sketches of former owners or inhabitants. Researchers can

also complete nomination forms to list properties in the national or state register or local list of historic buildings.

### What can an architect do for my project?

Architects can inspect the historic house to determine existing conditions; develop an ar-



Set of architectural plans — photo by Sven Mieke

chitectural program to determine best uses for existing rooms; provide conceptual drawings; assist homeowners with obtaining and reviewing bids from contractors; and develop a construction schedule and oversee work.

*Tip:* To find an architect qualified for your project, contact your local or state chapter of the [American Institute of Architects \(AIA\)](#). You can also reach out to your [state historic](#)

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Regret goes only one way. The preservation of historic buildings is a one-way street. There is no chance to renovate or to save a historic site once it's gone. And we can never be certain what will be valued in the future. This reality brings to light the importance of locating and saving buildings of historic significance—because once a piece of history is destroyed, it is lost forever.

*From "Six Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings" by Julia Rocchi*



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## PRESERVATION ALASKA

Alaska Association for  
Historic Preservation (AAHP)  
P.O. Box 102205

Anchorage, AK 99510-2205  
[AKPreservation@gmail.com](mailto:AKPreservation@gmail.com)

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## Preservation Notes

Preservation News from  
Around the State. To submit  
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email us at

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Banner by Bill Devine, 1992.

## Should You Hire... Continued from page 1

### preservation office (SHPO).

Note: Neither the AIA nor the SHPO guarantees or endorses the work of the architects on the list.

### What could an interior designer add to my project?

An interior designer specializes in interior finishes, including wall, floor, and ceiling surfaces, fixtures such as lighting, kitchen, and bathroom, and furnishings.

### How do I decide on a landscape architect or designer?



Stained-glass craftsman demonstrating his skill.

A landscape architect or designer can analyze the existing landscape, design one that is appropriate to your house, and prepare drawings and specifications for its restoration or rehabilitation. They can also help obtain bids from landscape contractors and oversee the work.



## American Society of Landscape Architects

*Tip:* Check your [state chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects \(ASLA\)](#), as well as your SHPO. As with architects, no endorsement is given or implied.

Article online at May 16, 2023  
<https://tinyurl.com/mw4amxz5>

Slide share:  
<https://tinyurl.com/yjxx28um>

## Forum Webinars from the National Trust for Historic Preservation



Access high-quality training fast and for free through the Preservation Leadership Forum Webinar Series! Covering topics to the preservation movement from historic tax credits to market studies and revitalization, the Forum Webinar Series gives viewers a chance to receive timely and informative content while interacting directly with content experts—right from their desk chair. Best of all, the Forum Webinar Series is currently free for all viewers; so don't hesitate to share these materials with your networks!

<https://tinyurl.com/ahnjvu77>

## Alaska Maritime Heritage Preservation Program

Tethered to Alaska's vast shorelines and major rivers are isolated and often historically underrepresented maritime communities whose lifestyles and cultures are as distinct as the regions in which they formed. From pack ice on the Arctic Coastal Plain, to salmon-rich riparian zones of the Yukon, Kuskokwim, and Bristol Bay, or temperate rainforests of Southeast Alaska, successful cultures thrived by using Alaska's diverse water-scapes, and passed their maritime knowledge from generation to generation. Far too many of Alaska's maritime historic properties remain unlisted, underrepresented, and unprotected. Up to 3,000 shipwrecks and an untold number of inundated terrestrial sites may be located within Alaska's 47,000 miles of tidal shoreline. Grant applications due October 31, 2023.

<https://tinyurl.com/nhc8c45w>



## Historic Preservation Briefs Around the State

### Anchorage Mushing District

Anchorage Mushing District Inc. is continuing work on the mushing district which encompasses 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. from A to G Streets.

This summer we installed 46 more 5" bronze Dog Paw disks and 7" husky head disks in the sidewalks along 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. We now have a total of 224 disks installed in the sidewalks on both the North and South sides of 4<sup>th</sup> Ave. between C and E Streets. The latest ones installed are located in front of Alaska Mint. These bronze disks are purchased by supporters of the Anchorage Mushing District project by donating \$400 for the smaller dog paw disks or \$600 for the larger husky head disks. They are engraved with names and messages chosen by the donors. See our website: [anchagemushingdistrict.org](http://anchagemushingdistrict.org) for details.



• We are creating street banners to be hung on the new street light standards recently installed by the Municipality. The first ones will designate the start/finish line for the World Championship Race (Fur Rondy race) and the ceremonial start of the Iditarod Trail Sled dog Race. We are also developing the first six banners of many more to come of our sled dog racing greats. The first six are George Attla, Earl Norris, and Roxy Wright of the world Championship races and Joe Redington, Susan Butcher, and Herbie Nayukpuk of the Iditarod Sled dog race. These banners will be in place by winter of this year.

• We continue to work to develop interpretive signs on the rich history of sled dog use on 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, particularly in the time period between Anchorage being founded (1915) and the completion of the railroad through Anchorage (1919).

• We are continuing to work with the Municipality of Anchorage to develop an agreement which will allow us to construct the Arch across 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue at the start/finish line just West of 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue and D Street. It is our goal to construct it in 2024.

### St. George the Martyr Orthodox Church

St. George the Martyr Orthodox Church & National Historic Landmark Repairs Underway

Thanks to an outright grant from the Rasmuson Foundation, ROSSIA contracted with Dennis Polard and his crew from Alaska Aggregate Products (AAP) to travel to the island of St. George during the

last week of August. Their primary goal was to inspect the main leaks in the bell tower, roof, and windows, hoping to repair as much as possible.

There is a lot of water damage to the plates above the windows and at the ceiling joist height of the bell tower window level, causing major sheet rock damage on the first-floor ceiling.

Project costs include funds to patch the roof, repair the front door, begin drying the inside entry, and assess/create a plan to replace the roof and damaged dry wall and secure the infrastructure of the narthex (entry) and bell tower.

According to the National Park Service Historical American Buildings Survey (HABS), the St. George Orthodox church was built in 1936 by Aleut parishioners, with earnings from the fur seal trade. For many years, it was one of the few buildings on the island not owned by the federal government. The historical relevance of the community is encompassed within the structure. The church was fully restored by the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Restoration Trust (APIRT) in the 1980s, and it has a current active parish.



### Engine 557 Restoration Company

In anticipation of pending the Hydro Test on the 557 boiler, the crew has been tempering the 6700 gallons of water in the tender. Over 10 days it



maintained 67°F just with passive heating. With no "house steam" at the 557 engine house, options were considered for getting the water closer to 80°F. Shopping on line we found a brand new Rheem 50 gallon hot water heater for \$120.00. NO venting or fuel storage required.

Mike Richardson, a retired plumber walked through the door right when we needed him. Consultant Paul Dalleska approved a design and with the help of Gene Augustine and Terry Douglas they scrounged the circulating pump, hoses, most of the plumbing. An additional \$80.00 in ball valves and hose adaptors saw the job done.

*Continued on page 7*

# In This Corner...

**S**ummer went by so fast! It's September already! Termination dust can be seen which is not a great sign if you are not into winter yet.

The two bills shown here are very important. The Reauthorization Act is



## Advocacy Alert: Urge Your Members of Congress to Cosponsor the Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act

Senate and House champions have re-introduced the Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act (H.R. 1785, S.639). Led by **Sen. Ben Cardin** (D-MD) and **Sen. Bill Cassidy** (R-LA) in the Senate and **Rep. Darin LaHood** (R-IL) and **Rep. Earl Blumenauer** (D-OR) in the House, these bills include four permanent provisions that will add value to the Historic Tax Credit (HTC), improve access to the credit, make more projects eligible to use the credit, and increase investment in smaller rehabilitation projects. The House version of the bill also includes a temporary provision to address recent challenges facing historic rehabilitation projects.

Full article and link to letter to send to your representatives:

<https://tinyurl.com/47km9mef>

vitaly important for continued funding of historic preservation projects. The Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act is another important bill for historic preservation.

Please go to the links and send a letter to your representatives supporting the bills. It is easy. You just add your information and hit send. *Thank you!*

Trish Neal, President  
Preservation Alaska



## Urge Your Representative to Co-Sponsor the Historic Preservation Fund Reauthorization Act!

Urge your Representative to co-sponsor the Historic Preservation Fund Reauthorization Act (**H.R. 3350**)! Introduced by **Rep. Mike Turner** (R-OH), **Rep. Earl Blumenauer** (D-OR), **Rep. Mike Carey** (R-OH), and **Rep. Teresa Leger-Fernandez** (D-NM), this important and straightforward bill would:

- Reauthorize the HPF for 10 years.
- Increases the authorization from \$150 million to \$250 million annually. Since 1976, the Historic Preservation Fund has helped to recognize, save, revitalize, and protect America's historic places. For more than 40 years, the HPF has empowered states and local entities to preserve the buildings and sites that tell their community's stories.

Full article and link to letter to send to your representatives:

<https://tinyurl.com/5763vvnk>



## Here Are Ways to Support Our Mission & Programs

Here's a quick list of things to do from home to support preservation with AAHP:

- **Become an AAHP Member!** Join today!

<https://tinyurl.com/bdhydc4>

- **Donate** to our Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties Grant Program  
<https://tinyurl.com/yhdjirj6>

### •Alaska Community Foundation:

Established in 1995, The Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) cultivates, celebrates, and sustains all forms of philanthropy to strengthen Alaska's communities forever. Please contact us on how to contribute to our endowment funds.

- **Advocate for AAHP and Historic Preservation!** Contact your local leaders and your mayor to promote the importance of Historic Preservation in your community.







## 2023 Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties

**Preservation isn't just about saving historic places. It's also a catalyst for community revitalization. Preservation is something we can only accomplish together.**  
*People Saving Places!*

1. SS Nenana—Fairbanks
2. Ascension of Our Lord Chapel—Karluk
3. Chitina Emporium—Chitina
4. Eldred Rock Lighthouse—Haines
5. Pilgrim Hot Springs—Nome
6. Pioneer Hall—Ketchikan
7. Fort Wm H. Seward Hospital—Haines
8. Bishop Rowe Chapel—Arctic Village
9. Bristol Bay Boats—Naknek
10. Hi Yu Stamp Mill—Fairbanks

## Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties Grant Program Sponsors

*Celebrating 32 Years of the Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties Grant Program!*

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# Asbestos: The Hidden Danger in Historic Homes

By Shannon Dauphin

Beneath the charm of that beautiful old home, dangers can be lurking. You might already know about the lead in older paint, and maybe you've already checked for unsafe radon levels. But have you considered the asbestos that could be hiding in your walls?

## What is Asbestos?

Asbestos is a mineral that is used in certain products to protect against heat and corrosion. During renovation of a structure, the asbestos can be exposed, and the tiny fibers from the material can be drawn into your lungs when you breathe. The damage done by asbestos exposure might not be evident until years later.

## Where Asbestos Hides

Asbestos can be found in insulation of all kinds. Here are some of the most common places you might find asbestos in an older home:

**Duct Work and Pipe Coverings.** To prevent freezing, insulation tape and sleeves were often used, and each of these can contain asbestos. Some old bonding agents and adhesives also contain the material.

**Hot Water Tank Covers.** Because hot water heaters often last for a long time, the insulating sleeve around it might be an older model that is filled with asbestos insulation. The insulation around the connecting pipes might be asbestos-based as well.

**General Home Insulation.** The popular "pink" insulation was often made with asbestos. The "spray" foam is also a culprit. However, the most hazardous of all might be the "popcorn" insulation, because it often has loose fibers that can easily be inhaled.

**Electrical Panel Partitions.** If your electricity has not been upgraded since the early 1980s, you might have asbestos in the panel partitions and other parts of your electrical system.

**Caulking.** Until the late 1970s, an estimated 25% of caulking materials contained asbestos. When you scrape the old caulking from windows and fixtures to replace it with new material, the old caulking can flake and tiny particles can go airborne, where the asbestos can be easily inhaled.

## How to Handle Asbestos Removal

If asbestos is left alone, it cannot become airborne, and that means it is non-toxic. If you

must remove it, speak with state regulators about the permits required to [handle asbestos removal yourself](#), and always follow the proper guidelines.

If you are dealing with attic insulation or other large areas of asbestos, it might be much safer to hire professionals to handle the removal job for you. [Hiring an asbestos removal contractor](#) can be more expensive than doing it yourself, but the peace of mind that comes from knowing your home is safe is priceless.

## Sources

Asbestos Products • May 19, 2009 • <http://www.maacenter.org> • <https://tinyurl.com/bdhz29uv>

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OSHA Fact Sheet: Asbestos • <http://www.osha.gov> • [http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data\\_AsbestosFacts/asbestos-factsheet.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_AsbestosFacts/asbestos-factsheet.pdf)

**About the Author** Shannon Dauphin is a freelance writer based near Nashville, Tennessee. Her house was built in 1901, so home repair and renovation have become her hobbies. <https://tinyurl.com/yc4x9vam>

## National Park Service awards over\$603,000 to American Indian Tribes, Alaskan Natives and Native Hawaiian Organizations

WASHINGTON - The National Park Service (NPS) announced \$603,149 in grants today for 10 projects across the country to support the protection of America's Native cultures.

"These grants help the National Park Service work with American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native organizations to preserve their cultural heritage and reconnect people with their traditions of the past that help inform their future," said NPS Director Chuck Sams.

**Alaska Grants:** Anchorage Shuyak Island Archaeological Survey Koniag, Inc. \$74,997. Chickaloon Talkeetna Survey Chickaloon NativeVillage \$47,959. Haines Stabilization of the Noow Hit TribalHouse Chilkoot Indian Association \$74,889  
View full article at: <https://tinyurl.com/5acxtuxd>



## Roundup Briefs...continued from page 3

### 557 Engine, continued

As a trial we plumbed out of the tender bottom into the circulating pump at the bottom of the heater and connected the delivery hose to the top output. For now the hose just goes into the water hatch on top of the tender. With the hydraulic head in the tender the pump only needs to lift water about 10 inches to complete the cycle. Now we can calculate how long it takes to raise the water volume of the tender by 5 degrees. Eventually this heater will be fed from the blowdown valve on one side of the fire-box water leg and water circulated into the blow-down on the other side. Nice slow control for bringing the boiler up to a comfort zone for the Hydro Test. August report: <https://tinyurl.com/2s47j9jm>

### Great News For Pratt Museum

Pratt Museum has again received the accreditation of the American Alliance of Museums, a highly prestigious honor which they initially received in 1997. Alliance Accreditation brings national recognition to a museum for its commitment to excellence, accountability, high professional standards and continued institutional improvement. The Pratt Museum is one of only 7 museums accredited in

the state of Alaska. For more information on reaccreditation and the American Alliance of Museums, visit their website. <https://www.prattmuseum.org>

### Katlian is in danger

Built in 1950 by the Haidas of Kasaan, the Katlian is in danger of being scrapped. The Katlian is on the move!

In the first big step towards home, the Katlian is currently being moved from the City of Craig's shipyard to a longer term storage facility. While it doesn't seem like that big of a deal, this is one huge step for our project. Costs incurred for storage and repair of older wooden boats like the Katlian can be massive, and often times leads to the final trip being to a waiting fire. While she's not out of the woods yet, this is a big step to preserving the Katlian, and we've now got a full year to dedicate to repairs before her tow home. Big thanks to the Organized Village of Kasaan for putting



up some funding to get this process rolling, also thanks to Shaan Seet and the City of Craig for facilitating this. Finally, a big thanks to Vaughn Skinna, the previous captain and caretaker of the Katlian for so many years, and for these pictures. Donate to the project here:

<http://gofund.me/a343f231>

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100092296673139>

### SS Nenana Appears in Magazine

The SS Nenana appeared in the Summer 2023 issue of *Preservation Magazine* in the "In Transition" section.



#### THREATENED SS NENANA

Preservation Alaska named a wooden-hull sternwheeler the state's most endangered historic property in May of 2023. Community members, led by Friends of SS Nenana President Patricia De Nardo Schmidt, are working to save the boat, which is owned by the Fairbanks North Star Borough. The Nenana, the last vessel of its kind in Alaska and a National Historic Landmark, was a workhorse during its heyday. From 1933 to 1954, the boat would traverse 858 river miles on the Tanana and Yukon rivers, bringing goods to villages, gold mines, and military bases along the route. Planes became the primary means of shipping cargo in the region, and the changing times put the Nenana out of commission. After being moved to Fairbanks in 1957, it underwent significant changes. Preservationists restored it in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but the boat – now on dry land in Fairbanks' Pioneer Park – has suffered years of deferred maintenance. The wood and paint have endured weather damage, leaks abound, and the sternwheel is sagging. The borough has requested bids for restoration and stabilization work, but so far estimates have exceeded the budget. Lee Williams, the superintendent who oversees Pioneer Park, says the short-term plan is to make the cargo deck accessible again so the Nenana (shown in 2016) can serve as an advocacy center and boost the Friends group's fundraising efforts.



## October

• **October 10, 2023**  
**Nominations for AAHP's Historic Preservation Awards** are due. Online at [www.AlaskaPreservation.org](http://www.AlaskaPreservation.org) or send email for criteria to [AKPreservation@gmail.com](mailto:AKPreservation@gmail.com)

• **October 10, 2023** **Nominations for AAHP Board** are due. Online at [www.AlaskaPreservation.org](http://www.AlaskaPreservation.org) or send email for criteria to [AKPreservation@gmail.com](mailto:AKPreservation@gmail.com)

• **October 5-8, 2023-- Connections and Disconnections in Alaska History** Alaska Historical Society Annual Conference Central Kenai Peninsula (and available virtually over Zoom) Registration is now open! The conference will open with an afternoon tour of the Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church, a National Historic Landmark, followed by a reception at the Kenai Visitors Center with a performance by the Salamatoff drummers.  
<https://tinyurl.com/3zr3xehe>

## November

• **November 2, 2023—Annual Meeting, Preservation Alaska.** Location TBA. Hybrid meeting planned.

*Please send your event information to*

[AKPreservation@gmail.com](mailto:AKPreservation@gmail.com)  
by December 1, 2023

 **Clio Foundation**  
1d · 🌐

If you love history, we have a big announcement...

Our free mobile app now includes geofencing to notify you when you get near any of the nearly 40,000 landmarks along with over 1500 walking tours and trails. And you can also find us on Threads.



# Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance

We are saddened with the passing of a dear friend, Lee Poleske. Lee produced the monthly newsletter for IHTA which was reprinted here each quarter.

## Lee E. Poleske 1937-2023

Even a casual observer noticed the walker with a flowing white beard, camera in hand, or a tote full of



groceries as he strolled downtown, along the historic Iditarod trail aka Waterfront bike path, through the harbor, to

Safeway, or even beyond to Mile 7, always refusing a ride no matter what the weather or season.

Nicknamed Father Time or Santa Claus, this friendly, rosy-cheeked man with sparkling blue eyes was frequently stopped by strangers who wanted to take his picture. When asked, he could provide answers to the location of the nearest restroom or a wealth of information about the history of Seward. Little did they know that they had just encountered the town treasure and historian, Lee Poleske.

Born in Manilla, Iowa on July 17, 1937, he graduated from Manilla High School and then attended the University of Dubuque, earning a BA in media technology in 1959. After graduation, he taught social studies and English at Dallas Center Junior and High School, Iowa for a year.

Rather than be drafted, in 1960 at age 23, he enlisted in the Army. After basic and advanced training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, he shipped overseas. Stationed in Heidelberg, Germany, he served as a Specialist with Technical Skills in the Intelligence Division, earning a Good Conduct Medal for rifle marksmanship along the way. He received an honorable discharge in November of 1963 after serving for three years. He returned home to Iowa. In January he applied for one of

two posted teaching positions and as months passed, he forgot about it.

In July, 1964, the phone rang. From Seward, Alaska. The principal asked if he still wanted a job teaching at the high school? And by the way, we've had some problems up here. (The town was still reeling from the disastrous March 27 Great Alaskan Earthquake.) Lee said yes, and the rest is history. He taught social studies, photography, Spanish, and history for the next 26 years, retiring in 1990. Since his arrival at age 27, Lee became an integral part of the community. In 1966, he joined the fledgling Resurrection Bay Historical Society and within a few years was elected the president of the society.

By 1971, he had a volunteer job as the director of the Seward Museum, then located in a former post office on Third at Jefferson where the Boys and Girls Club is now. For the next 41 years, "Mr. Seward Museum" curated the collection, created interesting displays, manned the front desk, developed programs for school groups, answered endless questions from visitors and researchers all over the world in person and by mail. He retired as director only when the museum was moved to the new Seward Community Library and Museum in 2012.

In the late 1970s, fellow teacher Dan Seavey collared Lee, Bill Hightower, and several other teachers to create the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers, a non-profit organization formalized in 1982 to promote the history of the original gold rush era Iditarod Trail (Seward is Mile Zero), and reclaim and maintain the route from Seward to Girdwood.

Thanks to this dedicated and persistent group, visitors and locals alike enjoy the Iditarod National Historic Trail bike path, built in 1991, from Mile 0 to the boat harbor, anchored by three bronze statues: The Prospector, Juijiro Wada, and Alfred Lowell. Lee assisted with

*Continued on page 9*



editing and ensured historical accuracy for the statues and interpretive signs and spoke at each dedication, including the final June 24, 2023 Alfred Lowell statue dedication. Lee also created the popular "Walk the First Mile" brochure to highlight history along the trail, and he collected informal data on the trail's use and users.

He and Dan Seavey gave countless public educational programs about the historic Iditarod Trail to teachers, schools, and organizations, inspiring generations of youngsters and their adults.

Lee wrote, printed, and mailed interesting newsletters with historic newspaper articles and current news tidbits for the Trail Blazers, the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance, and the Resurrection Bay Historical Society, always with carefully chosen real stamps.

The Alaska Historical Society recognized his many years of research about Seward and Resurrection Bay. He served on the Alaska Gold Rush Centennial Commission and was awarded the Seward Historic Preservation Award in 1998 and 2008. In 2007, the Alaska Historical Society and Museums presented him with the Volunteer of the Year Award for the State of Alaska. He also served on the Seward Hospital and Seward Library Boards.

In 2012, the Alaska State Historical Records Advisory Board awarded Lee Poleske and Amy Carney archival Certificates of Excellence for their "Bits of History" series of historical videos covering all aspects of Seward, Alaska's past.

In 2019, Lee received the Historic Preservation Award for Lifetime Achievement from Preservation Alaska.

Aside from a few trips Outside to earn his master's degree in the field of media, curriculum, and evaluation, Lee rarely left Alaska. Yet he made friends across the USA through his stamp, coin, historic postcard, and token collections. He was a valued long-time member of the Anchorage Philatelic Society, a stamp collectors club.

Lee could be found every Thursday afternoon at the new library, endlessly gleaning nuggets of information from Seward's past newspapers, researching archives and microfiche files. He organized and compiled the Seward area obituary index and created fascinating "Bits of History" videos.

His interest in Seward obituaries led to the tradition of the famous Summer Solstice Cemetery Tours, starting in 2006. "It starts at 10:30 pm," Poleske said, "so we try to keep it at one hour, before the ghosts and goblins come out."

His last theme on June 21, 2023 was "People Who Should Be Remembered."

"They're not all world-famous, but they were good citizens and they were good people, and they should be remembered," he said. "Some that most people have forgotten, but I always remembered them. Some are just people I remembered and liked."

Lee Ernest Poleske, 86, died at home in Seward on August 12, 2023. The family is planning a celebration of his life on Summer Solstice, 2024. The family wrote, "A friend of Lee's pointed out his quote from his high school yearbook, 'Live and let live.' He certainly lived a full life and was greatly loved by family and friends.

He will be greatly missed. We love you, Uncle Lee. Becky."

He was preceded in death by his parents, Sears and Anna (Segebart) Poleske; sister, Ruth Rosburg; sister, Anita Hammer and niece, Barbara McKillip.

He is survived by his niece, Rebecca (David) Steinbach of LaVista, Nebraska; great-nephew, Nathan Steinbach of Chicago, Illinois; great-nieces, Natalie Steinbach of Omaha, Nebraska, Emily Steinbach of LaVista,

Nebraska, Lily McKillip, Binnie McKillip, and Sidnie McKillip of Iowa City, Iowa.

Memorial donations may be made in memory of Lee to the Resurrection Bay Historical Society, P.O. Box 55, Seward, Alaska 99664.

Arrangements made by Peninsula Memorial Chapel & Crematory.

*Reprinted from the Seward Journal, August 31, 2023 with edits.*

**The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance** promotes awareness of the Iditarod Trail and its gold rush and Alaska Native Heritage by encouraging education programs and historical research, assisting in the protection, improvement, maintenance and marking of the Trail and developing partnerships that foster stewardship, commitments and support.

While the Iditarod Trail is well-known nationally and internationally due to the contemporary sled dog race, many Alaskans and most Americans are unaware of the basic history of the Trail. While parts of the Trail go back thousands of years to trade routes used by Alaska's native people, today's Iditarod Trail began with an Alaska Road Commission (ARC) scouting expedition in mid-winter 1908. With the strike of gold near Iditarod, the ARC blazed the trail the winter of 1910, giving the Nome gold fields and the Iditarod and Innoko mining districts overland access to the ice free deep water port of Seward.

The Alliance was founded in 1998.

Iditarod Historic  
Trail Alliance  
PO Box 2323  
Seward AK 99664  
[www.Iditarod100.org](http://www.Iditarod100.org)

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The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

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# Friends of Nike Site Summit

## Friends of Nike Site Summit "Weathered" the Tour Season

By Greg Durocher & Doris Thomas

As everyone in Southcentral Alaska is aware, Summer 2023 was less-than-memorable. At Site Summit, we were shoveling a huge



snow berm in front of the launch bunker June 24, when we would normally be giving a tour (see the photo).

Conditions eased enough to allow a visit on June 29 by servicemembers of the **Alaskan NORAD Region and Alaskan Command**.

A photo of that tour is on the



Volunteers dig snow from around the door to the launch bunker on June 24. The late snow on the roads and around the buildings led to the cancellation of a June 17 hiking tour at Site Summit. (Greg Durocher photo)

FONSS Website: <https://www.nikesitesummit.net/>

FONSS also managed to accomplish a hiking tour at Site Summit on July 22, plus two bus tours each day on July 8 and Aug. 13 (complete with a bus break-down the morning of Aug. 13) and several hiking tours of Kincaid Park (Site Point).

A hiking tour scheduled for Aug. 26 was canceled because of high

winds and driving rain. Evan Rowland's work crew went up that day to work on fences, however, and we took a visiting Site Summit vet and his wife up for a private tour, which ended up being mostly a "windshield tour" due to the outrageous weather.

In preparation for more student tours at Kincaid Park, we hosted a 90-minute tour for 18 **Anchorage School District social studies teachers** on Aug. 15. Student tours at Site Summit have been on hold due to the high cost of commercial bus transportation, so Kincaid is looking better and better as an easily accessible location to educate the next generation about the Nike missile system and the Cold War.

The last tour of the season was Sept. 1 at Kincaid for **22 members of Rotary International** attending the "Life on Land Symposium - Connecting the World through Sustainability" conference in Anchorage.

## Site Maintenance News

The now-assembled Nike-Hercules trainer missile at Site Summit, acquired from the **Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry (MATI)**, has had the desired effect on our visitors: jaws drop and cameras pop out the instant their eyes adjust to the bunker lighting.



Dutch and Lillian Wright, visiting from Florida, pose in the launch bunker with FONSS's new pride and joy, the missile trainer acquired from the Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry. Dutch served at Site Summit in the late 1960s as an IFC platoon leader. (Doris Thomas photo)



Thanks to Evan Rowland and his crew for turning all those hefty parts back into a missile!

Both the Launch Control Building's massive re-siding/repainting and the missile bunker lighting projects have



Thanks to Evan Rowland and Ron Haney, the Launch Control Building is sporting a uniform color for the first time in a couple years. This building is our first stop on all the tours. (Evan Rowland photo)



Former missile crewman Lance Morgan tells visitors on Aug. 13 about the features of the Nike missile trainer. (Greg Durocher photo)

been completed. Kudos to the leads: **Evan Roland, Doug Ruhl, Rich Goughnour, and the volunteers** who assisted them. We even had Anchorage **mayoral candidate Chris Tuck** assisting the electrical crew. We discovered he's an accomplished electrician!

Kudos also to all the **tour volunteers**. Our Site Summit tours typically involve at least eight FONSS members, plus our **JBER liaison, Morgan Grover**. Tours at Kincaid require a similar number of tour lead-

ers, so volunteers are always welcome. No experience needed, but we hope new recruits will learn the ropes (and the tour "script") well enough to eventually become tour leaders.

Please contact us by email at [fonss2007@gmail.com](mailto:fonss2007@gmail.com) if interested in volunteering for tours or work parties. You may also leave a phone message

### New FONSS Phone Number

**In other news, FONSS has acquired its own phone number: 907-717-0117.** This is primarily a message phone, so callers must leave a message. We don't answer calls from unknown out-of-state numbers.

### A Reunion

FONSS and the group Alaska Nike Vets will be hosting a reunion in mid-September 2024 for Nike veterans who served in Alaska. This will be the third reunion FONSS has hosted and will be a bit lower-key than the first two in 2009 and 2014. No big banquets or VIP speakers! We'll post details in later editions of this newsletter.

Follow **FONSS** on Facebook  
<https://tinyurl.com/48pj97uf>

## Past Excellence in Historic Preservation Award Winners

- 2022** Judith Bittner  
Whisky & Ramen and  
Determine Design  
DCI Engineers  
557 Locomotive Rest. Co.
- 2021** Grant Crosby  
Treadwell Historic  
Preservation &  
Restoration Society  
Howard & Juliana Farley  
Trish Neal
- 2020** Iditarod Historic Trail  
Alliance (IHTA)  
Fraternal Order of  
Alaska State Troopers
- 2019** Janet Matheson  
Katie Ringsmuth/<NN>  
Doris Thomas/FONSS  
Lee Poleske  
Hugh & Iris Darling
- 2018** No Award Given
- 2017** Bob De Armond  
Bill De Armond
- 2016** No Award Given
- 2015** Bob Mitchell
- 2014** Thad Poulson  
Jim Renkert
- 2013** Sheri & Darrin Hamming
- 2012** No Award Given
- 2011** Mary Flaherty
- 2010** FONSS  
Erin & Falene Reeve
- 2009** Don Corwin  
Steve Peterson
- 2008** No info available
- 2007** Edwin Crittenden, FAIA  
Katharine Crittenden  
Sam Combs, AIA  
Elayne Janiak

# Historic Preservation Briefs Around the State

## Katie Ringsmuth: NN Cannery and the Influenza Pandemic of 1919



Mug Up project leader and Alaska's state historian, Katie Ringsmuth gives a lecture titled NN Cannery and the Influenza Pandemic of 1919.

Ringsmuth recounts the role of the canneries during the influenza pandemic and how the outbreak impacted rural Alaska. <https://youtu.be/Zy9gie-Swko>

## Free to Use & Reuse: Historic Sites

Have you seen the "Free to Use and Reuse: Historic Sites" webpage on the HABS/HAER/HALS Collection on the The Library of Congress website?

"You can visit many historic sites virtually through architectural drawings in the Historic American Buildings Survey, the Historic American Engineering Record, and the Historic American Landscapes Survey Collection. (HABS/HAER/HALS). The drawings provide fascinating perspectives on how a site was designed and can reveal parts of a building not easily visible. The Heritage Documentation Programs [https://](https://tinyurl.com/28ejf655)

[tinyurl.com/28ejf655](https://tinyurl.com/28ejf655), NPS at the National Park Service <https://tinyurl.com/34n2nz4e> create the #documentation <https://tinyurl.com/52ctbdes>, which is made available online and preserved at The Library of Congress <https://tinyurl.com/58x9a468> through a partnership that dates back to the 1930s. This selection is the tip of an iceberg that represents more than 40,000 sites!" See the "Free to Use and Reuse: Historic Sites" webpage at <https://tinyurl.com/nt3aybhs>

Browse more content from the LOC that is free to use and reuse at <https://tinyurl.com/bdhpnhts>

## Kodiak museums announce new joint archaeology project

By Brian Venua

Two Kodiak museums will be collaborating to catalog over a thousand artifacts never before seen by the public. The Kodiak History Museum and the Alutiiq Museum announced the joint project to work the biggest unprocessed collection the history museum has.

All 1,100 pieces being processed were found around the archipelago between 1957 and 1962 by archaeolo-

gist Dr. Donald Clark. Altogether, the stone and bone objects and tools fill 13 file boxes.

Margaret Greutert is the chief curator for the Kodiak History Museum. She says they're partnering with the Alutiiq Museum because they'll need extra hands to process such a huge collection.

We are a small historical society and this is kind of the first time that we've been able to process a huge collection like this. That partnership with the Alutiiq Museum is really important and sharing that knowledge and it also makes sure that both of our collections are comparable to each other.

Several of the artifacts were stored into plastic bags and grouped together for various reasons, May 31, 2023.

The artifacts have been waiting a long time to be processed. Greutert says she was excited to receive a grant this spring from Museums Alaska's Collections Management Fund and finally process the finds.

The funding allows them to contract the archaeology staff at the Alutiiq Museum to help catalog each item.

A lot of them just look like rocks – they're actually not!

Most of them are stone tools and so that's part of what the Alutiiq Museum is going to help us with is identifying what tools these are, what materials these are, and then rehousing them in a way where you can see everything and you can access everything.

Amanda Lancaster is the curator of collections at the Alutiiq Museum. She says the two museums make for an excellent partnership.

I think for a smaller museum, that could be a much bigger project, but because we have the staff capacity and we have the sort of built-in expertise, it can go a little smoother for us. They got the funding and we brought the expertise!

It's a big job – Alutiiq Museum staff will wash and dust off each piece, and use archival paper and ink to catalog every item, or batch of items.



Margaret Greutert  
(Brian Venua/KMXT)



(Brian Venua/KMXT)



Amanda Lancaster  
(Brian Venua/KMXT)

Continued on page 14



# Wrangell history podcast receives national award

By Caroleine James

*Sentinel reporter*

*Reprinted from Wrangell Sentinel, July 5, 2023*

Every local knows that Wrangell has a fascinating, complex history, but people outside the island may not be aware of the community's many stories. Now that a Wrangell history podcast has received national recognition, tales of the island's past are becoming accessible to a broader audience.



Ronan Rooney

In mid-June, the American Association for State and Local History gave Ronan Rooney's "Wrangell History Unlocked" podcast an award of excellence for its five-part "Rise and Fall of the Star of Bengal" series. The podcast series details a 1908 shipwreck off Coronation Island in which 111 men — primarily Asian cannery workers — were drowned.

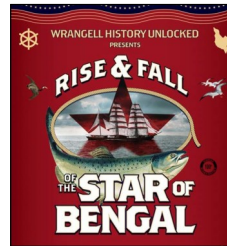
Though the wreck was "one of Alaska's worst disasters," Rooney wrote, no one was held responsible. His series explores the prejudices against the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino workers that likely influenced the tragedy, and tracks the way stories can be told, retold and twisted throughout time.

The award of excellence goes to leaders in the field of state and local history. This year, 51 people, projects and exhibits across the country received it. When Rooney heard about his award, he was "thrilled," he said. "I'm just an independent, little historian and getting this kind of recognition is great because I knew it would bring a lot of attention to 'Star of Bengal.'" The honor has helped Rooney grow his audience, both for the "Star of Bengal" series and the "Wrangell History Unlocked" podcast in general. In the past month, he's received more visits to his website than ever before and new listeners have been downloading his podcast episodes. "It's not a coincidence," he said. "I did not release anything new this month."

Katie Ringsmuth, state historian at the State Historic Preservation Office, nominated him for the award. When she first came across the "Star of Bengal" series, she was impressed by the "serious scholarship supporting his work," she said. Rooney "understood the ramifications and the historical sig-

nificance of the stories he was telling."

As state historian, Ringsmuth oversees the national registry of historic places for Alaska. She was impressed by Rooney's ability to make history accessible and interesting to casual listeners, not just to professional academics. In his hands, 19th century newspaper clippings and journal entries took on new life, entertaining and educating audiences in Wrangell and beyond, rather than sitting behind paywalls in academic journals. Though



Ringsmuth appreciates state and national history, she stressed the importance of telling local, often underrepresented stories like the ones Rooney has focused on. "Think of all the history that's occurring in people's local hometowns," she said. "I think that local history is a lot more ... robust than we

really think it is and I think Ronan's podcast really highlights (that.)"

The Star of Bengal story is also important, she added, because it emphasizes how ethnic and racial diversity have been part of Alaska culture for centuries. "Oftentimes, the rest of the country has fairly preconceived ideas about Alaska," Ringsmuth said. "Stories like this, these events in our history, I think surprise people. Most people don't realize we have an extraordinarily multicultural society today, which is tied in part to the commercial fishing industry." Mexican, Chinese and African American workers made massive contributions to the state's economy and have shaped — and continue to shape — its future. These workers "are often completely ignored in history," she said.

In particular, the podcast series "(honors) the Asian American workforce that contributed to Alaska's economic history, social history and cultural history."

Now that his audience is growing, Rooney hopes to expand his efforts by collaborating with other historians and exploring new forms of media. He's considering incorporating video into his future efforts or reaching out to other researchers who've studied the history of Chinese cannery workers. Regardless of the new shapes his work may take, he remains interested in Wrangell's frontier past, particularly during the first decade

*Continued on page 14*

Continued from page 13 "Star of Bengal"

after the United States purchased Alaska from Russia.

"I'd love for the 'Star of Bengal' to be part of a bigger network of historical storytelling," he said. "I managed to bring some new things to light, pick out some voices that had been silenced or not been heard. Now that we know this, I'm really curious to know, what's the reaction in our own community across people who study this topic? How does this impact what we know or what we say? How can we take this event and bring it to light for people?" Ronan's Podcast is located at: <https://www.wrangellhistoryunlocked.com/>


**NN Cannery History Project** was awarded the special projects award for excellence in history at the AASLH conference. See the Summer issue of *Preservation Notes* for the story. <https://tinyurl.com/23avm7w2>

**About AASLH** The American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), a national nonprofit association, provides leadership and resources to help the history community thrive and make the past more meaningful for all people. AASLH serves the tens of thousands of history organizations, professionals, and volunteers around the country who help people of all ages develop critical thinking skills and understand how learning history helps society make progress toward justice. Through research, advocacy, and our field-leading professional development program, AASLH advances public history practice and connects history practitioners to critical issues in the field and to one another. For more information about AASLH visit [www.aaslh.org](http://www.aaslh.org)

Continued from page 12 Kodiak Museums...

Margaret and I are going to sort of come up with a catalog sheet that gets all the information they need while providing all the context we think is important.

Some of that information includes tool types, field notes, how deep it was when it was found, and notes about artifact condition. Altogether, about five people will be working on the project. They expect to process about 10 objects an hour depending on how detailed their notes will be. The joint project is slated to have the entire collection processed by the end of the year.



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