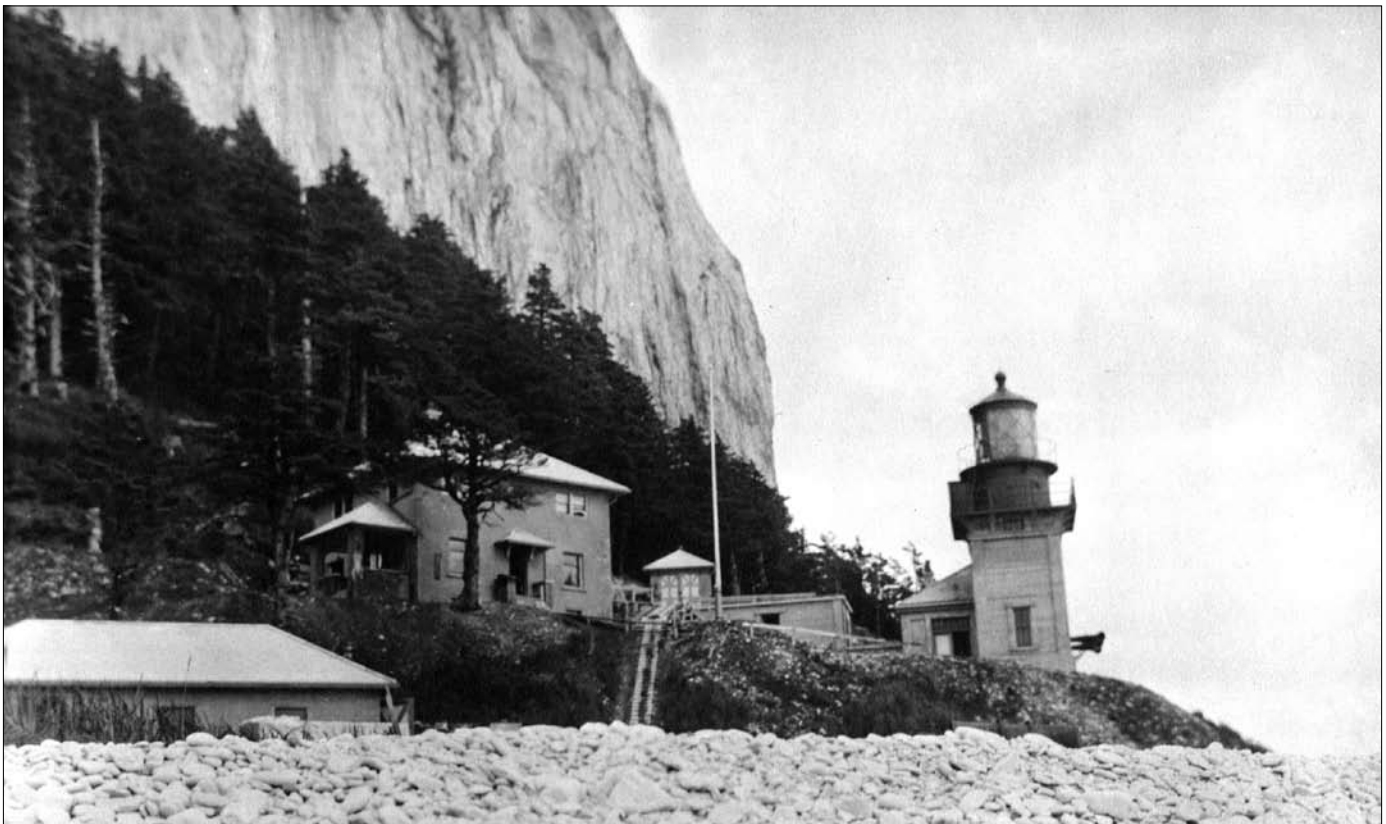


# MUSEUMS

## KETCHIKAN

NEWS FROM THE TONGASS HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND THE TOTEM HERITAGE CENTER  
OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2009

## Northern Lights



Cape St. Elias Light Station, 1918.

For more than 2,000 years, lighthouses have marked important approaches to land and warned mariners of rocks, shoals, and other hazards along the coastlines of the world. Even today, when instant, accurate position-finding is available to anyone with a \$100 GPS receiver, sailors, fishers, and recreational boaters find reassurance and comfort in the dependable beacon or fog signal of a familiar lighthouse.

The first lighthouse in Alaska was established in the early 1800s to mark the approach to New Archangel (now Sitka,) the capital of Russian America. Little is known about it, except that it was built on an island in Sitka Sound, and that it had ceased to exist by the 1830s. Later, the glass-enclosed cupola on the roof of the Russian governor's mansion on Sitka's Castle Hill functioned as a lighthouse, its light source consisting of an oil lamp and reflector.

When the United States purchased Alaska in 1867, there was little maritime commerce along the Inside Passage, and little demand for aids to navigation. As salmon canneries, mining, and tourism developed in Southeast over the next few decades, however, mariners and shipping companies pressured Congress to provide a system of buoys, lights, and fog signals for Alaska. The increase in shipping brought about by the Gold Rush finally tipped the balance, and in 1900, Congress authorized funds for construction of light stations in Alaska.

The first two Alaskan lighthouses, at Five Finger Islands and Sentinel Island, were lit in 1902, followed by Mary Island, Lincoln Rock, and Scotch Cap in 1903; Guard Islands, Tree Point, Fairway Island, Point Sherman, Point Retreat, and Cape Sarichef in 1904; and Eldred Rock in 1906. Several others were constructed later, bringing the total to 16.

*continued on next page*



Sentinel Island lighthouse, circa 1905. Winter and Pond photo.

### Northern Lights *(continued from page 1)*

All of Alaska's lighthouses are remote, some of them extremely so. At first, they were manned and maintained by the U.S. Lighthouse Service, a civilian government agency. Wives and families often lived at the stations with their lighthouse keeper husbands. In 1939, however, the Coast Guard took over the Lighthouse Service, and lighthouse duty became a strictly men-only assignment.

Over the years, nearly all of the Alaska lighthouses were rebuilt, and a few were reduced to minor lights. By the 1960s, improvements in navigation systems, such as LORAN, radar, etc., coupled with the ever-increasing cost of maintaining and manning remote light stations, led the Coast Guard to institute a nationwide program of automating its

## Mr. Lighthouse

For the last 25 or 30 years, if there was a question about Alaska lighthouses, the go-to guy was M. Joseph Leahy.

Joe came to Alaska in 1976 as a chief journalist in the Coast Guard. A history buff with a fascination for lighthouses, he was instrumental in the placement of lighthouse lenses in nearby museums when light stations around the state were being automated. After his discharge, he worked as the director of the Juneau Mining Museum, then as the director of the Juneau Centennial Museum. In 1985 he became executive director of the Valdez Museum and Historical Archive, and still later the development director for the Hoonah Heritage Foundation's proposed heritage center and museum.

Over the years, Joe amassed an impressive collection of photographs and documents relating to the operations of the Coast Guard and its predecessor organizations in Alaska. Most of the material pertains to lighthouses.

Joe Leahy died in Valdez on December 6, 2008. A few weeks before, he donated his research collections to the Ketchikan Museums. That gift was the inspiration for the *Northern Lights* exhibit.

lighthouses. Sentinel Island was the first Alaska lighthouse to be "unmanned," in 1966; Five Fingers was the last, in 1984.

A photographic history of Alaska's lighthouses, including more than 100 images from 1903 to the present, is the subject of the fall exhibit at the Tongass Historical Museum. *Northern Lights: Lighthouses of Alaska*, will be on view through November 15. Don't miss this "illuminating" show!

## Native Arts Studies Program Continues this Fall at THC

The 2009 - 2010 series of Northwest Coast Native Arts Studies classes is currently underway at the Totem Heritage Center and registration is open.

Haida carver **Donald Varnell** will teach **Intermediate Northwest Coast Masks Carving**, October 12 – 21. Students will be instructed on how to design a mask and transfer the design to a red cedar block for carving. Through step-by-step guidance, students will learn the techniques used in carving a three-dimensional Northwest Coast-style mask.

An intensive **Intermediate and Advanced Cedar Bark Weaving** class with **Holly Churchill** will be held October 12 – 24. Students will focus on oval and false embroidery baskets while touching on other basketry techniques and styles. Students with unfinished projects are strongly encouraged to participate to finish old projects while gaining skills in new techniques.

Tlingit artist **Fred Trout** will teach a special **Introduction to Northwest Coast Design & Carving** class, October 26 – November 7. Students will examine the basics of Northwest Coast design, replicate a design using the correct elements

and forms, and create, transfer and carve a design on a dance paddle or small panel. This class is a prerequisite for students pursuing a Certificate of Merit in any course of study.

**Cedar Bark Weaving**, taught by Haida weaver **Diane Douglas-Willard**, is scheduled for November 9 – 20. Open to weavers of all levels - beginning weavers are highly encouraged - this class will focus on the basic techniques of cedar bark twine basketry as students complete a rattle-top or clam basket.

For a full list of courses, dates and times, or to register, please contact the Totem Heritage Center at 225-5900 or visit the Ketchikan Museums at [www.ketchikanmuseums.org](http://www.ketchikanmuseums.org).

Fred Trout instructs Claudia Seaver on her design transfer in the 2006 design class.



# A Main Attraction

330 Main Street has long been a notable Ketchikan address. Associated with the Church of Christ, Scientist for 75 years, the property has roots in the community stretching back to 1902, when a two-story house was built on the site for Charles Guzman, an employee of the J. R. Heckman Company. Dr. J. L. Meyers occupied the structure after Guzman, using it as a residence as well as an office for his medical practice.



Main Street, 1909. In the foreground, 330 Main Street with Dr. J.L. Meyers and family on the porch. Donor, Forest J. Hunt, THS 62.4.3.40.

In 1913 Ray G. Hall and his family took ownership of the house and lived there until 1926. Chris Sorenson then purchased the site, later selling it to the Christian Science Church.

Christian Science was introduced into Ketchikan in 1905. At first, services were held intermittently in a building on Mission Street. From 1908 to 1915, the “Christian Science Hall” was located in a Front Street building owned by Charles Deppe, where City Hall stands today. Around 1933, after holding services for several years in various lodge buildings around town, the congregation purchased the the old Guzman house at 330 Main Street. The first floor was remodeled to include a reading room and a hall for services.

In 1945, the congregation arranged with McGillvray Brothers contractors to demolish the old building and erect a new church - the building we see today. It was completed in 1946 at a cost of about \$25,000.

In 2005, with a smaller assembly and ongoing building maintenance issues, the congregation elected to place the property up for sale. The Ketchikan Area Arts & Humanities Council, having occupied various facilities, including part of the Improved Order of Red Men building on Main Street and a space on Totem Way, purchased and remodeled the building as a permanent home for their organization. As a subtle nod to the building’s history, the Arts Council has maintained several architectural features of the former church.

Pleased to see new life breathed into their long-time home at 330 Main Street, the members of Ketchikan’s Christian Science congregation continue to hold services every Sunday at a private residence.



Left: The Arts Council’s newly remodeled home, 2009. Photo by Richard Van Cleave.

# Off the Wall

Artworks of all kinds will fill the exhibit gallery at the Tongass Historical Museum in early December, when the Museum’s winter show, *Off the Wall: Ketchikan Art from Private Collections*, opens for a two-month run. Art collectors and just plain folks (the rest of us) will be lending favorite pieces from their homes and offices for the exhibit, giving the community an opportunity to view a wide variety of rarely seen, Ketchikan-related art. *Off the Wall* will open on December 4<sup>th</sup> and run through January 31<sup>st</sup>.

Please let us know by November 2<sup>nd</sup> if you have art you would like to lend for *Off the Wall*. High quality artworks in any medium, created by a Ketchikan artist (past or present) or relating to Ketchikan, will be considered for inclusion in the show. Contact the Museum staff at 225-5900 or send an email to [museum@city.ketchikan.ak.us](mailto:museum@city.ketchikan.ak.us).

## Lighthouse Friends

The first thing most Museum visitors notice when they visit the Museum’s fall exhibit, *Northern Lights*, will be the oversize, recent color photos of Alaskan lighthouses. They add a dramatic dimension to the scores of historical images that make up the bulk of the exhibit. The color images were graciously provided for use in the show by Kraig Anderson, one of the three photographers and “Lighthouse Friends” who maintain the excellent website, **Lighthousefriends.com**. The website features spectacular photographs of Alaskan lighthouses (and many others,) along with well-presented historical information. Prints of many of the website’s images can be ordered online.

**Tongass Historical Museum**

629 Dock Street  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
(907) 225-5600

**Winter Hours**

October through April  
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM Wednesday - Friday  
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM Saturday  
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM Sunday



**Totem Heritage Center**

601 Deermount Avenue  
Mailing Address: 629 Dock Street  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
(907) 225-5900

**Winter Hours**

October through April  
1:00 PM - 5:00 PM Monday - Friday

**City of Ketchikan  
Museum Department Staff**

www.ketchikanmuseums.org  
email: museum@city.ketchikan.ak.us

- Museum Director . . . . . Michael Naab
- Sr. Curator of Programs . . . . . Chris Hanson
- Sr. Curator of Collections . . . Richard H. Van Cleave
- Administrative Secretary . . . . . Karla Sunderland
- Registrar . . . . . Erika Brown
- Program Coordinator . . . . . Lacey Gilbo
- Program Assistant . . . . . Aaron Burns
- Museum Attendant . . . . . Regina Foreman

Ketchikan Museums newsletter is published four times a year by the City of Ketchikan Museum Department.

*Photo at right: Charles Shepardson, Barney Larker, and Oscar Lindberg, lighthouse keepers of Scotch Cap and Cape Sarichef light stations during the 1920s and 1930s. M. Joseph Leaby Collection.*



**Ketchikan Museums**  
Tongass Historical Museum  
Totem Heritage Center  
629 Dock Street  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Ketchikan, Alaska  
Permit No. 95

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

# Ketchikan Museums Calendar

**Tongass Historical Museum**

**Northern Lights**

**Lighthouses of Alaska**

October 16 - November 15, 2009  
Opening Reception: October 16<sup>th</sup>, 5 - 7 PM



**Off the Wall**

**Ketchikan Art from Private Collections**

December 4, 2009 - January 31, 2010  
Submission Deadline: November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 5 PM  
Opening Reception: December 4<sup>th</sup>, 5 - 7 PM

**Special Programs**

**Northern Lights  
Educational and Special Tours**

For Reservations call 225-5900

**Movie Night at the Museum:  
"Legendary Lighthouses of Alaska"**

Thursday, October 22; 7:00 PM

**FUNDAY at the Museum**

Saturday, November 7; 10 AM - 2 PM

**Collaboration/Innovation:  
Donald Varnell & Ray Troll**

Friday, December 11; 7:00 PM  
Southeast Alaska Discovery Center

**Totem Heritage Center**

**Intermediate Northwest Coast  
Carving: Masks**

Donald Varnell, Instructor  
October 12 - 21, 2009

**Intermediate & Advanced Cedar  
Bark Weaving**

Holly Churchill, Instructor  
October 12 - 24, 2009

**Intro to NWC Design & Carving**

Fred Trout, Instructor  
Oct. 26 - Nov. 7, 2009

**Cedar Bark Weaving**

Diane Douglas-Willard, Instructor  
November 9 - 20, 2009