

## ALASKA COLLECTION SUMMIT BACKGROUND

On August 29, the Anchorage Public Library held a summit on the future of the Library's Alaska Collection that was attended by 40 local historians, journalists, educators, staff of partner institutions, and APL staff. The group spent a half day exploring how APL can continue to have a strong Alaska Collection that serves the needs of the community, given the Library's limited resources.

## SUMMIT GOALS

- Establish dialog between Library and stakeholders on issues around the Alaska Collection—provide an opportunity for each to explain their needs and hopes for the future of the Collection.
- Begin to shape the future focus of the Alaska Collection—with limited resources, how can the Library manage the Alaska Collection to most effectively meet community needs?
- As all of our institutions face cuts, how can we collaborate better to serve community need?

To gather feedback on the aspects of the collection that are most important to stakeholders and generate new ideas for how to approach the collection, break-out groups were held around the themes of:

- Collection Development
- Staffing Models
- Diversity of the Collection
- Programs and Hands-On
- Digitization

Additionally, a rendering of a potential new Alaska Room in the main building was presented for feedback. The combined feedback on each topic, as well as other comments, are presented in this document.

## NEXT STEPS

The Library's internal Alaska Collection planning committee will spend winter 2018-19 reviewing this data, conducting additional research, and continuing conversations with stakeholders. This process will lead to a new collection development plan and operational plan for the Alaska Collection that will lay out how the Library can best meet the needs of the community within its existing capacity. In the meantime, the Library will focus on these immediate actions:

- Reopen the Ann Stevens Room to have a place for quiet study (completed Sept. 2018).
- Establish regular meetings with institutions that hold large collections of Alaska/Anchorage materials to determine areas for collaboration.
- Move the materials in the Alaska Collection from the temporary location to the NE corner of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the main building, to bring it closer to reference desk and make it easier to access (by June 2019).
- Increase training on the Alaska Collection for all reference staff.

## NOTES FROM BREAK-OUT GROUPS

### 1. COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

#### What is needed:

- Broaden the scope of what AK Coll. is – Alaskana, not just AK history
- Digitized materials that exist elsewhere (X 2)
- More info about newer immigrant groups in ANC (X 3)
  - Also affinity groups in the community
- Unwritten history of indigenous people and related government actions
- Lack of curriculum of indigenous people
- Repository of student interviews from communities (and standards for such material)
  - Transcripts of interviews (AK Humanities Forum has these? AK History Day)
- Lack of secondary sources
- Historic photographs
- What ephemera exists & how to get a hold of it
- Collaboration between MOA Records Manager & the library
  - Municipal records - MOA publications w/access (print or digital – early and current)
  - Legislation/codes – city send copies to the library (use as leverage for funding)
- List of items lost and a plan/plea/vehicle for replacement perhaps from personal collections (X 2)

#### Related challenges:

- Duplicate records in the catalog make it difficult to locate and access academic collection
  - Can't find or difficult to find specific material at LL
- Items need to be cataloged (NIC)
- Need training/in-service for staff – Lack of expertise w/archival sources, artifacts (X 4)
- Collaboration w/ local archives, libraries, and organizations - Archives/resources are scattered
- Need a directory of all AK related material – “dream catalog,” “uber-catalog,” or “Asset Map” - Where and What things exist – will help determine gaps. Needs to be user friendly and complete. (X 4)
- A disaster plan (water damage) for timely action going forward
- Economic development to support these efforts

## 2. STAFFING MODELS

### New models:

- Consider making a AK collection duties included in all job descriptions
- Office hours for AK Experts or appointment services
- Hire a grant funded historian to build the collection, publicize and provide programs
- Interns or university fellows for practicums for AK History or related subjects
- Bring back specialist in AK history collection
- Dedicated AK volunteers, including retired, AK librarians and specialists
- Hire an archivist
  - Original cataloging
  - Selecting
  - Creating finding aids
  - Digitization
- Existing APL adult services staff: 5 full time, 1 vacant, 5 para, 1 support, 4 part time
- AK Librarian that is shared with the state through in person virtual services utilizing a grant, such as an interlibrary cooperation grant through the state library

### Improving existing model:

- Require staff to take a course in AK history
- Provide continuing education in archives classes
- Have defined hours with scheduled hours
- Dedicate time to staff training and sustainability
- Publicize AK Collection resources
- Continuing education specific to AK collection
- Supply both assistance and security staff
- Do morale boosting for staff
- Dedicated marketing – AK Collection orientation
- Video and audio experts with online tutorials and webinars, as well as audio tour

### Needs to consider:

- Journalists require timely assistance
- Outside AK Room collection will need increased security which will cost more for security services
- Librarian Computer help on AK collection and reference
- Set professional boundaries

### 3. DIVERSITY IN THE COLLECTION

#### Program/Service ideas:

- Oral history, video/audio mgmt. require different technology
- Host events with specific groups i.e. Hmong elders and record for future
- Celebrate AK Native cultures as alive and part of the collection – create social media base
- Create a play from a document
- Host speech competition based on original speeches
- Exhibits as a way to explain history i.e. Hmong weaving (2)
- Schools are diverse – work with them to use AK history for research to connect w/kids
- Library go out and collect stories in the community
- Exchange free room rentals, etc. to groups that bring diverse programs

#### Cultural Appropriateness

- Legalities of AK Native oral history – needs to be fleshed out respectfully
- Funding for programs vs. oral history
- Some communities don't want to share
- Outreach is necessary and be welcoming (i.e. Jewish Museum) (2)
- Get a good librarian who can find ways to connect with community

#### Collaboration

- Collaborate with ASD Title 6
- Partner with AK Native Heritage Center
- Collaboration with other libraries, state agencies - add collection records i.e. Alaska Native heritage
- Collaboration with Alaska Natives, storytelling interaction to get unwritten info and stories of people in villages – we could learn more from others (2)
- UAF digital collection, AK, Native College collection
- Connect with community councils
- Create task force – meet once a year
- Determine basis for what could/should be shared
- Seek grants for corporate records

#### Clearinghouse

- All libraries should know what each is collecting to make sure not to duplicate
- Learn about different libraries and why they aren't advertising what they have
- Make sure not to overlap with other institutions/projects – no one can do it all
- Different spots people could go to w/ AK Native history
- Directory of AK Native collections and collections in general
- Website that describes collections all over (2)
- Let people know where to find village celebrations

- Provide training to staff on other collections and how to access/refer
- Look at existing strengths/weaknesses

#### Logistics

- Gray papers/unwritten histories - hard to collect except digital
- Be a conduit, not physical holder
- How to organize ethnic and special groups w/ rich resources. Space and staff should be considered and how to organize
- Could be time-consuming
- Have a tightly-honed collection development policy
- There is a lot in archives, just not \$ to organize/promote
- Need boundaries; not an 'archive rescuer'

#### 4. PROGRAMS AND HANDS-ON

##### Collaboration with partners:

- Strengthen ties with ASD and the Native Community regarding Alaska Native History (i.e. College Gate Yup'ik program)
- Partnerships with other historical societies and researchers who give presentations
- Partnerships with Museum, Universities
- Integration with ASD--AK Studies program, displays of finished projects, coordinate w/school librarians
- Pay attention to special events/anniversaries specific to the Collection (AK Museum, Heritage Center, etc.) (2)
- Collaborate with other groups to highlight specific parts of the collection for events/programs
- Quarterly meetings with key stakeholders

##### Specific program ideas:

- Elder coffee times (telling stories)
- Artistic interactive activities to make community engaging
- Genealogy
- Teens/youth programs: mock newspapers, etc.
- Programs about neighborhoods and communities
- Music and dance-Native dance
- Tours/programs for educators
- Multicultural Night
- First Friday events, Harry Potter, Holiday events, highlighting the history (Elizabeth Perotovich Day, AK State Fair, Pioneer day, AFN, etc.)
- Author events featuring their work
- Scavenger hunts, adults included
- AK Native leadership events (Willie Hensley), lecture series, discussion series
- Guest lecture series-Cook Inlet Historical Society, lectures by people who have researched using collection coordination between lectures and materials.
- Alaska History—AK Humanities Forum. Display objects before Assembly, movies, power point displays, historical displays (2)
- How to research (w/ASD school librarians)

##### Displays:

- Static displays of Collection and displays from other groups (i.e. model trains) (2)
- Highlight collections at entrance
- Virtual reality (goggles), in and out of space
- Rap contests, etc.
- Have “lively” research area as well as activities
- Social Media-featuring rare books, etc.

- Exhibitions, interactive screens, listening to storytelling (Elders)
- Graphic designs, memes

**Marketing:**

- Prominent place of its own
- Natural Place for events—accessible parking
- Emphasis on doing importance of an outreach program, specifically during budget cuts—vital not an optional part of the collection
- National events—partnerships bringing to community level. News events.
- AK collection better represented in catalog or App
- Highlight AK Collection in newsletter
- Donor outreach
- Website social media highlights—“Did you know we have...”

## 5. DIGITIZATION

### Big Ideas

- In the world of digitization, what is the point of a library?
- Many ways to go wrong.
- BHAG – Digitize in next 10 years or not relevant
- Is instant access an admirable goal?
- How to fund? (5) Who funds? How to maintain free access? Fees for certain content? (3)
- Be realistic about barriers
- Share Resources with other institutions - need an interface for sharing and a fund stream, need a central entity to host and maintain (3). Include ARLIS, regional organizations w/ AK Native resources
- Creating access for rural Alaska
- Very good catalog of all Alaska Collections - UAF AK Native Knowledge Network
- Maybe an online chat system to consult an expert who covers multiple collections/Institutions
- Form a committee to work on this

### Specific things to digitize:

- Need priorities (4)
  - Rareness of item
  - State condition of item, fragility - save damaged item
  - Most commonly used/frequently handled reports, books
  - And expert input on priorities and state of collection
- Newspaper columns 50s-70s
- Need AI Index Content
- Anchorage Times - Atwood Foundation
- City minutes
- Gray literature: Local Government Docs, Studies, *EnmS* Statutes
- Newspapers – UAA
- Digitize microfilm
- Legacy Records
- Recording/oral histories
- Website for different organizations to host their documents and meeting minutes/personal papers

### Specifics on digitization process:

- Lack of an expert on collection a problem
- Codify best practices
- Tap into existing knowledge to avoid mistakes - what is the rest of the world “doing?”
- List of technologies needed
- Cataloging, Uber Index, crowdsource for indexing, website, searchable database (6)



- Make information to rural Alaska - Digitized item available on websites (2)
- What to do with original after digitized? (2) Hard copies/originals can be easier to read
- Digitizing level? – OCR??
- Need to establish partners, with *solula, and proféal*
- AI is fine but knowledgeable librarian
- Must be kept together
- Master Files of Digitization
- Must beta test w/all users
- Maintenance of Digital Collection
- ID Unique Items: capture AK Websites so collection not accessible for random users
- Google Books is great
- A wall- living donors explain importance of items that the institution digitized

## 6. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE IN A NEW ALASKA ROOM?

- Security for materials
- Disaster plan
- Dedicated staff librarian/archivist
- Quiet
- Scanner/copier/carrels with computer access
- Storage and display areas that have conservation/archive standards
- Prominent location
- Group meeting area
- Space for events that celebrate Alaska

## 7. OTHER IDEAS

(from idea parking lot and table notes from lunch discussions)

- Distribute list of AK Room books to be replaced so they can contribute from their personal library – unless money is not a problem for replacement
- Creation of an app to meet practices of younger generations. Can focus on AK Collection
- Every reference librarian knows (at least) 59% of respondents don't know what they really need
- Digitization is not only expensive, it has a very high noise-to-signal ratio
- 100% of users need a professional information specialist to help them locate the info they need
- Digitization creates a digital divide – those without access to technology are underserved if money is funneled into that type of project
- Need bus routes to Loussac
- When people walk into the Library they should know they are in Alaska! This state and its culture should be the first point of contact
- Alaska Room: Original vs Proposed Space:
  - Cost-benefit analysis
  - Need open discussion about the original vs new proposed location of Alaska room, even if written in an old Strategic Plan.
  - Preserve the Ann Stevens Room as a quiet reading and events space
  - Spaces for both quiet study and conversation
  - Stay in original Alaska Room with better access and security.
- Library Programming/Marketing:
  - Periodically have open house/tours of the Alaska Collection.
  - Become a vibrant space that highlights the collection and better publicity.
- Community Conversation (local/statewide cultural/historical groups):
  - Discussion of what the core materials are through a virtual meeting space
  - Place for organic conversation
  - Keep collaborating!
- Fundraising/grants:
  - Need a foundation to support us.
  - Need a committee to explore and implement fundraising.
  - Get grant funding.