

PALMER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PRESERVING OUR PAST, SHARING OUR STORIES & MAKING HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS
Official Publication of the Palmer Historical Society—Volume XXIV No.10—October 2009 Edition

PRESIDENT'S VIEW FROM FARM LOOP

The frost is on the pumpkin and vegetable harvest activities are about over. I don't know about everyone else but only the leeks and the brussel sprouts the moose didn't eat remain in my garden. Although there is still heat reaching us from the sun, the shorter days and profusion of falling leaves suggest that Fall will soon transition to Winter. Late Fall also means it is time for our annual meeting. As you may know the main business of the annual meeting is to elect the Board of Directors, but following that, Talis Colberg has graciously agreed to do a presentation on the life and times of

M. D. Snodgrass one of Palmer's most distinguished and important historical figures. We would like to encourage anyone interested in serving on the Board to contact me or any current board member. Of course, nominations can also be made from the floor at the meeting. The PHS Annual Meeting will be held Friday October 16th at the Palmer Library at 7:30 p.m. Please note that this meeting is on a Friday, not the usual Wednesday, to accommodate Dr. Colberg's schedule.

*Chuck Logsdon,
PHS President*

HISTORIC PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Thanks to Mary Ann Anderson for contributing this month's historic picture of the 1948 Horton Hotel fire in downtown Palmer. The picture was taken from in front of Central School. From the picture, it looks like the fire had the potential to take out much of Palmer's business district. Mrs. Horton was Governor Bill Egan's sister.

Do you remember the fire? Send your *recollections* to newsletter@palmerhistoricalsociety.org and we'll have it in next months' newsletter!

TOUR OF THE PALMER HISTORIC DISTRICT

On September 10th, members of the Mat-Su Historical Preservation Commission, the Palmer Historical Society, and the Palmer Museum of History and Art, toured Palmer's historic district with Brian Turner. Mr. Turner is Regional Attorney in the Western Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The National Trust is a 501c3 non-profit organization that provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting to our history and collectively shaping the future of America's stories. We were for-

tunate that Janet Kincaid was there and guided us through the "Dorm," even including the sub-basement. And DeLena Johnson described what it took to restore the Colony Recreation Center into quality commercial space.

A Palmer Historical District walking tour has potential for promoting Palmer as well as redevelopment plans for the old Matanuska Maid Co-op property.



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 Hulberts "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 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

SEASONAL FAVORITE RECIPE FROM LOUISE WALDAL



Have an abundance of this season's low bush cranberries? You'll want to give this recipe a try!

FRESH CRANBERRY SALAD

2 cups fresh cranberries, ground
 1 medium apple, unpeeled and cubed
 14 oz. crushed pineapple, drained
 ¾ cup sugar
 2 cup small marshmallows
 1 cup whipping cream
 ¼ cup finely chopped pecans or walnuts

Stir cranberries and apple together in bowl. Add pineapple, sugar, and marshmallows. Whip cream until stiff. Fold in cranberry mix and chill.

Thanks to *JoAnn Utt* for sharing Aunt Louise's recipe.

Louise Waldal arrived in Whittier Alaska from Brooklyn, New York in 1950. What a culture shock! A few years later she moved to Anchorage and then in the 1950's put her name in for a homestead at Angel Lake near Big Lake. She received title and homesteaded with only her faithful dog as her companion. She met and married Emil Waldal in 1958. She met Emil in 1957 the night that he went to see Harold Dunn at the Elks Purple Bubble Ball. For many years she worked at the Thrifty Variety. She and Emil are now retired and living at the Butte where they keep busy feeding the neighborhood birds.

PHS SPONSORED MOVIES IN THE NEWS



Nicolet College, Rhinelander, WI

As mentioned in our last Newsletter, both *Alaska Far Away—The New Deal Pioneers of the Matanuska Colony* and its predecessor *Where the Matanuska River Flows* continue to be shown both in Alaska and the Lower 48.

PHS sponsored and hosted two showings of *Alaska Far Away* at the State Fair. And for several nights last month *Where the Matanuska River Flows* was broadcast

throughout the State on television stations KTOO or 360 North.

Alaska Far Away, was also recently shown in Rhinelander, Wisconsin to a packed house. I was amused to see that the narrator for the latest Ken Burns documentary *The National Parks: America's Best Idea* is the same Peter Coyote who narrates our *Alaska Far Away* movie.

Chuck Logsdon

***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*

Colony Christmas - December 12th

COLONY HOUSE MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE

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

WRAP-UP OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

We were treated to an excellent presentation about the homesteaders of the North Palmer area at our September meeting. The centerpiece was a recently discovered surveyor's plat of Township 18 North that Vi Norbo brought to the picnic



last summer. The map was found by Vi's daughter Vivian Smith in a wall of the second homestead house built by her grandfather, Adam Werner.

This map is unique, as far as we know, because it has homesteader names and annotations added by what appear to be official surveyors. At the last meet-

ing, Ralph Hulbert led us through some of the interesting features of the map, including homesteader names and the road to Bugge's well. Like all similarly dated maps, this plat was done by federal surveyors between 1913 and 1916. Vi Norbo briefly summarized her father's life and homestead experience,

sprinkled with many wonderful glimpses of her family's life in the Valley.

We were also fortunate to have Vicki Pedersen in the audience, who shared some stories about how her grandfather, T. A. Smith, came to Palmer and became one of the homesteaders whose land encompassed much of what is now North

Palmer.

John Stuart finished the program with information he gleaned from the Federal Archives in Anchorage about how many of the homesteads on the 1916 plat were "proved up" and patented by 1921. John illustrated this process with a homestead application by Henry J. Golightly. Conditions for gaining a patent included that the land have no minerals or oil, no hot springs, that it was not occupied or used by Eskimos or Indians, and had not been reserved by the United States for fish or fisheries. A lively question and answer period followed this delightful tour of how the land in the North Palmer area came to be privately owned. Thanks to all of our presenters for a delightful program.

WE WERE COLONISTS AND WE STILL ARE!

When my wife Mary Ellen and I visited with Harry and Theodora Campbell in July 1988, Harry shared the following lines of poetry with us. They were from a story he was writing in verse. It was about his colony experiences, and to my knowledge it was never published.

Colonists Frank and Florence Hess from Cavour, Wisconsin, traveled to Alaska with three sons. The day they arrived in Seward, May 22, 1935, Robert turned 7 (the ship furnished a cake), Richard was 4-1/2, and Frank Junior was 1-1/2 years old.

Frank drew Tract 146 which was on Farm Loop Road, so we were assigned to Tent Camp Number 5. We lived there until early October when our house was complete enough to be occupied. Dad

also used his trumpet to play in the dance band along with Father Merrill Sulzman. In June 1936, a number of reasons compelled the family to leave the colony and return to Wisconsin.

Our visit to Palmer, in 1988, was a side trip after the Cruise Tour we had been on. We had contacted Wayne Bouwens before the cruise, so he volunteered to show us around for a day. I guess he was just warming up for the 20 years of service he contributed to the Palmer Historical Society.

When we returned to Palmer for the 60th Reunion, it was a great experience being able to meet other colonists, share pictures and tell stories.

In October 1936 our sister Delores was born. As she grew up, she considered herself a colonist just as we did. When the 65th Reunion rolled around I escorted her and her husband to the events. After the Reunion we went sightseeing up in Denali. On the way back to Anchorage, at her insistence, we had to make a swing back into Palmer to ring the ship's bell one more time



before flying home. That year Mary, the owner of our tract house, had set it up as a Bed and Breakfast, so we stayed there while we were at the reunion!

Richard Hess

Photo was taken July 4, 1935

Frank and Florence Hess and their children from Cavour, WI - Robert (7), Richard (4-1/2), and Frank Junior (1-1/2)

by Harry Campbell

And when the train had stopped at last
They had reached their destination
On the Last Frontier their eyes were cast
And they called for a Celebration.

Frank Hess got his trumpet out
And blew a bugle call
Then he played *Home Sweet Home*
His feelings shared by all.

MUSEUM CHATTER CORRECTION

The September Newsletter section, Chatter from the Colony House Museum, should have read as follows: In recent weeks, the CHM has had contact from the Englebretsen, Carter, Juvette, and Bisson families, all Colony participants, and from the Arthurdale, W. Virginia FDR New Deal community.

OCTOBER MEETING SHIFTS TO FRIDAY- PHS ELECTIONS & TALIS COLBERG ON THE EVENING'S AGENDA

As mentioned in our last Newsletter and on our <http://www.palmerhistorical-society.org> website, our Friday, October 16th, get-together will include the Palmer Historical Society's Annual Meeting where our main business will be to elect our new Board of Directors.

Current Board members are running for re-election with the exception of Ralph Hulbert. Ralph will continue as

a special research projects person for the PHS, but his Board position will need to be filled.

Any member can run for the Board and can be nominated at the meeting. If you are interested, please contact any current Board member. You will find contact phone numbers on the front page.

Following the election, Dr. Talis Colberg, local historian, former State At-

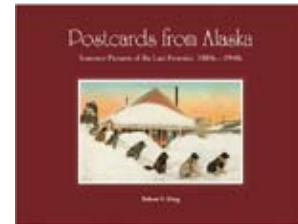
torney General, and current Borough Mayor, will make a presentation on the life of M. D. Snodgrass, who is one of the City of Palmer's founding fathers. Dr. Colberg's dissertation was entitled "M. D. Snodgrass and the Founding of the Alaska State Fair." This should be a very interesting presentation and one you won't want to miss.

NOVEMBER MEETING TO BE "PICTURE POSTCARD PERFECT"

Don't make us say it... "Wish you were here!" Do you remember sending postcards from your holiday travels and sending that sentiment to friends and family? Robert King, local co-author of *Postcards from Alaska: Souvenir Pictures of the Last Frontier* with will be our Wednesday, November 18th, meeting guest.

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.

Looking for Christmas presents? Our speaker will be bringing a few copies for purchase, and he'll autograph them for you too!



Please Note our PHS Meeting is on Friday this Month!
Palmer Library – Public Welcome!
PHS Annual Meeting
Friday, October 16th
Speaker Dr. Talis Colberg
Please note day change!
PHS November Meeting
Wednesday, November 18th
Author Robert King
PHS Colony Christmas
Saturday, December 12th

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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PO BOX 1935
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