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BARANOV QUARTERLY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY ♦ SUMMER 2007

Baidarka Conservation Funded

The Baranov Museum is pleased to announce receipt of a grant award from the Alaska State Museum in the amount of \$8,410 to fund a conservation effort on the 26-foot, three-hatch baidarka (*qayaq*) in our collections. The goals of the conservation effort are two-fold: install a new exhibit mount that more evenly and effectively distributes the baidarka's weight, and clean and stabilize the wood and skin components of the baidarka.



Three-hatch baidarka model donated by John Heath. A baidarka is a portable boat made of skins stretched over wood frames widely used by the Native peoples of coastal Alaska. The 26-foot, three-hatch baidarka in the collections of the Baranov Museum will be the focus of a conservation effort this fall.
Photo by Evelyn Wiszinckas

For this project, Objects Conservator Dana Senge of DKS Conservation Services, Seattle, WA, will spend two weeks at the Baranov Museum in November of 2007. Her scope of work will include a training program for the staff of local Kodiak museums in the care and cleaning of skin materials. The conservation of the baidarka will focus on the need for cleaning as dust and grit promote physical damage to the skin surface over time, basic stabilization to prevent further damage and the improvement of appearance to enhance visitor comprehension of the baidarka's original structure and technology.

continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE:

MUSEUM HAPPENINGS

Upcoming programs and how to be involved
- Page 1 & 4

MUSEUM ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

- Page 2

CURATOR'S CORNER

Gardening in Afognak Village
- Page 3

FROM THE ARCHIVES

A look at "Buskin Gardens"
- Page 5

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Where to grow potatoes
- Page 6

MEMBERSHIP & DONATIONS

Our thanks to all of our contributors
- Page 7

KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BARANOV MUSEUM
101 Marine Way
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Yes! I want to help preserve and share Kodiak history

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Please send a gift membership from me to: _____ at the \$_____ level

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My check made payable to the Baranov Museum is enclosed

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101 Marine Way, Kodiak AK 99615 (907) ♦ 486-5920 ♦ baranov@ak.net ♦ www.baranov.us

2008: Our Bicentennial Year

In the Baranov Museum archives, there is a copy of an extraordinary map. It is a plan of the community of Kodiak in 1808.¹ It features depth soundings for the harbor and carefully illustrated representations of nearly fifty buildings. The cartographer, Captain I. V. Vasil'ev, neatly identifies each building with a letter or number, and includes a corresponding legend explaining their use and function. The legend enables us to see the location of a Slavonic-Russian school, a hospital, a communal banya, a cattle yard, and, curiously, a "library

with a cellar underneath." Perched above present-day Pearson Cove is a battery with twelve cannon slots constructed by Captain Lisianski. But perhaps the most significant piece of information we can derive from this 1808 map is the identification of the Baranov Museum building, marked letter "z", and identified as a "newly built magazin." This is the earliest piece of evidence we have of the existence of the Baranov Museum building, known also as the Russian

continued on page 4



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Each quarter, we design our newsletter to make you aware of the programs and activities at the Museum, share insights into the many unique objects and artifacts in the collections, and publish rarely seen photos of old Kodiak. The newsletter is also an excellent way to share good news. We are pleased to announce that the Baranov Museum has been selected as one of 111 museums nationwide to participate in the Museum Assessment Program, sponsored by the American Association of Museums and the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The program is a two-year process of self-study, peer review and implementation. The Assessment process will review the museum's entire operation, including mission and planning, governance, administration, finance, collections stewardship, interpretation and presentation, marketing, public relations, membership, and community support. The Baranov Museum will use the assessment process to strengthen our operations, identify areas of need, build capacity and enhance communication with the communities we serve.

The Kodiak Historical Society has been collecting, preserving and sharing Kodiak history for 53 years. The work of tireless volunteers, the trust of Kodiak families in donating their objects and artifacts, and the generous, ongoing support from the community and the City of Kodiak have all contributed to our success as a dynamic history museum and center of learning. We see the Assessment process as an excellent opportunity to thoughtfully examine where we have come from, where we are now, and where we are headed as an institution. As always, we look forward to engaging our members in the process.

Katie Oliver
Executive Director



Proud Beginnings

It has been 50 years since the Historical Society opened the first museum in a WWII Quonset hut in downtown Kodiak. The three-place baidarka (see story p. 1 & 4) was a perfect fit for the long, narrow dimensions of the hut. We have come a long way!

Baranov Museum, Lola Harvey Collection, P-421-14

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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

MEMBERSHIP

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

SPONSORS

Susan Harvey Bonallo, Lu & Stefani Dochtermann, Dr. Bob & Marian Johnson, Leo & Beth Kouremetis, Pat & Frank Roppel, Lynda & Richard Ross, Spruce Island Charters-Herman Squartsoff, Hester H. Witcher

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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 Museum 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!

FROM THE GUEST BOOK...

What our Visitors are saying about the Baranov Museum:

"Very, very interesting. I am so happy to see our shared history." Petropavlosk, Russia

"It's great to be able to learn about my home history." Kodiak

"Excellent exhibits, you've really revived memories for me." Oregon

"What a phenomenal basket collection, unforgettable." England

"You more than met our expectations; I was amazed!" Homeschool educator, Kodiak

"Would love to spend 100 hours going through all the photo and history albums." New Zealand

"What an amazing place - filled with fascinating history!" California

"Weather very wet, Museum very good." Scotland

"A highlight of our trip." Ottawa, Canada

"I REALLY LOVE this place! I never knew so many interesting things happened here."
3rd grade student, Kodiak

Baidarka Conservation Funded

continued from page 1

Robert Banghart, Curator of Exhibitions at the Alaska State Museum in Juneau, Alaska, will also travel to Kodiak to direct the installation of the baidarka in a new exhibit mount in early December 2007. Banghart will design the new suspension system to use Mylar sleeves. The weight of the baidarka will be born by the largest and strongest framing members, and distributed at numerous points along the length of the boat. The suspension system is designed to support the frame in a manner that more closely replicates the compression for which it was originally designed. The exhibit mount will be visually discreet, and eliminate any undue strain on the frame.

The baidarka has been in its current suspension from the ceiling at the Baranov Museum since 1978. Museum staff recognize that this project presents a valuable research opportunity for all those interested in baidarka/kayak design and technology. Any persons interested in studying the baidarka, or observing or participating in the conservation effort are encouraged to contact the Baranov Museum. The project begins November 17, 2007 and continues to December 4, 2007.

About the Baidarka:

Existing records maintain that the Baranov Museum baidarka was constructed in the early 20th century, and used in sea otter hunting expeditions in southwest Alaska by the brothers Alexander Shaishnikoff and Alexai Yatchmenoff. Following the official closure of commercial sea otter hunting, the baidarka was put in storage at the Alaska Commercial Company warehouse in Unalaska. In 1956, Walter Dyakanoff, then Mayor of Unalaska and local agent for the Alaska Commercial Company, donated the vessel to the Kodiak and Aleutian Islands Historical Society and arranged for its transport to Kodiak.

Despite its association with the Eastern Aleutians, the baidarka is of classic Koniag (Kodiak Alutiiq/Sugpiaq) style, specifically in the form of the upturned, bifurcated bow and the absence of the distinctive Unangan-style stern. All joins were made by pegging, scarf joints, and lacing with sinew and two-ply cotton string. The frame is covered with seven sea lion skins sewn together with sinew. In addition to being one of the most prominent and studied pieces in the collections of the Baranov Museum, the baidarka is also one of the most unique and rare. According to David Zimmerly's database of arctic kayaks, it is one of only five Koniag three-hatch baidarkas of antiquity remaining in public collections, and one of only two in the western hemisphere.

2008: Our Bicentennial Year

continued from page 1

American Magazin or the Erskine House. It also confirms that we have one remarkable anniversary to celebrate next year.

Originally constructed as a warehouse to store the Russian-American Company's wealth of fur seal and sea otter furs, this building has also served as general store, Alaska Commercial Company Kodiak station headquarters, private residence, boarding house and home to the Baranov Museum. And now, a 200-year-old spruce log building in a wet, maritime climate highly conducive to rot! It is truly a triumph of preservation and a testament to good stewardship. Throughout the upcoming year we look forward to commemorating our history through exciting events and educational programming including a speaker's series, an illustrated history publication, an archaeological excavation, a new website, a poster design contest for kids, and much more. It's a great time to visit the Baranov Museum. And next time you stop by, be sure to ask to see that extraordinary map.

¹ The original map is in the collections of the Russian State Naval Archives, St. Petersburg. It was first published in English by Svetlana Fedorova, *The Russian Population in Alaska and California, Late 18th Century - 1867* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1973), p. 355. The Baranov Museum is grateful to Dr. Thomas Vaughn and Dr. Lydia Black for providing additional translation and interpretive details.

Ever since this collection came in from John Gibbons, via Gene and Phyllis Sundberg I have wanted to share it in one our newsletters. And what better time than this. A very special thanks to the Sundbergs, for passing on to us these great photographs.

- Alice Ryser, Archivist



Top: John Gibbons, left, and colleagues examine some of the vegetables produced at Buskin Garden. *Baranov Museum, John Gibbons Collection, P-488-7.*

Above: The Buskin Garden in 1944. This area is now the Bear Valley Golf Course. *Baranov Museum, John Gibbons Collection, P-488-6.*

The U.S. Army began planning an experimental farm on Kodiak Island in 1942. Located near the main Army post of Fort Greely, the farm was developed under the supervision of Major General Charles H. Corlett, post commander at the time, and Lt. Eugene Russell, a recent graduate of the Oregon State University School of Agriculture.

In the spring of 1943, Army servicemen prepared a 14-acre tract for planting. Although officially known as the Fort Greely Experimental Farm, the project was locally referred to as Buskin Garden due to its proximity to the upper side of Buskin Lake. John Gibbons recalls that one of the goals of the endeavor was to, "provide green stuff for the recovering G.I.'s from Attu." A variety of roots and vegetables were successfully cultivated, including onions, turnips, lettuce, radishes, Swiss chard, corn, peas, celery, parsnips, carrots, beans, cabbage, beets, rutabagas, rhubarb and potatoes. Strawberries and raspberries

flourished as did forage crops such as red clover and white clover, perennial rye grass, timothy, wheat and oats. The potatoes grown were smaller than expected but what they lacked in size, they more than made up for in quantity and quality. Planters at Buskin Garden encountered a challenge with which avid Kodiak gardener's are likely well acquainted - the volcanic ash deposit left by the 1912 eruption of Mt. Novarupta in the Katmai region. Deep plowing was necessary to uncover the pre-eruption soil.

Various types of fertilizers were used, including nitrate of soda, calcium and ammonium fertilizers, muraite of potash, fish meal and barnyard manure. As John Gibbons remembers, "We hauled tons of cow manure from Bell's Flat."

Potato Patch Lake

0.3 miles long, west of Shahafka Cove, 1.2 miles northeast of Kodiak

The land surrounding Potato Patch Lake near downtown Kodiak had long been utilized by Kodiak families as a spot for cultivating this Alaskan staple. Even in 1915, people could not remember a time when potato patches had not been an ingredient of the landscape there. Bringing in kelp to fertilize the crop was also a tradition that stood longer than memory could pin point. One long-time Kodiak family remembers their potato patches both in town and later at the lake.



Two men apply kelp to a potato garden at Potato Patch Lake, 1919. Ribbon kelp, *Alaria fistulosa*, has long been a popular fertilizer for potato and vegetable gardens on the island. Photo by Robert Griggs, National Geographic Society, Katmai Expedition Collection. Courtesy University of Alaska, Anchorage, Archives and Special Collections, UAA-HMC-0816-7-6018.

cellar was “where the road leads out to the Navy Base” (now the Coast Guard Base).

Neil remembers his mother generously giving potatoes and other produce to those families who came around and asked. “Some of them would bring grocery lists to our place.” he recalls with a chuckle. Neil’s father employed the Russian tradition of raised beds providing drainage and warmer soil, still considered essential in Kodiak today. He would rotate fertilizers. “He used kelp one year and manure from the cows the next.”

After the 1964 earthquake, Urban Renewal purchased the Sargent’s land for \$8000. Their house was bulldozed, and Neil’s family moved to the point near Potato Patch Lake just a mile east of town. They maintained a large garden at Potato Patch Lake and grew carrots, rutabaga, turnips and cabbages.

Picnic on the Green, Sunday August 5th

Bring your lawn chairs and come down to Sargent Park on Sunday, August 5th at 1pm for an old-fashioned community picnic! **Top Cover**, the Elmendorf Air Force Band of the Pacific’s seven-member ensemble will perform exciting renditions of all your favorite tunes from 12:30 - 2:30 pm. Their repertoire includes classic rock n’ roll, country, jazz fusion, and today’s top 40 hits.

There will be horseshoes and potato sack races for the kids (young and old). Kiwanis of Kodiak will be serving up hamburgers, hot dogs and drinks available for purchase. Join us for this fun community picnic on our beautiful downtown greenspace, Sargent Park, adjacent to the Baranov Museum.

Sponsored by the City of Kodiak, Parks and Recreation, and the Baranov Museum. For more information call 486-5920.



A baby girl was born in Karluk Village in 1851 to the Yeraloff family. Parascovia, whose father was employed by the Russian-American Company as an overseer, became a midwife in Afognak Village many years later. At the age of twenty, she married Maksim Gregorioff in Afognak Village. Maksim was one of five Gregorioff brothers that lived in the village.¹ How did Russians come to live and garden in the Native village of Afognak?

According to Robert Porter during the eleventh census of Alaska, the “Russian Town” settlement, *Rutkovsky*, was started in the early 19th century.² As the employees retired or became infirm and unable to work, the Russian-American Company needed settlements in Kodiak where the employees and their Alutiiq families could be self sufficient. Afognak Village was one such site selected in part because of conditions favorable for agriculture.

Soon after the treaty of cession was signed between the United States and Russia in 1867, U.S. Army serviceman Eli Lundy Huggins described Afognak Village as the “Creole Village”:

*Scattered irregularly for a mile and a half along the edge of this forest are the fifty or sixty houses which constitute the Creole village, or settlement. The dwellings are substantially built of hewed logs, as already described, each with its bath and other houses in the rear, and surrounded by kitchen gardens, a gentle south slope being, if possible, selected for the latter.*³

Seventeen years later when Sheldon Jackson, the General Agent for Education in Alaska, visited Afognak he described two villages which were known as Aleut Town and Russian Town:

*Nearby are the two villages of Afognak, with a population of 339. These reside in 32 good frame and log buildings, and cultivate 100 acres in potatoes and turnips.*⁴

One of Maksim and Parascovia’s daughter’s, Eulavia, married a Swede named Herman von Scheele, who came to Alaska to work in the Karluk canneries.⁵ Their daughter, Eunice von Scheele (Neseth), born in 1907, later became the curator of the Baranov Museum during the early days of the Kodiak Historical Society. Eunice collected and catalogued many objects representing everyday life in Afognak: banya tubs, wooden shoe lasts, fur



Left: Berry and potato masher hand-carved from a single piece of wood. Baranov Museum, Cecil Brown Collection, 84-35-1

Above: A potato digger used in family potato patches in Afognak Village in the early 20th century. The handle features a 26 inch wooden broom handle. Baranov Museum Collections, 85-19.



stretchers, a wooden butter form, and quart glass milk bottles. Pictured above is a handmade, wooden potato digger - a piece Eunice wisely believed merited curating for the museum.

Another unique household item pictured above is a wooden berry masher. The hand-written notes that accompanied this donation explain, “in Afognak Village this was Babushka Parascovia’s every handy masher for berries, etc. It was carved from one piece of wood.” The tool is from the Cecil Brown collection, but who is Cecil? Parascovia’s son, Fedot Gregorioff, had a daughter Marion who married Cecil Brown. Eunice’s brother, Robert, piloted the mail and freight boat, *Ruf Rider*, around Kodiak Island stopping at all the villages, twice a month with his trusty engineer, Cecil Brown.

Stop by the Baranov Museum to view these objects and many others reflecting the agricultural traditions of Afognak.

¹ Lola Harvey, *Derevonia's Daughters* (Kansas: Sunflower University Press, 1991), pp. 29-31.
² Robert P. Porter, “Report on Population and Resources of Alaska at the Eleventh Census” (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1886), p. 14.
³ Eli Lundy Huggins, *Kodiak and Afognak Life, 1868-1870* (Kingston, Ontario: The Limestone Press, 1981), p. 26.
⁴ Ivan Petroff, “Report on the Population, Industries and Resources of Alaska” (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1893), p. 37.
⁵ Harvey, p. 46.