

PALMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESERVING OUR PAST, SHARING OUR STORIES & MAKING HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
Official Publication of the Palmer Historical Society—Volume XXIV No.9—September 2009 Edition

PRESIDENT'S VIEW FROM FARM LOOP

The Alaska State Fair is on and it's time to harvest the garden and chase a moose. It's hard to believe that in a couple of weeks, the leaves will all have turned to their fall colors. Still, at those times when the clouds part and it stops raining, the sun still has some real heat. The change of season also means that our Colony House Museum is closing for the season. Although tourism was down this summer in Alaska, we still had a good influx of visitors at the museum. Best of all we had a graduate student intern, Jennie Davy, who got us on track to begin building our Museum's collection database. I know many of you met Jennie and she did a great job for us this summer. Now we need to carry the momentum forward into next year and continue the job of cataloguing our collection of historical treasures from Palmer's past.

This past summer we also held our annual picnic, this time at the Matanuska River Park. It was cool, windy, and somewhat crowded with other picnicking groups, but the sun was shining as members mingled and enjoyed the picnic fare. Later, many took a quick trip around the nearby Palmer cemetery to

visit the graves of the dearly departed, and recall the lives and times of those whose final resting place is Palmer.

Our fall monthly meetings and program series begins this month. We are in the process of putting together a full slate of historical programs for the coming months. Our next meeting is September 16th at the Palmer Library at 7:30 pm and for our program Ralph Hulbert will lead a discussion of historical tidbits to be found in a plat titled "Matanuska Coal Fields" that shows names and other survey information dated 1916. This map was recently discovered in the wall of the Adam Werner homestead home by his granddaughter Vivian Smith and was the topic of conversation at the picnic.

Our annual meeting is scheduled for Friday, October 16th (note this meeting will be on Friday not Wednesday), and it will feature a presentation by Dr. Talis Colberg discussing the life and times of M.D. Snodgrass.

Finally, if anyone is interested in helping with our cataloguing project please give me a call.

**Chuck Logsdon,
PHS President**

WHERE THE MATANUSKA RIVER FLOWS ON 360NORTH!

Many of our members may own this DVD *Where the River Flows*, which was a precursor to the latest production—*Alaska Far Away*, which recently played at the Alaska State Fair.

Locally, you can find 360North on MTA DTV as Channel 302, on Broadcast Channel 7.3, and as Channel 15 on GCI Cable.

Here are the broadcast times:

September 15 - 8 pm - part 1
September 16 - 8 pm - part 2
September 17 - 8 pm - part 3
September 18 - 8 pm - part 4
September 20 - 7 pm - part 1
September 20 - 8 pm - part 2
September 20 - 9 pm - part 3
September 20 - 10pm - part 4

Part 1: *Hard Times*; Meanwhile In Alaska; A New Deal and a New Dream; Like Going to the Moon; and A City of Tents in the Wilderness, followed by bonus features The Colony House Museum and the song When It's Springtime in Alaska.

Part 2: *The Journey*; Hoopla and Headlines; Alaska at Last; and Getting Down to Work.

Part 3: *Growing Pains*; A Community Takes Shape; Matanuska Grown; and From Colony to Statehood, followed by a bonus feature, the song Alaska Far Away.

Part 4: *We Were a Part of History*, followed by bonus features Barney's Basement; Palmer Cemetery; Preserving History and the song Where the River Matanuska Flows.

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 Oldest..." 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 ELECTIONS FRI, OCT 16TH

Your Palmer Historical Society has officers which volunteer of their time to serve you, their fellow members. The Board encourages you to consider, prior to this election, your turn at serving your fellow members. Contact Chuck Logsdon, current President to talk with him about the positions and the time commitment involved.

Current Board Members:

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

visit our website at www.palmerhistoricalsociety.org

PHS PICNIC FAVORITE-CHICKEN ENCHILADAS FROM VOSIE "VOSELLA HUGHES" HEATON

CHICKEN ENCHILADAS

4 large chicken breasts
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 med onion chopped
1 clove garlic crushed and chopped
1 4oz can chopped chilies
1 4oz can sliced black olives
2 cups thick white sauce
2 cans cream of chicken soup
8 oz sour cream
10 ea 8" flour tortillas (or more)
1-1/2 lbs cheddar cheese grated

Boil chicken breasts in a small amount of water, dice and set aside. Save the water and add to milk to make the white sauce. Heat the butter and olive oil in a large fry pan and add the onions and garlic. Cook until soft but not brown.

Add the chopped chilies, olives, white sauce and cream of chicken soup. Heat

until almost boiling and remove from the heat. Add the sour cream and stir well.

Spoon a little sauce in the bottom of a 9X13 pan. Put some chicken, cheese and a little sauce in a tortilla, roll up and lay in the pan. Continue until the pan is full then pour chicken soup mixture over all. Sprinkle remaining cheese over all. Bake 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

If serving at a picnic where the tortillas may be difficult to cut with a plastic fork (LOL) just cut the tortillas into strips cover with the chicken and some cheese then pour the chicken soup mixture over all and top with cheese. This is a lot of cheese but tastes so good!

I am writing from memory of what I did, and hope at least all the main ingredients are there. There you go!

Love, Vosie



GREETINGS FROM UPSTATE NEW YORK



I would first like to thank everyone who helped make my summer internship a wonderful experience. I was greatly impressed with how passionate PHS members were about celebrating and preserving the history of the greater Palmer area. I hope you will continue to interpret the interesting and dynamic history of the area from the homesteading days to the present.

Through the assistance of several dedicated PHS volunteers, we were able to inventory over 800 objects in the Colony House Museum and create detailed records with photos for 141 objects. The passage of a Collections Management Policy, currently in the drafting phase,

will help to utilize PHS's resources in the most effective manner for preserving the tangible relics of Palmer's past.

While we were able to accomplish a considerable amount in documenting the collection this summer, there is still assistance needed in inventorying the house and storage areas, documenting new acquisitions to the collection, and creating object records. Thus, I entrust you (the history loving member of PHS) with the continuing process of recording why these objects are important to Palmer's past, present, and future so that subsequent generations will understand their significance.

Jennie Davy, Sep 1, 2009, Cooperstown

***Come Join Us
and
Become an Active Member
of your
Palmer Historical Society!***

Mail in your payment, with the following information today:

Name: _____

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*Membership levels of the
Palmer Historical Society:*

Regular

\$10 per year

Contributing

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Sustaining

\$100 per year

Lifetime - \$500

"THE OLDEST" SERIES CONTINUES...THIS MONTH—THE UNDERGROUND PHS PICNIC GO'ERS

The oldest road in Palmer, which in May I suggested was East Blueberry Street, is visible on the 1916 map featured at this month's program. The surveyor's notes for another trail on the map say it leads from the river to Bugge's well—making that the first known reference to an underground utility in Palmer, and the starting point for our next research—Palmer Underground.

In my day job as environmental sleuth, I've had to describe history of wells, water lines, sewer systems, and steam tunnels. They are even more in the news recently, with downtown Palmer dug up all summer to replace old water lines and major sewer upgrades contemplated. And the rumors persist of tunnels throughout Palmer.

We have some facts and stories. We know that the colonists relied on wells hand dug by homesteaders Bugge and White until wells were drilled—but those were inadequate so a wood stave line was laid three miles to Brasil Springs. Bernie Swoboda and others provided some details of the early wells, and I've found photos, records, and artifacts are still visible.

The sewer was even more interesting—initially the outfall was about where the basement of MEA headquarters now sits. Dating when the sewer outfall was extended 3 miles to the Matanuska River took some research, as the city and EPA had no records since it happened before incorporation. Claire Kopperud remembered—she had helped Herb haul and place the pipe. The history of the sewer treatment and the salmon in the outfall stream are central issues of upgrades, potentially costing us about \$100 million.

The steam tunnels from the powerhouse to the colony buildings are mapped, but long forgotten, except by the kids who used them to sneak into the Co-op for "Sunday business". We hear of tunnels on the west side of the tracks, but know of only one.

So don't be shy—tell us your recollections or submit your questions of the old Palmer Underground. We'll put together a presentation—maybe by November, if we get enough good stories.

Ralph Hulbert

CHATTER FROM THE COLONY HOUSE MUSEUM

The Colony House Museum comes to the end of its thirteenth year (!) of summer operation as September cooler days began to color the scene. As always, though, the CHM remains generally available for special arrangement tours year round, so interested persons should call (907) 745-1935 to make those possible arrangements. These are the dedicated docents who have given the Museum a knowledgeable and caring welcome to 2009's summer visitors. PHS profusely thanks Bonita Parks Strong, Norma Loyer Benson, Arlene Benson Fox, Willie Pedersen, Mary Ann Anderson, Gayle Eckert Rowland, Evie Foster Mielke, Barbara Lentz Thomas, Carol Strouse, Heather Lampard, our lead walking tour guide Sharon Benson, and Ruth Hulbert for their dedication to the CHM

effort by sharing our community's history. Much appreciation, too, for Terry Richardson, who has taken on some of the mowing duties as summer came to a close. In recent weeks, the CHM has had contact from the Englebretsen, Carter, Juvette, and Bisson families, all Colony participants from the Arthurdale, W. Virginia FDR New Deal community!

Next time you notice the blue flags flying in the Park Quadrant, tip your hat to Valley resident Kevin Burke, who donated this set of flags to Palmer as a gesture of good will citizenship and neighborliness. Kevin is a great local source of Flags, Military memorabilia, and the like and you should look for him when you visit the Alaska State Fair this year!

By Gerry Keeling

Scenes from the July PHS Picnic at the Matanuska River View Park!



Colony Christmas - December 12th
Colony House Museum Open House

FALL MEETINGS BEGIN SEPTEMBER 16TH-ADAM WERNER'S MAP-PALMER'S FIRST HOMESTEADERS

At our July picnic, Vi Norbo brought a special non-edible treat – an old map recently found behind a wall in her parent's homestead cabin.

The map appeared to be an original 1916 survey plat of Township 18 North, Range 2 East, the area from the Palmer-Wasilla Highway north to Moose Cr., bisected by the Matanuska. We map geeks hovering around had never seen such a map. Not only was it incredibly detailed – much more than the best copies BLM provides, but it had significant differences from the “official”. Most intriguing were the homestead entries, all in careful

draftsman script, many scratched out, indicating some type of official record. We emailed a copy to BLM and immediately got several excited replies.

Yes, this is an original plat, one of three believed produced. One is the official, from which copies are made, another is a duplicate in case the official is destroyed, and this is the triplicate which was used as the land record. These triplicates were eventually sent to the local land offices, rarely to be seen again by BLM personnel. BLM then sent us abstracts of all the 50+ homestead entries in the township and showed us how to find originals.

Our September program will feature this map, look at some of the details such as trails, roads, cabins, and gardens, and trace the progress of homesteading north of Palmer until it was stopped in 1935. Vi will briefly tell us about this map and her father, Adam Werner, who homesteaded in 1914, and maybe show us some photos. We'll also look at photos of other homesteads on this map, including those of Bugge, T.A. Smith, Heady, White, and Loken.

Join us September 16th for a glimpse into the homesteading roots of Palmer.

John Stuart and Ralph Hulbert

Fall Meeting Season Begins
Palmer Library – Public Welcome!
PHS Membership Meeting
Wednesday, September 16th
PHS Annual Meeting
Friday, October 16th
Speaker Dr. Talis Colberg
Please note day change!
PHS Membership Meeting
Wednesday, November 18th

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