



# BARANOV QUARTERLY

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY ♦ SUMMER 2008

## Archaeological research uncovers landscape features & rare artifacts

Ground-breaking of an inquisitive nature took place this summer with an archaeological excavation at the historic Baranov Museum. For eleven days in late June archaeologists and community volunteers explored and carefully excavated the historical resources on the grounds surrounding the Museum building. Following comprehensive research of the evolution of site use, Principal Investigator Dr. Mark Cassell of Territory Heritage Resource Consulting selected five sites around the property for excavation. The excavation units yielded landscape features, rare artifacts and much new information on how the property has been used over time.

On the first day of digging, Alutiiq Museum Curator Patrick Saltonstall, who directed volunteers through the Alutiiq's Community Archaeology program, announced a \$20 reward would go to the first person to find material with the Russian Imperial Crest – a double headed eagle frequently featured on Russian-American Company materials. A few hours later, student Karen Barnard unearthed a piece of ceramic marked with the distinctive emblem. It was perhaps an early clue as to how productive these excavations would prove to be. The following day, on the southwest side of the property, between the Baranov Museum and Center Avenue, the volunteers' trowels ran into solid wood planks. Working steadily, the excavators revealed nine square feet of a perfectly intact floor of an earlier Russian building on the site. A second early Russian building was uncovered nearby.

On the northeast side of the building, the team chose an excavation area designed to encompass both the inside and outside of the Erskine annex footprint. The annex, a large 19th century addition to the Baranov Museum building, was torn down in the years immediately following the 1912 eruption at Katmai. The weight of the ashfall had collapsed

*continues on page 6*

## Community Praznik - Sunday August 3rd

A milestone anniversary calls for a big celebration. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets and join us on Sunday, August 3rd for a good old-fashioned community Praznik\* on Sargent Park. Enjoy musical entertainment by local groups, as well as special guests Top Cover - a seven member ensemble from the Elmendorf Air Force Band of the Pacific. Kids young and old can enjoy potato sack races, face painting and the horsehoe toss. There will be fresh salmon on the grill thanks to donations from Western Alaska Seafoods and Alaska Pacific Seafoods. Look also for salmon piroshki made with Fields Wild Salmon and jam tarts made by the St. Herman's Sisterhood. Special thanks to our sponsors Horizon Lines, Twin Peaks Construction, CH2M Hill, and USKH.

\*Praznik [in Cyrillic Праздник] - is the Russian word for "holiday" or "festival" and is commonly used to refer to a public celebration.



*An excavation unit on the west side of the property revealed perfectly intact wood planking, believed to be the floor of an earlier building on the site. Photo Mark Cassell.*



*The Elmendorf Air Force Band of the Pacific is one of several groups performing at the Praznik.*

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

What a glorious summer it has been here at the Baranov Museum. New programs, old friends and lots of activities and good news to share. We have worked hard this year to provide many opportunities to get involved with the Museum and support the preservation efforts of our remarkable 200-year-old National Historic Landmark building. Looking for an easy and entertaining way to support the Museum?

- **Buy the Book.** The richly illustrated publication *A Legacy Built to Last* by local author Sue Jeffrey chronicles 200 years of Kodiak history. \$6 from the sale of every book directly funds the preservation work on the building at the center of the story, a worthy contribution indeed!
- **Drink Stout.** Kodiak Island Brewing Company has crafted the Baranov Bicentennial Russian Imperial Stout in honor of the 200th anniversary of the building. The stout is quite a tasty quaff, and a portion of all growler sales benefits our capital campaign. This is a brew you can feel good about buying.
- **Stop by the Annual Meeting.** Every October we get together with members to report on our accomplishments and share our plans for the future. This year our guest speaker Dr. Mark Cassell will present on the findings and results of the archaeological research on the Museum grounds. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, October 29.
- **Renew your membership.** Support from individuals is the keystone of our work. Making an annual contribution is perhaps the best way to ensure our programs continue throughout the extraordinary years and the years that follow. We appreciate all of the recent positive response to our membership request letters and hope you take advantage of your free admission privileges.

We are open every day this summer and look forward to seeing you and yours,

Katie Oliver, Executive Director



*Historic mill work specialist Don Corwin from Skagway, Alaska, examines the signature gable window on the Baranov Museum. A man of many talents, Don will also be on the salmon grill at our Praznik on Sunday, August 3rd. Stop by to say hello to Don!*

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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  
Hannah Johnson, Gallery & Gift Shop

### MUSEUM HOURS

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

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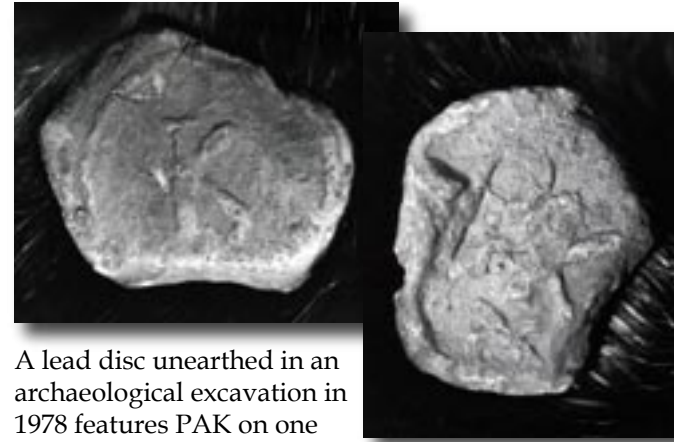


## Digging up the Past

An archaeology dig around the Baranov Museum? How intriguing. Although this summer there was a dig around the building as part of the bicentennial celebration of the historic Russian American *Magazin*, it was not the first excavation. In 1977 the Kodiak Community College sponsored a preliminary dig before the 1978 dig in preparation for the new foundation under the Erskine House. The most notable finds were a Russian lead seal, and a Russian axe head, both of which are exhibited in the main room, and Russian trade beads.

The Kodiak Community College Field School Excavation of the Baranov House was led by Linda Yarborough during July through August of 1977. The main objectives of the dig were to train archaeology students in methods and techniques and to educate the public about the role of archeology in planning construction work of any type on public lands. Although the stratigraphy was not clear as the Erskines had disturbed the dirt with a rock foundation work and gardens, the dig was successful in testing the site in preparation for the following year's official archeological dig.

In May of 1978 Dr. Ann Skinwin led the Anthropology project of the University of Alaska which made test pits around and under the building. As a fur warehouse in the Russian American period between 1808 to 1867, a major find was a coin shaped lead disc with the letters "PAK" in Russian letters on one side and a K on the other side for



A lead disc unearthed in an archaeological excavation in 1978 features PAK on one side (right) and K on the other (above).

Kodiak that were sent from Russia to mark pelts. PAK was the insignia for the Russian American Company. Russian colonial insignias like the Kodiak counter or bale seal were stamped on products, especially on bales of fur attached by wire or cordage, exported from the Northwest Coast. State Archaeologist Dave McMahan who discovered numerous lead seals at the Castle Hill excavations in Sitka and has published on the subject notes that the average bale seal is approximately the size of a US nickel, although somewhat thicker and considerably heavier.

Objects found in the bicentennial dig are currently being studied, documented and numbered in Anchorage by Mark Cassell of Territory Heritage Resource Consulting. An exhibition of artifacts is planned for 2009.

## Intern Elizabeth Manekin

The Baranov Museum is pleased to welcome Elizabeth Manekin as our summer intern. A graduate student at Brown University, she is here to work with both the Baranov and Alutiiq Museums thanks to the Alaska State Museum's pilot internship program, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. We sat down for a brief Q and A to help introduce her to our members and friends.

Q: Elizabeth, what made you interested in an internship in Kodiak?

A: I confess, choosing Kodiak was more serendipity than foresight on my part. When I applied for the Alaska State Museum work project this past fall, the program director presented the Kodiak museums as one of the most dynamic and professional of the six work sites; I didn't know ahead of time how wonderful everyone and everything would be.

Q: What are you studying at Brown?

A: I am in the public humanities program, which balances the theories and contents of humanities scholarship with the more practical - and the more public - issues of their application and interpretation. To study history is one thing, but how do we make it accessible to the public? In an exhibit? On a website? What story- whose story- are you telling? Who are you telling it to?



Q: What are your impressions of the Baranov Museum? What are you working on?

A: I've been very impressed with the knowledge and dedication of all those involved at the Baranov and for a small museum, it certainly holds a lot of history. My project will be helping with the collections plan, a document that will guide the museum's future collecting efforts. It will be a challenge, but I feel lucky to have such a wonderful staff to work with and such an interesting collection- and community- to research.

## Rasmuson Foundation supports Museum Capital Campaign

The Kodiak Historical Society is pleased to announce receipt of a grant award in the amount of \$123,000 from Alaska's Rasmuson Foundation. The Society was one of twenty-nine organizations statewide selected to receive financial support through the Foundation's Tier 2 program this July. "We are thrilled to include the Rasmuson Foundation as a funding partner in our Bicentennial Capital Campaign," said Society Director Katie Oliver. "Their investment brings us considerably closer to meeting our fundraising goals."

The Rasmuson Foundation grant will serve as matching funds to the federal *Save America's Treasures* award. The scope of preservation work to be completed on the National Historic Landmark building includes both interior work and exterior work. Interior work will include the installation of a fire suppression system and a new electrical system. The building will be completely rewired, receive new track lighting in the gallery and historic lighting fixtures appropriate to the period for which the building is significant. Exterior work is designed to protect the building and the Museum collections from water damage. Failing window units will be carefully removed, restored by a historic mill work specialist and re-installed to prevent any further water infiltration. The redwood siding, put up by the Alaska Commercial Company in the 1880s, will be stripped of its many layers of paint, repaired as needed, primed and repainted.

Support from individuals and local organizations is a critical indicator that organizations such as the Rasmuson Foundation look to when considering whether a community project merits their investment. Thank you to all of our donors who have helped ensure our success with this campaign!

## Capital Campaign Contributors

City of Kodiak, Rasmuson Foundation, Betts Johnson Memorial Fund, Kodiak CHARR

Valerie Bond, Pat Branson & Gordon Gould, Ian Bruce, Dan & Randy Busch, Glenn Davenport, Marcella Dillon, Wallace & Beth Fields, Jean Grenning, Karl Gurcke, Vern & Debra Hall, Margaret Hall, Bob Hatcher, Pat & Patty Holmes, Tim & Donna Hurley, Frances Iani, Wally Johnson, Nancy Kemp, Kodiak Island Brewing Company, Kodiak Island Medical Associates, Mary Monroe, John Miller, Evelyn Mortimer, Mildred Muller, Joanna O'Gorman, Reed & Marcia Oswalt, Marius & Sylvia Panzarella, Deedie Pearson, Paul & Marilyn Pedersen, Pete & Sally Ramaglia, Sue Ramaglia, Robert Reynolds, Saltonstall Family, Neil & June Sargent, Hester Whitcher.



## So Many Ways to Give...

- 11-year-old Joanna O'Gorman donated a portion of her cash winnings in the Bicentennial Poster Design Contest to the capital campaign, proving that you are never too young for community philanthropy. Thank you Joanna!
- Reed Oswalt has donated the use of his shop for our window restoration efforts. Donations of professional services, and use of equipment and space are all eligible as matching contributions to our *Save America's Treasures* grant. Thank you Reed!



- Ben Millstein of Kodiak Island Brewing Company has crafted a new beer in honor of our Bicentennial year. The Baranov Bicentennial Russian Imperial Stout has a deep black color and a strong complex flavor with hints of molasses and almonds. One dollar from the sale of each growler of Bicentennial stout will be donated to our capital campaign. Thank you Ben!

- Wally Johnson purchased thirty-five copies of our new publication *A Legacy Built to Last* by Sue Jeffrey as a gift to fellow Rotarians. Because a portion of all book sales benefit our capital campaign, Wally's gift will instill an appreciation of the significance of the Museum building and help to preserve it. Thank you Wally!



In May of this year I received a donation of thirty-two slides from Doug Marchand, who as a young man was employed at Bell's dairy from 1947 to 1948. The dairy was located at the head of Women's Bay, in the area that is now the Kodiak State Fair grounds. Doug's memories of the dairy include washing 100,000 milk bottles by hand and rounding up cattle at 2 o'clock in the morning in hip-deep snow. He recalls, "Our fresh water supply came from a wooden tank up on the hillside. The heater which kept the water from freezing malfunctioned, and the building and tank caught on fire, so we all became firefighters and saved our water supply."

Earl Bell told Doug Marchand of having been a traveling magazine salesman in depression days, and of having signed on with a fishing boat in Seattle, following the migration to Kodiak, then sending for his wife and starting the dairy. He would milk the cows and drive the cans of milk down the beach to a rock slide, then carry the cans over the rocks, where he had another vehicle which took the milk into Kodiak. When the Navy expropriated the property for the base, other citizens marched on Washington with complaints, but Bell wisely made a deal with the Navy to stay on his property, although surrounded by the Base, and supply milk to the Navy personnel.

Mr. Bell made a deal with the Navy for two large "reefers" - cold storage units - which he combined into one and converted into a very comfortable home for him and Mrs. Bell and, ultimately, three sons.

- Alice Ryser



Doug Marchand on horseback. This photo was taken in the area just beyond where the Rendezvous is now.



Above: Bell's Dairy and living quarters at Women's Bay, late 1940s.



Left: A metal plaque commemorating the life of Earl Bell, actual size approximately 16 inches in diameter. Baranov Museum collections.

Far left: Earl Bell, gassing up his automobile.



the annex roof and W.J. Erskine declared it damaged beyond repair. The team predicted that the soil layers in this unit would reveal the perimeter of the building, as the area outside the annex would hold the distinctive ash layer while the area where the building had stood would not hold a solid ash deposit (see photo at right). Here volunteers found numerous trade beads, ceramic shards, square nails and spikes, window glass, and many more remnants of 19th century life in Kodiak. After several days of working in the area, Dr. Don Clark came across a deposit of wood chips and fish bones and discovered pieces of woven spruce root amongst it. Working around the weaving he soon discovered that the fragments were part of a large, essentially intact Alutiiq spruce root basket. Margan Grover of Bold Peak Archaeological Services spent the next six hours carefully unearthing the rare find.

Over near the center of Sargent Park, another team of volunteers tackled an excavation unit adjacent to where the Frederick Sloane Sargent home once stood. Frederick Sargent arrived in Kodiak in April of 1868, employed by Hutchison, Kohl and Company (later the Alaska Commercial Company) to conduct an inventory of the Russian-American Company holdings in town. Sargent married Mary Larionoff and built his large home next door to the Baranov Museum building. Sargent's diaries, inventories, meteorological recordings and other written accounts provide valuable insight into life in Kodiak in the late 19th century. Neil Sargent and family members came down to share memories of their experiences on the property and in the home, which was razed in the years immediately following the 1964 earthquake and tsunami. This excavation unit revealed features and artifacts consistent with a homestead, including a proliferation of early 20th century children's toys.

The Baranov Museum Bicentennial Archaeology project has been a huge success. From its inception, the project has been intended to help understand past human land use at the Museum property from the most distant to the most recent human presence. The many artifacts recovered are a testament to our rich and varied shared past remaining literally in our backyard. It was thrilling to see the Russian-era floor, to unearth the perimeter of the annex, to witness the uncovering of Nellie Erskine's garden pathway border. Those who continued to dig until the final day were rewarded with the discovery of Kachemak-era cultural material, signifying that the use of this corner of Kodiak could extend over a millennia or more.

Learn more! Join us at the Kodiak Historical Society Annual Meeting on Wednesday, October 29th for a presentation and discussion with Dr. Cassell. The Baranov Museum Bicentennial Archaeology project is funded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and by the City of Kodiak through a National Park Service Historic Preservation Fund grant. Artifacts recovered will be accessioned into the permanent collections of the Baranov Museum.



Volunteers Myra Scholze (left), Libby Eufemio (at the screen) and Sarah Corbin take a pause from their work on a misty Kodiak day. All photos by Mark Cassell.



This excavation unit straddles the footprint of the annex building on the property. Note the distinctive 1912 ash layer in the left side of the unit, just beyond the perimeter of the building, and the absence of the ash layer in the area where the annex once stood.



The spruce root basket unearthed three feet down on the northeast side of the building. Note the ash layer in the upper right of the photo. Found amongst a deposit of fish bones and wood chips, the basket was largely intact.



# PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

July

Throughout July, we are pleased to offer activities in collaboration with the Kodiak Arts Council's Sum' Arts for Kids program:

**July 8, 2008 10am - 11am "Something Fishy"** Kids ages 8-10 can discover Kodiak's amazing salmon history while designing their own salmon can labels. From Yukala to gravlax, kids will hear stories of drying, salting, and canning salmon. Join us for a tasty piece of history and art. Pre-registration required. Location Kodiak High School art room. \$5 suggested donation.

**July 22, 2008 10am-11am "Thar She Blows!"** Discover the origins of scrimshaw! Kids 8-11 will listen to salty stories of Kodiak's whaling days as they etch their own whaling story on faux ivory medallions. Borrow traditional designs of whales and ships or make your own design. Come roll up your sleeves, matie! Pre-registration required. Location Kodiak High School art room. \$7 suggested donation.

**July 24, 2008 10am-11am "Russian Pysanki Eggs"** Explore the unique tradition of Pysanki egg decoration with this art activity and story. Ages 4 - 8 (Ages 4 & 5 with adult). Pre-registration required. Location KHS art room. \$5 suggested donation

Join us in August for more Bicentennial Year events:

**August 1, 2008 Open House 5pm-7pm First Friday Family Fun Night** A great opportunity for families to explore and enjoy the museum together. Free admission, children's activities and a new theme each month.

**August 3, 2008 Bicentennial Community Praznik** Join us for an afternoon of music, food, and fun on the green of Sargent Park as we celebrate the 200th year of Kodiak's Baranov Museum building.

August



KODIAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BARANOV MUSEUM

101 Marine Way

Kodiak, AK 99615

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## MEMBERSHIP

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

### SPONSORS

Dr. Donald Clark, Patrick & Zoya Saltonstall

### SUPPORTERS

Cecille Costello, Hazel Jones

### FAMILY & INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

Lance & Linda Bear, Meredith Bear, Wendy & Naomi Beck, Dr. Bob & Marian Johnson, Sam & Camilla Jordan, Suzanne Melvin, Chris & Betsey Myrick, Christina Nahorney, Mary Opp, Susan Payne & Don Dumm, Joanne Ray, Laura Slater & Mark Stichert, Barbara Spink, Gretchen & Chris Wing

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 Historical Society is funded in part by the City of Kodiak, Kodiak Island Borough, Alaska State Council on the Arts, Alaska State Museum, Museums Alaska, the Rasmuson Foundation, and many private donors. We thank you all for your support!



**Yes!** I want to help preserve and share Kodiak history

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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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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- Sponsor ..... \$ 100 - 249
- Patron ..... \$ 250 - 999
- Benefactor ..... \$ 1000+
- Family ..... \$ 25
- Individual ..... \$ 20
- Senior 65+ ..... \$ 15



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