

PALMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESERVING OUR PAST, SHARING OUR STORIES & MAKING HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
Official Publication of the Palmer Historical Society—Volume XXIV No. 11—November 2009 Edition

PRESIDENT'S VIEW FROM FARM LOOP

Well Halloween is in the rear view mirror and Thanksgiving is coming up next. This can mean a couple of things but for sure there is frozen dirt and the prospect of snow soon. Glancing out the window I note that I might not see as many waxwings and grouse around here as usual this winter because there are fewer mountain ash berries and crab apples than usual at my house. Having said that, the weather this fall was very nice and the historical society continues to rediscover things about Palmer's past.

It seems like nearly every day something comes in via snail mail or email that encourages a reexamination of old photos or maps or other documents from past times in our community. Most recently the grandson of a homesteader named John Moore contacted me asking about any information we might have. Thanks to the plats and surveyor's notes assembled by Ralph Hulbert and his recollection of a Moore's cabin, I was able to locate said cabin on the 1915 Township 17 Range 2 East map. It appears

the cabin was located on the south end of Hamilton's farm just across from the State Fair property. What fun.

If you like this kind of thing, seriously consider volunteering to help with any PHS activities and projects. This could include documenting collections, serving on the board of directors, coordinating speakers and programs, helping out at our meetings, shoveling snow, mowing the lawn at the Colony House Museum, or being a featured presenter to the group yourself!

Speaking of programs, our next meeting is November 18th at the Palmer Library at 7:30 pm and we will be hearing from Robert King who will be talking about Alaska souvenir postcards. His book *Postcards from Alaska: Souvenir Pictures of the Last Frontier, 1890s-1940s* will be for sale.

Finally, thanks to all of you who continue to contribute in so many ways to the Palmer Historical Society.

Chuck Logsdon,
PHS President

HISTORIC PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Here is a picture of Alaska's first elected Governor, Bill Egan, arriving at Palmer in a chartered DC-3 landing at the Palmer airport for his first official visit.

How many of the dignitaries can you identify?

We will have a larger copy of this photo at the November meeting!

YOUR PHS NEWSLETTER

That's correct—this is your newsletter, and the Board is anxious to see member submissions coming in for this new year. As a member, who has chosen to serve to assist in getting the news to each of you, I shall ask for your support again: short stories about life in Palmer, school memories, things you thought “know one else knows about this” stories, send in comments about Ralph Hulbert's “The Old-est...” series and help us fetter out some more facts about our Palmer History.

You may e-mail me directly at newsletter@palmerhistoricalsociety.org, or you may call me at 745-2013! Operators are standing by...

PHS ELECTION RESULTS

Based on the elections at our October 16th meeting, the following Palmer historical Society members will serve on your Board of Directors:

President - 745-2327

Chuck Logsdon

Vice-President - 745-3462

John Stuart

Treasurer - 745-7687

David Mathews

Secretary - 376-4938/745-4913

JoAnn Utt

Sharon Benson

Program Chairman - 745-4586

Ralph Hulbert

Colony Museum - 745-3703

Gerry Keeling

Webmistress - 745-3462

Karen Stuart

KAKM ALERT FOR DEC09

KAKM Public Broadcasting will be airing *For the Rights of All: Ending Jim Crow in Alaska*, which is about Elizabeth Peratrovich, on December 1st, 8PM. More info at www.alaskacivilrights.org too!

visit our website at www.palmerhistoricalsociety.org

SEASONAL FAVORITE RECIPE FROM BUELA OSE

PUMPKIN BREAD

1-1/2 cup sugar
1/4 tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon cloves
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1-2/3 cup flour
Put all above ingredients in a large bowl.
Drop in:
2 eggs
1/2 cup salad oil
1 cup pumpkin
Beat on medium speed of mixer till mixed good. Dates, raisins or nuts may be added if desired.
Pour into 2 greased and floured loaf pans. Bake at 325 degrees until toothpick comes out clean.

RESEARCH MADE EASIER

This is a glimpse into an ongoing research project and how our membership can play a part. Last week, Joe Mazut called looking for information about John Springer, whose old cabin is just beyond his yard. Below are excerpts from emails starting the research.

We hope to see Joe at our next meeting, find out how far along he is, and introduce him to some who knew John.

*From: Joe To: Ralph Sent: October 29, 2009 3:56 PM
Subject: Emailing: Land Patent Details - BLM GLO Records*

This is what I found (homestead patent, <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>)
Joe

*From: Ralph To: Joe, Historians (Chuck, Coleen, Jim, LeRoi)
Subject: info request on John Springer*

Historians

Joe Mazut lives next to John Springer's homestead and is researching him. I said I'd introduce him to resources if he would write up his research and share it.

I can't add much. You found the link to the homestead patents. I'll confirm the address where you can request copies of the homestead entry file from somewhere near D.C. The PHS page has a link to the original 1916 survey plats, and they sell the disc that has the surveyors' notes.

Joann Utt provided the recipe this month that comes from Buella Ose, wife of Al Ose.



Al served in the Legislature from 1973-1978 representing the Valley. JoAnn remembers the "woman behind the man" in his political career, noted for pants and a delightful smile. Their log house on the inner Springer road was a political meeting place.

If anyone knows any stories or history about Buella, please send a note to Joann Utt, P.O. Box 1114, Palmer, AK 99645. Next year we may use another of Buella's recipes and would love to include a little more biographical information.

Joe will post some of the resources he's found so far, including some in the library.

Anybody else?
Ralph

From: Coleen Mielke To: Joe, Historians

According to the census records, John August Springer was working at Bird Creek in 1920, caring for railroad horses. He told the census taker that he was born in Sweden in 1875 and came to America in 1891 and became a US citizen in 1915.

On the 1930 census, he was working for the ARC at Mt. McKinley and gave the census taker the same information except he said he immigrated in 1893.

Herning first mentions Springer in 1914, when he says, "Hildreth, Springer and Williams back from Nelchina District reported Buck and Gray party had a hole down 45 ft. in muck, bench channel on Crooked Creek". He does not mention Springer again until 1925 when he says that Springer came over to Wasilla from Palmer.

Attached are the 1920 and 1938 homestead papers for a John August Springer. You might have to zoom them larger to read them. I'm afraid this is all I have.

Come Join Us

and

Become an Active Member of your Palmer Historical Society!

Mail in your payment, with the following information today:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

Membership levels of the
Palmer Historical Society:

Regular

\$10 per year

Contributing

\$25 per year

Sustaining

\$100 per year

Lifetime - \$500

RESEARCH MADE EASIER. CONTINUED

Fellow PHS Members,

There is more to this fascinating ongoing discussion of John Springer, the man for whom the Springer road gets its name, with a dozen postings by press time.

If you are interested contact us at colony@palmerhistoricalsociety.org.

Ralph Hulbert

From your Newsletter Team—

Yes, the internet makes communication and research, in our busy worlds, much easier. I enjoy genealogy and have reached my husband's family across-the-pond from a cryptic comment on a message board. I have found online records in my families very own handwriting. Yet, *you* can be a part of Palmer's history by contributing your stories to our Palmer Historical Society Newsletter!

WRAP-UP OF OCTOBER MEETING

Talis Colberg's presentation on M.D. Snodgrass was very informative and enjoyed by all who attended our October meeting. Dr. Colberg gave a fascinating



and fact filled presentation starting with an account of M.D. and his wife Margaret reporting to the experiment station in Kenai early one June morning in 1907. Later, Snodgrass managed the experiment stations in Kodiak and Fairbanks as well as selecting the original 220 acres as the site for the Matanuska experiment station. Talis did an excellent job of telling M.D.'s story which is not that well known.

Many long-term Palmer residents recall M.D. as a resident who raised livestock on the east side of town from the early 1920's into the 1960's and now we know he also played an important role in opening up the Alaska territory.

M.D. served a number of terms in the territorial legislature and on the University of Alaska board of regents, twice nearly securing the job of University president. He also vigorously promoted agricultural development throughout the State. Talis's discussion of the ups and downs of M.D.'s political career, provided a fascinating look at the politics of a bygone era.

As Talis pointed out, M.D.'s greatest contribution may have been as the driving force behind the creation of the State fair in Palmer, the State's premier Fair with an attendance topping 300,000 in recent years.

"HOLIDAY GREETINGS" FROM THE COLONY HOUSE MUSEUM

The Colony House Museum quietly awaits the first flurry of winter as we look ahead to the spirit of Thanksgiving and the scents and sounds of the Christmas season which will follow shortly thereafter. The Palmer community's Chamber of Commerce earmarks the second weekend in December as "Colony Christmas Weekend" (Dec. 11-12), which means that PHS will be readying itself for that weekend's OPEN HOUSE & HOLIDAY BAKE SALE at the COLONY HOUSE MUSEUM.

The big day for the CHM will be Saturday, December 12 beginning at 10:00 a.m. when the door opens to officially greet early visitors. Of course there will be footsteps stirring earlier that week in decorative preparation, and definitely by 9:00 a.m. on the morning of the 12th. Our wonderful Baking Elves have created a splendid variety of Bake Sale goodies through the years, treats which also embellish the Open House hospitality table.

During the afternoon, those who love to carol will gather around the historic piano. During the day, Bake Sale shoppers will be tempted by an array of holiday goodies to carry home, and the hospitality table in the kitchen will welcome all visitors.

This community event creates a picturesque feeling of an "olden days Christmas" for all ages to reflect upon, made all the more meaningful with every person who becomes involved. So whether you are indeed a Baking Elf, a decoration guru, a snow shoveler or snowman builder (IF we have snow by then), a museum tour giver, a sharer of hospitality or history, a lover of singing carols together...you will be an important part of the day. Please call Gerry if you have any questions...745-3703.

The Open House will come to an end in time for everyone to enjoy the celebratory holiday Fireworks display beginning across the street in the Quad at 6:30 p.m.

P.S. History based items available at the CHM which may help complete your gift shopping include DVD's of "Alaska Far Away" and "Where the River Matanuska Flows", sheet music of Don Irwin's song "Where the Matanuska Flows", Evangeline Atwood's book "We Shall Be Remembered", a few copies of Don Irwin's book "The Colorful Matanuska Valley", and copies of a 1910 Willow Creek Mining District map by Dr. Sleem.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

We recently discovered the following poem included in a manila envelope we received from the Chugiak Eagle River Historical Society (www.cerhs.org) containing a potpourri of Palmer oriented clippings and items from the late 1960's and early 1970's. This poem might help you get into the "old Palmer" Christmas mood or at least bring back memories.

Christmas--'71

The Moose Lodge was lovely
all cheery & bright,
As the MTA crowd
settled in for the night.

The Holiday Season
was about to begin,
And Oh! What a group
to Bring It On In.

The food was delicious.
There was booze in excess.
It looked like this party
was a real success.

We were all enjoying ourselves,
we thought the gathering nice.
But then Marne Hanks screamed,
"My God! THERE'S NO ICE!"

Everyone stopped their chatting.
Each jaw did drop.
We could not imagine,
"The office party --A Flop?"

Max Clements dashed to a phone
to order the stuff.
He had to keep the gang happy
lest things get rowdy and rough.

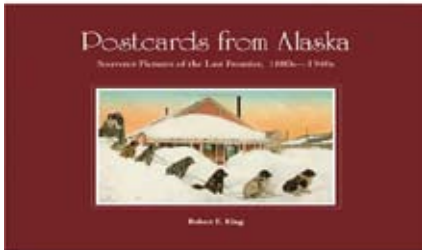
With a trembling finger,
he began to dial.
And then something happened
that made us all smile.

In his frenzy and panic
he had dialed a wrong number.
Gravel Gertie cut in
to tell of his blunder.

And then, speaking for the subscribers,
she went on to say,
"Merry Christmas to all
at the DAMN M T A !"

NOVEMBER MEETING TO BE "PICTURE POSTCARD PERFECT"

We are pleased that Robert E. King will be making a presentation based on his book *Postcards from Alaska: Souvenir Pictures of the Last Frontier, 1890s-1940s*. The book contains over 400 postcards of Alaska mostly arranged by region with historical and other information.



The book also has special chapters on:

- history of postcards and postcard collecting
- Alaska's earliest "pioneer" postcards of 1897
- overview of the diversity of Alaska's postcards
- a dating guide for Alaska's postcards.

Mr. King has collected Alaska postcards for many years, initially sparked by seeing the postcards of the Alaska Highway construction project of the early 1940s including postcards his father brought home from work on the highway in 1943.

King is also drawn to postcards for their "visual information" in illustrating past history and culture. He is an archaeologist and historian who has lived in Alaska since 1981.

Anyone interested in vintage and historic postcards should be sure to attend Mr. King's presentation Wednesday at 7:30 pm November 18th at the Palmer Library. Mr. King will have copies of his book for sale at the program

Think you have a postcard of Alaska *not* in the book? Bring it to the meeting to share with fellow PHS Members and Mr. King.

Colony Christmas - December 12th

COLONY HOUSE MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE

PLEASE REMEMBER WE'LL NEED SWEETS AND TREATS FOR OUR OPEN HOUSE!

Saturday, December 12th

PHS Colony Christmas

Author Robert King

Wednesday, November 18th

PHS November Meeting

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PALMER, AK 99645-1935

PO BOX 1935

PALMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT NO. 232
PALMER, AK 99645