



BARANOV QUARTERLY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY ♦ MARCH 2007

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Spring and Summer Programs at the Baranov Museum

Grass Basket Weaving: Dedicated volunteer, Hazel Jones continues a rich tradition at the Baranov Museum with her Spring Attu Grass Basket Weaving class. Hazel was a student of the late master weaver Anfesia Shapsnikoff who taught the first basket weaving workshop at the Baranov Museum over 40 years ago. The six week course is held on Tuesdays and Thursdays on the sunny front porch of the museum. If you are interested in signing up for future weaving classes, please call to pre-register.



Scrimshaw with Whalefest: Whalefest is a well anticipated Kodiak event and the Baranov Museum will again be hosting our popular Scrimshaw program for kids ages 7-11. Explore the museum's historic whaling photos, scrimshaw art and whaling artifacts! While listening to stories of salty whaling voyages, children will be inspired to create their own scrimshaw art on faux ivory medallions. Saturday, April 14 at 10am. Please pre-register as space is limited.



KACLAC After School Arts & Education Series:

This series of programs is a new and unique opportunity for young people, offering palced-based learning and the rich resources of the Baranov Museum. These programs are designed to make history fun, artistic and build a strong community relationship with our youth. This series includes four hands on art activities that help children explore themes relavent to Kodiak history. Contact Ani Thomas for descriptions of these programs and to schedule a date for your group.

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Museum Welcomes New Intern

On February 15, the Baranov Museum welcomed Tatiana (Tanya) Degai to Kodiak for a three-month internship. Tanya hails from Petropavlosk on the Kamchatka Peninsula, eastern Russia. Her internship is sponsored through a visitor exchange program with the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Department of Anthropology. Her time at the Baranov Museum is intended to help her develop practical museum skills she can take back to Russia and help the Museum advance projects that would otherwise be unachievable. At the Baranov Museum she will be working to create finding aids to materials in our research archives, digitizing historic photographs in our collections, and assisting with the production of interpretive labels for the gallery. On your next visit be sure to say Добро пожаловать (DO-bra pa-ZHA-la-vat) or "welcome" to Tanya!

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Like many folks in Kodiak, we at the Baranov Museum rejoiced when Dr. Lydia Black chose to retire on the island. And true to those initial expectations, rarely has a single individual made such an impact on our institution in such a short period of time. The Museum was truly enriched by Dr. Black - her public support, her donations to our collections, her willingness to help us evaluate and understand the greater narrative associated with our historic building. And then there were her popular lectures at the Museum. She spoke about the Alutiiq whalers of Little Afognak, and the decade-long journey toward the publication of her triumphant book *Russians in Alaska*. My personal favorite was her lecture on Chirikof Island during which she methodically defeated the persistent rumor that the 19th century settlement was a Russian American Company penal colony.

The Museum always felt so small when Lydia came for an evening's presentation. Chairs filled up early and latecomers had to squeeze in between exhibit cases and around the side in the Museum store area. Because of Lydia's talks, we learned how to prepare the Russian American room for a crowd of 90 - 100 people. There was never enough room, but despite the cramped conditions, no one ever left early. As Iver Malutin explained recently during a filmed interview at the Museum, "when Dr. Black talked - you listened."

We did indeed listen, and we learned. We took notes - lots of them, and tried to keep up with her razor-sharp wit. Following every visit, we felt so grateful to have in our community such a great scholar, and such a giving friend.

We are in the business of preserving stories here at the Baranov Musuem, and we will hold hers very dear.

Katie Oliver
Executive Director



Dr. Lydia Black evaluates pieces from the Russian glass collection at the Baranov Museum in the spring of 2006.

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OUR MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the Kodiak Historical Society is to collect, preserve, research and exhibit historically significant artifacts, documents, photographs and other data relative to the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands area; to evaluate and interpret the materials in the collections for educational purposes and presentation to the public; and to continue to develop and maintain a library of rare books about the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands area.

MUSEUM STAFF

Katie Oliver, Executive Director
Alice Ryser, Archivist
Ellen Lester, Curator of Collections
Ani Thomas, Education Coordinator
Nancy Pierce, Gallery & Gift Shop

MUSEUM HOURS

Summer Hours
Mon - Sat: 10 - 4, Sun: 12 - 4
Winter Hours
Tues - Sat: 10 - 3
Closed Sunday & Monday
Admission \$3.00

Have you visited the Baranov Museum lately? During the February museum closure, changes were made to the permanent exhibits. After a Museum Assessment Program evaluation in Collections Management, funded through the Alaska State Museum, the renovation process has begun in the Russian American Exhibit with changes in themes, cases and objects.

Themes in the main exhibit room, expressed in wall text and in cases, help to give the visitor a better picture of the history from Russian contact in Kodiak, through whaling during the American period. As part of the grant, Libby Eufemio is writing an exhibit label style manual for the Museum and working with us to create new labels for the gallery.



Libby Eufemio prepares new interpretive labels for the Baranov Museum gallery. Funding through the Alaska State Museum Grant-in-Aid program enabled the purchase of a new wide-format printer as well as label mounting materials and staff training in graphic design programs.

Exhibit case contents and arrangement have been reorganized to establish more cohesive themes. Cases begin with the Alutiiq culture at the time of Russian exploration, the Alutiiq maritime hunting of the sea otter for the Russian American Company, the Russian settlement and development with a focus on Russian Orthodoxy, through tools used during the Russian American Company and Alaska Commercial Company's era.

New objects have been exhibited and others, that have been on exhibit for years, have been stored for conservation and preservation - another recommendation from the Museum Assessment Program.

Most outstanding among the new pieces on exhibit is a full crown bentwood hat by artist Peter Lind, Sr. Carved from a single piece of wood, the hat is decorated with ochre paints, beads, ivory and sea lion whiskers. Lind describes the hat as both functional and spiritual. He explains, "Spiritually, the hat gives the hunter transcendental abilities of an animal. The hats were also used as masks to tell stories through dance. Different visor styles confirmed rank and status. Visor decoration showed the hunter's skill".

Purchase of the hat was made possible through the Arts Acquisition Initiative, funded by the Rasmuson Foundation and administered by Museums Alaska.

Thus you see the need to come visit the museum to see the many changes. During March through May is a great time to visit the museum before the seasonal and cruise ship visitors come during the summer months. Please let us know what you think of our improvements in telling Kodiak History. Volunteers are always welcome to help join in the ongoing process of interpreting objects that many Kodiak residents have lovingly shared with the public.



Closed Crown Bentwood Chiefs Hat by artist Peter Lind, Sr., now on exhibit at the Baranov Museum. Purchase of this hat was made possible through the Rasmuson Foundation's Art Acquisition Initiative.

Tool Time

Window Specialist Don Corwin from Skagway, Alaska, visited the Baranov Museum in mid-March to assess the condition of our wood windows. The windows on the historic Museum building feature a variety of styles and materials, predominantly from the late 19th and early 20th century. The conditions of the windows also vary with the east and west elevations of the building receiving the brunt of our maritime weather conditions. On the last afternoon of his visit, Don took the time to help us evaluate and interpret the Frederick Sargent collection of 19th century wooden planes and hand tools.



Capturing the Collections

Approximately six months ago, Curator Ellen Lester and Volunteer Evelyn Wiczinkas embarked on an ambitious project to capture a digital image of every object in our collections. The work is slow and steady, but the results are fantastic due in no small part to Evelyn's considerable skills as a photographer. A complete digital record will be a huge accomplishment in collections management and will enable us to share our many rare pieces via the Internet. Another example of how our volunteers contribute invaluable!

Clockwise from Left: Wooden berry picker made by Ole Erikson of Larsen Bay, 1940s, 91-1-1. 18th Century brass telescope with seal skin covering, 81-4-1. Capper & Cork Press, patented in 1898. Donated by Anna Blinn of the B&B Bar in 1967. 67-147-13-1

Spring and Summer Programs at the Baranov Museum

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Salmon Camp Presentation with the National Wildlife Refuge- The Baranov Museum is proud to be a participant in this award winning program. Kids can look forward to learning the island's salmon fishing history with fun new activities this summer. June/July (fish trap photo)

Sum'Arts program with the Kodiak Arts Council- Another fun opportunity! The Baranov Museum will again be offering an art activity for this summer program. Activity and date to be announced.

To learn more about these programs or to schedule a date for your group please contact Ani Thomas, Education Coordinator. programs@baranov.us . In addition to the above we are always happy to lead tours of the museum. There are many stories to tell...visit us often.



Coast Guard Support Center, 1983.
This photograph was taken from lower Government Hill looking at the gate area and beyond.



Coast Guard Support Center, 1983.
When I came to Kodiak for the first time in 1963, all there was for a terminal was a little building (center) shown in this photograph.



USCG Cutter Storis, 1983.
Built by the Toledo Shipbuilding Company in Toledo, Ohio, the Storis was launched March 28, 1942. In 1957, the Storis was the first vessel to transit the Northwest Passage and circumnavigate North America, in the company of Coast Guard Cutters Bramble and Star. The Storis was decommissioned in February 2007.

In our most recent newsletter I made mention of an album containing over 500 slides mostly of the US Coast Guard Base and a few slides of town taken in the early 1980's. These were donated by the U.S. Coast Guard Integrated Support Command out of Seattle Washington. We are so grateful and very appreciative of this donation.

We also have in our archives another folder of Kodiak Coast Guard slides which have been made into prints and put together in an album for public viewing. The following photographs are taken from these two collections.

No words that I could express would be adequate enough to convey our appreciation for the magnificent work carried on here in Kodiak and throughout our coastal waters by the United States Coast Guard.

- Alice Ryser, Archivist



Old Golden Anchor, 1983.



Marginal Pier
This pier has long since been abandoned but in 1983 it apparently was still somewhat in use. I understand that at least once a year during an 11.4 tide the water level would rise to cover the dock as shown in this photograph.

Fort Abercrombie

An Alaska State Historic Park, 186 acres, approximately 4 miles northeast of the City of Kodiak

Less than a handful of miles from Kodiak's St. Paul Harbor lies a shadowy forest with mossy carpets and tall spruce draped in velvety clumps of green. Quiet lakes, and meadows blooming with chocolate lilies and paintbrush and countless other flowers perched on cliffs diving fearlessly into the crashing sea below. This place is Ft Abercrombie, built during WWII to brace Kodiak against any attack by the Japanese. Among the mossy trails here are fading reminders of WWII scattered among the spruce. In 1941 President Roosevelt signed an executive order reserving 780 acres for a military post at Miller Point, a strategic location providing a vital link to military operations in the west. In 1942 Miller Point was renamed Ft. Abercrombie in honor of Lieutenant Colonel William Ralph Abercrombie. The fort became a State Park in 1969 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1970. In 1985 it was designated a National Historic Landmark.

The person behind the name, though well acquainted with Alaska, never actually made it to Kodiak. William R. Abercrombie was born at Fort Ridgely, Minnesota, August 17, 1857. Coming from a long line of military service, he continued the tradition joining the army at the age of 19. His grandfather Ralph Abercrombie fought for the English Army before settling in the United States. William's father, General John J. Abercrombie graduated from West Point Military Academy

References:
Alaska Department of Natural Resources, "Fort Abercrombie State Historic Park Management Plan." Adopted October, 2006.
Smith, Diana, 2007. "Colonel William R. Abercrombie", *Washington Biographies Project*.

in 1822 and served the army for the next 55 years before retiring in 1822. He won distinctions and honors in connection with service in the Indian wars, Seminole and Black Hawk wars, and the Mexican and Civil wars. Two of his sons would serve in the army and one in the navy.



Lieutenant William Abercrombie, 1880's.
Alaska State Library, ASL Portrait File
Collection, ASL-Abercrombie-WR-1

William was commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Second Infantry by General Grant in March 1877. In July of that year he came to the Pacific coast to take part in the Nez Perce war. He spent the next few years in Spokane, Bend and Coeur d' Alene areas. In 1884 he commanded his first expedition to Alaska, locating the Copper River delta.

"In 1889, William Abercrombie

commanded the Copper River exploration expedition operating from Port Valdez, Alaska. He discovered and located an all-American route from Port Valdez to the Tanana River, and the same year was appointed chief engineer of the department of Alaska and construction chief engineer of the department of Alaska and construction engineer of the trans-Alaskan military road.

In 1898, he commanded the Alaska exploration expedition No.2 in the Copper River region with a goal to discover and locate an all-American route from Prince William's Sound to the international boundary between Canada and the United States.

From 1899 until 1901 he was engaged as constructing engineer of the trans-Alaskan military road, from Valdez to the Yukon River, covering four hundred and eighty miles. All in all, he served in active military duty for thirty-three years, spending ten years, summer and winter, in tents" (WA Bios Project). Later he became connected with mining projects, having owned gold and silver bearing properties since 1884.

Throughout his life of adventures, Abercrombie had many varied interests which are reflected in the many associations he was involved in across the world. He belonged to the National Geographic Society, the Geographic Society of Philadelphia and the Explorers Club of New York, of which he is a charter member.

MEMBERSHIP

We would like to extend sincere thanks to all of our new and renewing members from December, January & February. Your continuing support is truly appreciated.

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To become a new or renewing member please call the Baranov Museum at 486-5920. If we have inadvertently left you, your spouse, or your business off the list, please call for corrections.

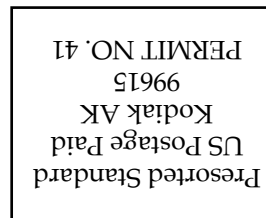
The Baranov Musuem is operated in partnership between the Kodiak Historical Society and the City of Kodiak. The Kodiak Hi Museum, Museums Alaska, the Rasmuson Foundation, and many private donors. We thank you all for your support!

The Kodiak Historical Society has been honored to receive many generous memorial gifts in honor of Elspeth "Betts" Johnson. Our thanks to...

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