

Palmer Historical Society

PRESERVING OUR PAST, SHARING OUR STORIES & MAKING HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
Official Publication of the Palmer Historical Society—Volume XXIII No.5 – May 2008 Edition

President's View from Farm Loop

Looking out the window I believe my forecast of green leaves for our May 21 program meeting is safe. This will be our last program and our last newsletter until September, so stay tuned for our Fall/Winter lineup of speakers and programs. We still have some things planned for the summer including an open house for Colony Days June 14th, the PHS Picnic July 27th, and our tour of an historic site in August. Don't worry, we will send you a reminder postcard.

The Board of Directors has made upgrading our technology for documenting and cataloguing our collection of things and documents and preservation of these items our top priority. As a result, we have submitted a grant application to acquire a computer as well as looking at acquiring additional protective storage space.

The State of Alaska is currently in the advanced stages of liquidating the Matanuska Maid Dairy. PHS has joined with the Palmer Museum of History and Art

(PMHA) and the Wasilla Knik Historical Society in requesting that items of cultural and historical significance be retained and that they remain in Palmer for the benefit of the public. The Board of Agriculture and Conservation has assured us that they have directed that items like this be identified and set aside for the benefit of the public. This process is evolving and we believe that we have a team in place to ensure that this is accomplished.

Thank you to all PHS members who purchased raffle tickets for a chance to win one of two dinners for four, which are scheduled for May 18th at the Colony House Museum. A great meal in classic Colony-style awaits the winner. Winners will be served and entertained by members of the PHS Board of Directors!

Finally, if you have an idea or an item you think would be of interest to the membership please contact me or our editor Cheryl Babbe.

Chuck Logsdon, President

Chatter from the Colony House Museum!

The Colony House Museum has shaken off winter's traces and is ready itself for summer's visitors. Officially, the Museum opened on May 1, thought the first school classroom tour actually arrived in February! *Norma Benson, Sharon Benson, Carol Strouse, Barbara Thomas, Arlete O'Connor, Gale Rowland, Helen Havemeister, and Bonita Strong* have signed on as docents for the school tours. Other springtime helpers have been *Richard Harbuck* and *John Stuart* who wrestled the storm windows into storage...and *John* continues on with the lawn clean-up. Do you have a "green thumb"? We need a volunteer to help plant a small vegetable garden? Can you help us?

Come wind, rain, snow, or shine, the Colony House Museum offers its visitors a tasty visual and informative

dose of 1930–1940's history, spotlighting the Great Depression through the World War II years and with focus on Palmer's Matanuska Valley Colony.

Summer hours remain Tuesday through Saturday (10A-4P) with special tour arrangements possible.

Admission is only \$2 for adults and \$1 for children under age 12—a bargain! *Our phone number is 907-745-1935.*

Coming Up: Colony House Museum's Open House during Palmer's Colony Days, on Saturday, June 14th! Won't you please help out by dropping off a plate of cookies or bars for our visitors? Give me a call to make arrangements. Helping hands are always appreciated at the Museum!

Submitted by Gerry Keeling

FINAL Edition Till Fall

Thank you to Chuck Logsdon, and members of the Palmer Historical Board of Directors for their photos and articles these past five months. Please consider writing an article for our fall newsletters, send a Tribute Recipe, photos, and of course we welcome your submissions to newsletter@palmerhistoricalsociety.org or to our mailbox: PHS, Post Office Box 1935, Palmer, AK 99645!

Mark Your Calendars

May 21st, 2008

Palmer Public Library Mtg Room

Gather at 7:00PM

Call to Order at 7:30PM

Program information on Page 4

As always, the public is cordially invited to attend, and refreshments, served by our Hospitality Committee, will be available during our evening. Come Join Us!

June 14th, 2008

Colony Days - Stop by the Museum!

July 27th, 2008

PHS Summer Picnic at Heaven Farm

Movie to Play at Colony Days

ALASKA FAR AWAY

The New Deal Pioneers
of the Matanuska Colony



PHS has learned that Juster-Hill will be in Alaska during the Colony Days for a showing of the *Alaska Far Away* movie.

While we have not received final confirmation—we are hoping that DVD's of the movie will soon be on their way too!



visit our website at www.palmerhistoricalsociety.org

Matanuska Maid Update

On April 22, members of both the Palmer Historical Society and the Palmer Museum of History and Arts testified to the Board of Agriculture and Agriculture requesting that those things associated with the now defunct Matanuska Maid dairy that are of historical and cultural significance be preserved and remain in Palmer.

As a result Chuck Logsdon and Ralph Hulbert along with long time Mat Maid creamery employee Ernie Knueppel were invited to take a look at some of the items stored at Mat Maid's Palmer facility. We were accompanied by Francie Havemeister, Director of the Division of Agriculture and Ray Nix State Ag Land/Asset Manager. The items we examined were those not already identified as having historical value. Much of what we looked at was used industrial equipment that over the years had been replaced. We did identify a couple of items that had potential value for collection purposes, including a large hand painted picture of a Holstein dairy cow done by local artist Rusty Dow, an old Pepsi soda pop bottle dispenser, and an old warehouse cart with steel/iron wheels.



The State has made it very clear that preservation of historic artifacts is a mandate and that as soon as the process is complete these items will be placed in the hands of a State curator. Both the Palmer Historical Society and the Palmer Museum of History and Arts are committed to seeing that as much of this collection as possible remains in Palmer.

Palmer Historical Society 2008 Calendar

January 16th.....*An Aerial Tour of the Matanuska Valley Fall 1939 – Part 2*,
Presentation by Ralph Hulbert

February 20th....*Presentation of Historic Film Footage by Kevin Tripp of the Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association*

March 19th.....*Presentation by Kenny Hughes Sr. about the Lazy Mountain Children's Home*

April 16th.....*Slide Show (PowerPoint) Presentation by Joe Lawton of his pilgrimage on the Camino to Santiago de Compostela, a walking journey across northwestern Spain*

May 21st.....**A History of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police presented by local historian Cliff Salisbury**

June 14th.....*Colony Days Open House at the Colony House Museum*

July 27th.....*Annual Palmer Historical Society Picnic*

Fall/Winter.....*Monthly programs—a work in progress. We're always looking for input on our monthly speakers. Have a suggestion? Would you like to speak on a topic? Contact us today!*

Annual PHS Picnic - July 27th

Just perfect for a Mat-Su Valley Sunday afternoon – a potluck picnic! Arrive anytime after noon and stay as long as you wish. PHS Members LeRoi and Margaret Heaven will host the picnic at their home.

Directions are: Turn off Parks Highway onto Fairview Loop Road. Watch for the Milepost marker for Mile 2 on Fairview Loop Road, and turn left onto Davis Road. Pass three houses on the left (you will be going downhill). Look for an opening in the trees...turn left there into an actual field. Drive through the field to their home and cabins!

Come discover all the comforts of an early Valley picnic! Members are to bring salads and desserts, as well as beverages for your own family. The Palmer Historical Society will provide burgers, dogs, buns and condiments, as well as eating utensils, plates and napkins!

There is potable water available on site, informal horseshoes (no pit), volleyball net will be set-up, cabins to tour and some benches and chairs.

Watch for our reminder postcard in July!

Did Palmer "race" by you?

Do you remember the car race in the streets of Palmer? Did you race in the event? Work the event? Do you have newspaper clippings, photos or film?

While I have enjoyed working with the Board of the PHS on the newsletter, I am interested in pursuing the history of motorsports across Alaska too! You may call me at 745-2013 or send me an e-mail with your recollection of the street race or other motorsport activities in the Mat-Valley and Alaska: newsletter@palmerhistoricalsociety.org should you be able to help record this history!

Cheryl Babbe



Board of Directors Serving PHS in 2008

President – Chuck Logsdon.....	745-2327
Vice President – John Stuart.....	745-3462
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Co-Secretary – JoAnn Utt	376-4938
Treasurer – David Mathews.....	745-7687
Program Chairman – Ralph Hulbert	745-4586
Colony Museum – Gerry Keeling.....	745-3703
Board Member Emeritus – Kay Love.....	745-3697

Pat Lawton's Rhubarb Pie

"This Rhubarb pie beats all others I've tasted! No sour bites nor sweet ones. Uniformity because it is sliced thin!"



Pat Lawton's Rhubarb Pie
3 cups thinly sliced Rhubarb
2 cups Sugar
2 Tbls. Corn Syrup—Karo (optional)
2 Tbls. minute Tapioca

1 recipe for Double Pie Crust

Combine 2 cups Rhubarb, 1 cup Sugar and Syrup. Bring slowly to a boil. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining 1 cup Sugar, 1 cup Rhubarb and Tapioca.

Mix well and pour into 9" Crust. Add top Crust that has slits or lattice Crust.

Bake at 425 degrees for 30 minutes.

Thanks to Sharon Benson for getting Pat's pie recipe for the newsletter... those who've stuck a fork in it know what I mean! - Ralph Hulbert

Willow Creek Mining District 1910 map by Dr. DH Sleem

At our May meeting, we should have the long awaited reprints of this delightful map, with a biography of Dr. Sleem and history of the map. For those who've missed the teaser updates at our meetings, this map came to PHS via Bill Pippel, who found it in the family home.

He'd never seen it before – none of us had. It came with a note from a Pat Williams in Seward, dated 1964, to Bob Pippel, suggesting the historical society might like it if he didn't. So, Tony Pippel and I went to visit Pat, charming, spry, and witty at 98, and learned the provenance of the map and

the related stories – fascinating, and included with the reprinted map.

This rare 3-color map covers the area between Knik and the gold mines in the Talkeetna Mountains. The geography is surprisingly accurate, given there were no surveys yet. The place names have changed over the past century, the roadhouses are long gone, but some of the mines and trails can still be found.

PHS and other local historical groups will offer these reprints, courtesy of Bob and Kay Pippel. Get your copy at the meeting for \$10. Check out our web page for mail requests.

Lawton "Takes Members on Trek"

April Meeting Wrap-Up by John Stuart

Does the rain in Spain really fall "mainly on the plain"?

Our most recent program didn't address that question, but those in attendance learned a lot of other interesting and sometimes odd details about a country that has a lot of history to offer.

Joe Lawton brought us along as he relived his trek on the Camino de Santiago. In spite of some technical gremlins that delayed his photo presentation, Mr. Lawton delivered an entertaining look at an adventure few of us would experience otherwise.

Hiking fifteen or more miles per day for

five weeks provided an up close and personal look at the country its people and fellow travelers. It became clear that some of the greatest rewards of the trip were the friendships made along the way. We look forward to hearing from Mr. Lawton again with his latest endeavor.

April's speaker is a wonderful example of the variety of subjects covered at the monthly programs. Do you have a presentation for us? Or perhaps a suggestion of someone we could contact? Ralph Hulbert is busy scheduling programs for the fall season; call him with your ideas today!

New Deal 75th Anniversary in 2008

The New Deal Diamond Anniversary is being celebrated this year, and we're recognizing the builders of the biggest Alaskan New Deal project, the Matanuska colony. For our May meeting, we'll pass out compiled lists of the 654 "transient" workers and administrators plus an introduction by Jim Fox, who supplied the list. With luck, we'll also have it posted to our web page by then.

This is a "work in progress". This list is not complete, and the stories are just starting to be told. It remains for our PHS membership to fill in the important details.

In response to our last newsletter, member Bernie Swoboda called with tales of Jonesie, the former transit worker who stayed to run a taxi service—if you run a taxi and play cards in a small town, there will be a few stories told. Bernie, a new deal worker himself in the program's later years (to be added to the list), mentioned "Gunnysack" Bill—he's up in Sutton, so we must talk to him. Does anybody know about Al King, the other taxi driver? We know Mac McCartney got hired to help build the water tower—a great story there too.

We hope to have a place on the web page where these stories can be posted. Keep in touch. Call a PHS Board Member if you have details to share, or email to info@palmerhistoricalsociety.org.

"...a wonderful example of the variety of subjects covered at the monthly programs. Do you have a presentation for us? Or perhaps a suggestion..."



The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Klondike Gold Rush

We are pleased to have local historian Cliff Salisbury as our guest speaker May 21 at the Palmer Library. Cliff first came to Palmer just out of high school in 1953 to work for the U.S. Army's Alaska Communication System repairing the phone system from Palmer to Eureka. After 6 months here where he stayed at the Hyland hotel, he was transferred to the railroad where he lived on the train for the winter in Girdwood and the rest of the time from College to Healy and Curry. After graduating from college he returned to Palmer with his wife in 1960 where he taught history for three years before heading out to see the world. He spent one year in New

Zealand and 13 years teaching history on US Air Force bases in Europe before returning to Palmer.

Cliff spent four years in Canada, and married a Canadian girl. His interest in Canada led to classes in Canadian history at UAA. Subsequent research on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) led to a paper on the Mounties, contrasting law enforcement on the US and Canadian sides of the border during the Klondike gold rush. This research will be the basis for his presentation.

Mark Your Calendars

June 14th - Colony Days
July 27th - Annual PHS Picnic
August - Historical Tour

Come Join Us and Become a Member of the Palmer Historical Society!

Mail in your payment with the following information today:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Membership Levels of the Palmer Historical Society:

- Regular - \$10yr
- Contributing - \$25yr
- Sustaining - \$100/yr
- Lifetime \$500

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Anchorage Daily Times, July 3, 1958

While remodeling our kitchen, we found this on a page of the newspaper found wadded up in the wall of our house.

Chuck Logsdon