

News from the State of

ALASKA

ALASKA TRAVEL DIVISION

Box 2391

Juneau, Alaska

For IMMEDIATE release

January 3, 1966

Jets, which bring visitors to Alaska today from all over the world, were of course beyond the comprehension of Stellar and his companions.

Aside from the legions of modern outdoor enthusiasts -- who The man who discovered Alaska -- in fact who discovered the Pacific shores of America -- was Vitus Bering, a Dane sailing for czarist Russia. Alaska's first tourist, however, was Bering's passenger on the trip, a naturalist named Georg Wilhelm Stellar. He arrived in 1741, setting foot at Kayak Island near the present-day city of Cordova.

At the island, and elsewhere, Stellar marveled at what he saw: Lush green vegetation. Towering stands of timber. Glaciers which literally poured from snow-capped peaks. Abundant wildlife.

And birds. He saw scores of birds to observe and classify. One of them, a jay, today bears the name of "Stellar Jay" in honor of this early visitor.

Now, more than two centuries later, the very same glaciers continue to thrill Alaska's visitors. The same species of fish and game and birdlife continue to flourish and make Alaska a mecca for sportsmen with guns, rods, or cameras. The identical forests, fjords, beaches, and mountain ranges still make almost any scene, anywhere, -- a "scenic" worth painting -- or photographing.

Of course some things have changed drastically. Stellar arrived in a ship called the St. Peter which, by today's standards, could not qualify as a first-class lifeboat aboard the spacious cruiseships and ferryliners which ply Alaska's coast.

Jets, which bring visitors to Alaska today from all over the world, were of course beyond the comprehension of Stellar and his companions.

Aside from the legions of modern outdoor enthusiasts -- who delight in camping out in Alaska's wilderness areas, campgrounds, national forests and national park lands -- today's tourists enjoy modern hotel and motel accommodations which the eighteenth-century Stellar would have considered fit for a czar.

For the Russians, Alaska's geography posed one mammoth question mark. Modern day travelers know they can divide Alaska conveniently into four regions for their explorations. The southeastern region, or panhandle, is the land of totems and totem-carving Indians. It's the land of the Inside Passage route for cruiseships and ferryliners, and the land, too, of glaciers and fjords and fighting king salmon. Southcentral Alaska centers around Anchorage and also includes the famed Matanuska Valley farming area, Katmai National Monument with its 'Valley of 10,000 Smokes' and Kodiak Island, just recently accessible for motorists via scheduled ferry service from the Alaska mainland.

Interior Alaska evolves around goldrush-born Fairbanks and boasts authentic old sourdoughs, the Yukon River, and Mt. McKinley -- highest peak in North America -- in Mt. McKinley National Park.

Accessible only by air, Alaska's fourth region, the Arctic, covers a land of surprisingly flowered tundra and piercing mountain ranges. It contains colorful, friendly Eskimos with entertaining dances and eye-popping blanket-toss exhibitions, and unique communities such as Barrow (farthest north settlement in North America), Kotzebue, and Nome.

It took weeks for the original Russian explorers to reach Alaska. From any point in the USA or the world, the 49th State today is only hours away by jet, only days away by steamship, ferry, bus, or family car.

For nearly a quarter-century now, the Alaska (Alcan) Highway from Dawson Creek, B.C. to Fairbanks, Alaska, has proved a popular way to reach the northland. This year for the first time motorists and others will be able to plan a true one-way-by-sea, one-way-by-land circle trip all the way from the other states of the nation. They can, for example, board ferries in Washington state en route to Vancouver Island, off the coast of British Columbia, then (after May 20) take the brand new B.C. Ferries vessel "Queen of Prince Rupert" from Kelsey Bay on the island to Prince Rupert, B.C., just south of the Alaska panhandle. From Prince Rupert to and through the panhandle the Alaska State Ferry System will once again offer daily-except-Sunday departures aboard its deluxe fleet of 500-passenger, 108-auto ferryliners.

Wilhelm Stellar, of course, never dreamed such safe, convenient travel could be possible. For his "tour" the distances were vast, the hazards great. Even so, his writings indicate he thought even that trip was well worth the effort. # # #



UNEXCELLED, UNCLUTTERED FISHING opportunities abound in Alaska. This river bend, only a few minutes walk from Alaska's Glenn Highway, is typical of a thousand such angling spots all over the 49th State.



THE MOOSE HAS RIGHT-OF-WAY -- Wildlife in Alaska is so common that some of the animals (this moose included) apparently think the roads were built for their convenience. Other road users, of the two-legged motorized variety, seldom object, however. In a state as big as Alaska, there's room for all.

FILLER FEATURES

For IMMEDIATE Release Jan. 3, 1966

Alaska, which prides itself on being the "Last Frontier" whoops it up on Independence Day each year with celebrations in more than 20 cities and communities across the state. Parades, dances, boat races, fireworks displays, Eskimo or Indian dance exhibitions, children's games and midway booths are featured at festivities from Ketchikan in the southeast panhandle to Kotzebue in the Arctic.

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ANCHORAGE (Special) -- After a season's absence here due to dock construction, the elegant ocean-going ferryliner M/V Tustumena will again operate in the summer into this port city beginning June 4. The 200-passenger, 67-vehicle vessel will depart Anchorage each Friday en route for Homer and Seldovia on the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island. From the island the Tustumena will depart each Saturday for the mainland cities of Seward, Valdez, and Cordova and will return, via these same cities, to Kodiak on Thursdays. From Kodiak the ferry will complete its circle route with stops at Seldovia and Homer, arriving back in Anchorage in time for another Friday departure.

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JUNEAU (Special) -- A full range of arts and crafts objects -- from oil portraits and op art to ivory carvings, totem poles, and soapstone sculpture -- representing every region of the 49th State will be on display at the Juneau Armory, March 10-13, at the 22nd annual Alaska Arts and Crafts Exhibit.

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FAIRBANKS (Special) -- The longest day of the year, June 21, will see two top non-pro baseball teams playing ball through the hour of midnight without electric lights in this sports-minded interior Alaska city. The Fairbanks Goldpanners will take on Oregon State utilizing only the light of the northland's midnight sun.


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ESKIMO MOTHER AND CHILD -- This woman and her baby live at Barrow, Alaska which is the farthest north point on the American continent. Friendly and affable, the Eskimo people enjoy demonstrating their dances and arts skills to visitors. They pose willingly for photographs.





THERE GOES THE ALASKA FERRY! -- Vacationers enjoying a beach party on the shores of a Southeast Alaska island take time out to wave as a sleek Alaska ferryliner plys its way between ports. Using a combination af Alaska ferries along the Alaska panhandle coast and (after May 20) the new B.C. Ferries vessel along the coast of Canada's British Columbia, motorists may now sail with their vehicles almost all the way from the "lower 48" states to Alaska.

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ALASKA TRAVEL DIVISION
BOX 2391
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January 14, 1966

During much of the 19th century, sea captains from Boston to Vladovostok knew Sitka, Alaska as the "Paris of the Pacific" -- literally a jewel in the wilderness where fancy dress balls, lavish banquets, sophisticated entertainment, and priceless art objects contrasted sharply with the stark surroundings of the still-untamed frontier.

Of course the czarist Russians who originally settled there didn't call it Sitka. They named it New Archangel and it served as headquarters for the Russian-American Company's far flung fur-gathering operations which extended literally to California.

Travelers today still recognize Sitka as one of the most fascinating port cities in the Pacific Ocean.

One reason is its setting. Facing nearby Kruzof Island's towering Mt. Edgecumbe -- an extinct volcano which nearly duplicates Japan's Fujiyama -- the city looks out, as well, on hundreds of large and small islands in its protected bays and channels.

Among the man-made attractions of the city, the most popular is probably Sitka National Monument. There, eighteen totem poles stand as silent sentinels over the brand new National Park Service visitor center which features a slide-show room, totemic displays, and demonstration areas where native Alaskan artisans work with wood, ivory, jade and other Alaska materials.

Equally impressive is the display of north country artifacts at Sheldon Jackson Junior College museum. For the visitor with industrial interests, the Alaska Lumber and Pulp Company's huge modern pulp mill regularly opens its doors.

In a fire that destroyed a number of downtown buildings, famed old St. Michael's Cathedral burned to the ground January 2. Fortunately, however, almost all the icons and other religious treasures -- valued in excess of a million-and-a-half dollars -- were saved. Already plans are underway to reconstruct the historic church.

Unaffected by the fire was the old Russian Mission building which was even older than the church, the Alaska Pioneers Home, and the hilltop replica of an old Russian blockhouse. Unaffected too were the city's tourist hotels and dining spots, Sitka National Cemetery (oldest in the U.S. west of the Mississippi) and Castle Hill. It was atop this hill, incidentally, that the Stars and Stripes first flew after the Alaska Purchase in 1867 and where the 49-star American flag first flew in Alaska after statehood.

It's easy to get to Sitka. Scheduled flights arrive and depart from nearby Juneau and Ketchikan several times daily and Alaska's sleek ferryliners dock with passengers and vehicles four times a week during the visitor season. Ample campgrounds are available.

Salmon fishing (for 40 and 50 pounders and larger) is unexcelled and is especially fun during the annual Sitka Salmon Derby scheduled for 1966 on June 18-19 and 25-26. Trout angling is equally productive

More details on Sitka, its attractions and how to get there may be obtained from the Alaska Travel Division, Juneau.

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ALASKA FILLER FEATURES

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The month of May, according to Alaskans, is one of the best times in which to visit the 49th State. Days are already long (in fact, in many parts of the Arctic region, the sun does not even set during much of the month); precipitation is at its lowest; accommodations are uncrowded; and some tours and facilities feature pre-season reduced rates. September offers many of these same advantages.

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FAIRBANKS (Special) -- One of the longest and roughest riverboat marathons in the world will get underway here June 18 when the annual "Yukon 800" riverboat race commences at the log Chamber of Commerce building in downtown Fairbanks. Racers will proceed first down the Chena then the Tanana and finally the Yukon rivers in their 800-mile 18-hour dash to the community of Ruby on the Yukon and return to Fairbanks.

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KETCHIKAN (Special)-- A new locally-produced "meller-drammer" -- of the type which recent Alaska visitors have rated highly in other communities -- will be staged in this city beginning with the 1966 travel season. Called "The Fish Pirate's Daughter", the 30-minute comedy will join such other spoofs as "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" in Skagway, "Hoochinoo 'n Hotcakes" in Juneau, and "The Smell of the Yukon" in Haines-Port Chilkoot.

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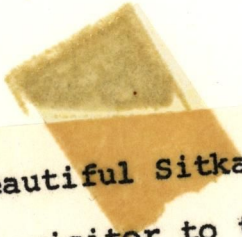
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OLD RUSSIAN CANNON at beautiful Sitka-by-the-Sea, Alaska,
draws the attention of a visitor to the 49th State. Sitka,
first capital of Alaska under American rule, was the last capital
of the territory when it was occupied by Czarist Russia.

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