

# The Paystreak

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 The Newsletter of the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation (AMHF)

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## Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation New Inductees

### AMHF Inducts Three Involved With Alaska’s Mercury Mining Industry

	<p><b>Robert F. Lyman (1911-1974)</b> lived in the tradition of an intelligent, entrepreneurial, hard working, independent Alaska miner who established a mining family—now in its third generation. Bob differed from more typical small scale miners in that he was more formally educated than most. He also extracted mercury rather than gold, the latter of which was the norm in Alaska. Besides developing and operating small scale mercury lodes, he managed Alaska’s largest mercury mine at Red Devil, Alaska, which, during the 1950s, produced nearly 20 percent of U.S. domestic requirements of the then strategic metal. He was killed in a heavy equipment accident doing what he loved—mining the White Mountain deposits in the foothills of the Alaska Range.</p>
	<p><b>Wallace M. Cady (1912-1991)</b> worked in Southwest Alaska only briefly, but in the five years of tough, field work during the 1940s, he produced, with other USGS colleagues, Professional Paper 268--‘The Central Kuskokwim Region, Alaska’. This classic summarizes the geological framework of an area the size of Vermont and is centered on Alaska’s premier mercury mining region. Concurrently, Cady worked closely with Alaska small miners to increase the flow of the strategic metal mercury that was vitally needed for the war effort. Wallace Cady would later be recognized by his colleagues as establishing modern, plate-tectonic, structural and regional geologic frameworks for key portions of the North American Continent</p>
	<p><b>Russell Schaeffer (1905-1960)</b> was one of Alaska’s ‘tough guy prospectors’ that accomplished much in the backwater of the southern Kuskokwim Mountains. Although often working alone, he was well known and respected throughout the Kuskokwim River region. He co-discovered the significant Cinnabar Creek mercury deposit with Harvey Winchell and developed the Fortyseven Creek placer and lode gold-tungsten system along the Holitna strand of the Denali Fault system. Schaeffer was an expert mineralogist, and his descriptions of mineral deposits were used by the U.S. Geological Survey during their investigations. Found dead at his mine site in 1960, he is remembered for his ingenuity and tenacious persistence in the search for mineral deposits in the Kuskokwim Mineral Belt of Southwest Alaska.</p>

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## Supported by the Alaska Miners Association

Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007  
Sheraton-Anchorage Hotel, Anchorage, Alaska

### Program

The general public is invited to the jointly sponsored, induction ceremony from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM on November 8<sup>th</sup>, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Ballroom of the Anchorage-Sheraton Hotel. There is no charge for admission. Refreshments will be served.

**Introduction by Mary Nordale**.....7:00-7:10PM  
**Presentation of Inductees**.....7:10-8:10PM

**Wallace M. Cady by Charles Hawley**  
**Robert F. Lyman by Tom Bundtzen**  
**Russell Schaeffer by Charles Hawley**

**Refreshments and Coffee Break**.....8:10-8:30PM  
**Recollections of Inductees from the Audience**.....8:30-9:00PM

### Acknowledgements

The November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007 induction ceremony of the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation (AMHF) features three important mining pioneers that contributed to Alaska's rich mining history. *Wallace Cady* was a brilliant geologist that wrote, with several colleagues, a classic U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 'The Central Kuskokwim Region, Alaska'. During 1940s field investigations, Cady and his colleagues worked closely with Alaska's small miners to increase the flow of the strategic metal mercury that was vitally needed for the war effort.

*Bob Lyman* lived in the tradition of an intelligent, entrepreneurial, very hard working, independent Alaska miner, who was the clear leader of and synonymous with the Kuskokwim mercury mining industry. Lyman worked closely with prospector *Russell Schaeffer* one of Alaska's 'tough guy prospectors' that accomplished much in the backwater of the southern Kuskokwim Mountains.

Also in this *Paystreak*, The AMHF is publishing biographies of mining pioneers inducted in ceremonies held earlier in 2007. Mine statesman *Phillip R. Holdsworth* and attorney *H.L. 'Bert' Faulkner* were inducted in a March 20<sup>th</sup> ceremony in Juneau, which was held in conjunction with the revived AMA Juneau Branch-hosted biennial mining conference. Mine educators *Earl H. Beistline* and *Ernest N. Wolff* were inducted on July 19<sup>th</sup> at the Golden Citizens Luncheon in Fairbanks, a part of the annual Golden Days Celebration.

Data sources for all inductees are numerous and listed at the end of each biography. Helen Lyman wrote the biography of Robert Lyman, whereas Chuck Hawley wrote the biographies of Wallace Cady, Russ Schaeffer, and Phil Holdsworth. David Stone wrote the summary for Bert Faulkner, and Curt Freeman wrote the biography for Ernie Wolff. T.K. Bundtzen provided the biography of Earl Beistline, and prepared this AMHF newsletter for publication.

## Alaska's Quicksilver Mining Industry

The element Mercury, symbol Hg, is a liquid at room temperature. It is silvery and flows easily hence it's ancient name quicksilver. Mercury is dense (specific gravity=13.6) and amalgamates with gold and silver. The chief ore mineral is the brilliant red cinnabar, a mercury sulfide.

Mercury vapor and some of its chemical compounds are highly toxic, a property which is taken advantage of in fungicidal paints and the germ-killing properties of the common antiseptics merthiolate and mercurochrome. In wartime, demand for mercury for explosives, electric switch gear, mercuric acid dry cells, and fungicides drove prices upward and Alaska mercury was in demand both nationally and internationally. In 1942, the U.S. War Production Board declared mercury 'strategic', which caused a flurry of mine activity throughout the United States. During much of the 1940s and 1950s, funds were provided by the Defense Minerals Exploration Administration (DMEA) to explore and develop mercury lodes throughout southwest Alaska.

Mercury was known to Russian traders in Alaska at least as early as 1838; cinnabar lodes crop out on the banks of the Kuskokwim near the Russian post at Kolmakof's Redoubt. In 1906, W.W. Parks found an occurrence that he called the "Alice and Bessie." Oswald Willis and Matt DeCourcy made discoveries now known by their names in 1909 and 1911 respectively. Hans Halverson made at Barometer Mountain in 1921 and the dominant mine, Red Devil, in 1933.

In peacetime, most of the Alaskan cinnabar was retorted on site for amalgamation and sold to local placer miners. There are definite price spikes that coincide with WW I, WW II, and the Korean and Vietnam Wars, with cinnabar discoveries made during or shortly after these conflicts. Beginning in the late 1940s, the Red Devil mine near Sleetmute became Alaska's largest producer with total production amounting to nearly 36,000 flasks through 1971. In 1941, Russell Schaeffer and partner Harvey Winchell found Cinnabar Creek, perhaps almost equal in size potential to Red Devil. Eskimo prospector and miner Jack Egnaty found the White Mountain prospect in 1958. The Lyman family operated White Mountain for a continuous eleven year period finally ending in 1974. Small amounts of mercury ores were retorted from the Mountain Top mercury mine southwest of Sleetmute as late as 1986. After that, there is no further production of mercury from Alaska mine sources. Total Alaskan mercury production during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was about 41,000 76 pound flasks, a modest amount compared to world sources. However, Alaska's contribution during the 1950s, mainly from Red Devil, amounted to 15-20 percent of U.S. industrial requirements.

Today, environmental laws greatly restrict mercury mining in the United States, including Alaska. Never-the-less, mercury mining has been important in the Kuskokwim region. In the late 1950s, with the shutdown of essentially all gold mines, mercury mining was Alaska's major hard rock industry. It attracted some of the most colorful and competent of Alaska's miners.

### Selected Data Sources:

Bundtzen, T.K., 1983, Overview of Alaska's Strategic Minerals, in, Agnew, Allen F., editor, *International Minerals—A National Perspective*: American Association for the Advancement of Science Selected Symposia 90, Westview Press, Inc., Boulder, Colorado, p. 37-70.

Cady, W. M., Robert E. Wallace, Joe M. Hoare, and E. J. Webber, 1955, The Central Kuskokwim Region, Alaska: U.S. Geol. Survey Prof. Paper 268, especially p. 3-4, 7.

Rutledge, F. A., 1958, Investigations of Mercury Deposits, Cinnabar Creek area, Georgetown and Aniak districts: U.S. Bureau of Mines R I 4719.

Sainsbury, C. L., and E. M. MacKevett, Jr., 1965, Quicksilver deposits of southwestern Alaska: U.S. Geol. Survey Bull 1187, especially p. 2-3.

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## Previous Inductees, Alaska Mining Hall of Fame

### *National Mining Hall of Fame Inductees*

Six charter members of the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation were previously elected into the National Mining Hall of Fame in Leadville, Colorado.

**Stephen Birch:** Founder and developer of Kennecott Copper Mines.

**Frederick Bradley:** Successful manager of Treadwell and A-J Mines, Juneau.

**John Treadwell:** Founder of Treadwell Mines, Juneau.

**Alfred H. Brooks:** Chief Geologist of U.S. Geological Survey in Alaska.

**Earnest Patty:** University of Alaska, and manager of Placer Dredging Venture.

**Clarence Berry:** Prominent Klondike and Interior Alaska miner.

### *Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation Inductees*

#### Fairbanks Spring 1998

##### **Induction Ceremony Honoring Early Yukon Basin Traders and Prospectors**

**Alfred Mayo:** “Captain Al” well-known Yukon River trader, prospector.

**Jack McQuesten:** Known as the “Father of the Yukon” grubstaker for prospectors.

**Arthur Harper:** Well known and respected trader and prospector and promoter of the Yukon.

**Howard Franklin:** Fortymile prospector, discovered first “bedrock” placer gold in Alaska.

**John Minook:** Creole-Athabaskan prospector who discovered Rampart district.

**Felix Pedro:** Discoverer of Fairbanks district in 1902.

#### Nome Summer 1998

##### **Induction Ceremony Honoring Pioneers of Nome Gold Rush**

**John Brynteson:** A ‘Lucky Swede’; an experienced hard-rock miner, discoverer of the Cape Nome district.

**Erik Lindblom:** The eldest of the “Lucky Swedes”, a tailor.

**Jafet Lindeberg:** The Norwegian of the ‘Lucky Swedes’, president and manager of the very successful Pioneer Mining Company.

**Charles D. Lane:** Tough, honest, and wealthy miner who helped the Lucky Swedes in their legal battles.

#### Juneau Spring 1999

##### **Induction Ceremony Honoring Discovery of Juneau District**

**Joe Juneau:** Native of Quebec, a California 49er, co-discoverer of gold in Juneau district.

**Richard Harris:** Irish immigrant, co-discoverer of gold in Juneau district.

**George Pilz:** German immigrant who sent and financed the Juneau and Harris prospecting ventures in the Juneau area.

**Kawa/ee:** Tlingit leader who brought rich gold samples from Gastineau Channel area to George Pilz

**Livingston Wernecke:** Geologist-engineer for the Bradley companies of Juneau.

**Bartlett Thane:** Promoter-founder of the world’s largest gold mine, the Gastineau at Juneau.

#### Anchorage Fall 1999

##### **Induction Ceremony Honoring Mining Pioneers of Southern/Southwest Alaska**

**Andrew Olson:** Swedish immigrant, innovator at Flat; the original organizer of the platinum mining complex in the Goodnews bay Mining District.

**Evan Jones:** Welsh immigrant; the true father of Alaska coal mining industry

**Wesley Earl Dunkle:** Kennecott engineer and innovative geologist, co-founder of Star Air Service, predecessor of Alaska Airlines.

Fairbanks Spring 2000

**Induction Ceremony Honoring Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Interior Pioneers**

**Emil Usibelli:** Italian immigrant and founder of Usibelli Coal Mine, Inc., Alaska's only and historically largest producer of coal; civic benefactor in Fairbanks.

**John B. Mertie Jr.:** Leading U.S. Geological Survey geologist; outstanding earth scientist, mathematician, and world expert on platinum.

**Fannie Quigley:** Prospector, renowned for her bush skills, legendary Kantishna character.

Juneau Spring 2001

**Induction Ceremony Honoring Early Government Role in Mining**

**Benjamin D. Stewart:** State and Federal mining administrator, Alaska constitutional delegate at Alaska Statehood Convention in Fairbanks.

Fairbanks Summer, 2001

**Induction Ceremony Honoring the Pioneers of the Large Scale Gold Dredging Industry of Nome and Fairbanks Districts**

**Norman C. Stines:** Visionary engineer that planned and supervised original USSR&M activities in Fairbanks district.

**Wendell P. Hammon:** Installed the first three dredges in Cape Nome district; helped design financing for what became USSR&M dredge fleets in Alaska

**James K. Davidson:** Designed and built Miocene and Davidson ditch systems.

Anchorage Fall 2001

**Induction Ceremony Honoring Discovery of Flat District**

**John Beaton:** Co-discovered Iditarod district with William Dikeman.

Fairbanks Spring 2002

**Induction Ceremony Honoring Successful Miners and Engineers of Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Frank G. Manley:** Highly successful miner in Fairbanks, Hot Springs District, and Flat. Founder of the First National Bank, Fairbanks

**Herman Tofty:** Norwegian immigrant who worked prospects near Manley Hot Springs.

**Chester Purington:** Acclaimed international mining engineer; wrote treatise on Alaska placer fields.

**Thomas P. Aitken:** Arguably the most successful small scale mine developer during the Alaska-Yukon Gold Rush; worked both lodes and placers in Alaska and Yukon.

Anchorage Fall 2002

**Induction Ceremony Honoring Immigrant Pioneers**

**Peter Miscovich:** Croatian immigrant who settled in Flat, Alaska 1910. Pioneered the use of hydraulic mining techniques.

**David Strandberg:** Swedish immigrant who joined the Klondike gold rush in 1898 and the Iditarod rush of 1910. Built placer mining dynasty Strandberg & Sons, Inc.

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**Lars Ostnes:** Norwegian immigrant who mined in the Iditarod district and developed placer mines in remote western Alaska for over 50 years.

Fairbanks Summer 2003

**Golden Days Induction Ceremony (also recognized during Fall AMA convention)**

**Kyosuke “Frank” Yasuda and Nevelo Yasuda:** Japanese immigrant and his Eskimo wife, discovered Chandalar gold and founded the community of Beaver.

Anchorage Fall 2003

**Induction Ceremony Honoring Early and Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Placer Miners**

**John Gustavus (Gus) Uotila:** By 1915, Gus Uotila was known as a tough Iditarod teamster. He mentored placer mining operations throughout Alaska and became a respected overland freighter.

**Simon Wible:** He mined gold, built water canals, and became a wealthy man in California. When the time the gold rush came along, he pioneered hydraulic mine technology on the Kenai Peninsula.

Fairbanks Spring 2004

**Honoring Early Pioneers Associated with USSR&M Dredge Fleet**

**Roy B. Earling:** Built pre-World War II FE Company into one of the efficient and successful dredge mining firms in the world.

**James D. Crawford:** Well organized manager who acquired new dredge properties and guided FE company into successful post-World War II period of gold mining.

**Jack C. Boswell:** Engineered the development of the rich Cripple deposit; and helped build giant FE machines used to dig deep placer deposits. Published historian of USSR&M era.

**Genevieve Parker Metcalfe:** Breakthrough woman mining engineer who developed initial plans for FE Fairbanks operations, wrote a landmark thesis on Alaska placer mining, and was a champion athlete and scholar.

**Earl Richard Pilgrim:** First Professor of Mine Engineering at University of Alaska. Independent Kantishna miner and FE consultant, “Mr. Antimony” in the US.

Anchorage Fall, 2004

**Honoring Those in the Mining Legal Profession,  
In Cooperation with the History Committee of the Alaska Bar Association**

**William Sulzer:** Bill Sulzer became a prominent New York attorney and politician and briefly served as Governor of New York. The ever-optimistic Sulzer mined copper in southeast Alaska and developed gold in the Chandalar district.

**Joseph Rudd:** Shortly after Statehood, Rudd drafted the State’s mining law on State Lands and was sought for his expertise on Natural Resource issues throughout his career. He was killed in a plane crash in Anchorage upon his return from Juneau after discussing with other Alaskans challenges to President Carter’s Implementation of the 1978 Antiquities Act.

Anchorage Fall, 2005

**Honoring the Discoverers and the Developer of Platinum Resources at Goodnews Bay**

**Per Edvard (Ed) Olson:** Born in 1898, Edward Olson was born into a large farm family in Sweden and immigrated to the United States in 1905. In 1934, assumed the position of general manager of the Goodnews Bay Mining Company (GBMC), the largest supplier of platinum in the U.S. during 1934-1975.

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**Walter Smith:** In the summer of 1926, Yupik Eskimo Walter Smith and his young apprentice Henry Wuya found placer platinum in a stream draining a remote, uninhabited coast of southwest Alaska. The GBMC eventually purchase Smith's claims. Smith and Wuya are recognized as discoverers of Goodnews Bay platinum.

**Henry Wuya:** Henry Wuya was born to Eskimo parents in Quinhagak on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. Wuya, was proficient in English when few Yupiks knew English. He mentored with the older and experienced prospector, Walter Smith.

#### Fairbanks March 2006

### **Honoring Two Pioneers Important to Both Canadian and American Mining Communities**

**Ellen (Nellie) Cashman:** Ellen (Nellie) Cashman was a quintessential gold stamper that participated in many gold-silver rushes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Nellie's final home was Nolan Creek in the Koyukuk district of northern Alaska. Cashman died in 1925 at St. Anne's Hospital, Victoria, British Columbia, a medical facility she helped found several decades earlier.

**Jack Dalton:** One of the premier horse freighters of the Alaska-Yukon gold rush era, Jack Dalton opened up the 'Dalton Trail' for prospectors and trades from Haines to Central Yukon, Canada. In later years he worked as a freight engineer for the Alaska railroad. The Dalton Highway is a tribute to the Dalton family in Alaska.

#### Juneau June 2006

### **Honoring the Mining Legal Profession, in Cooperation with the History Committee of the Alaska Bar Association**

**Frederick (Fred) Eastaugh:** Nome-born Fred Eastaugh was an Alaskan accountant a ship's officer for the Alaska Steamship Company, and Alaska mining attorney. Eastaugh was appointed to the Alaska Minerals Commission in 1991 by Governor Walter Hickel. Upon his death a year later, Hickel ordered state flags flown at half mast.

#### Anchorage November 2006

### **Honoring an Outstanding Statesman and an Outstanding Prospector Active in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century Alaska Mining Industry**

**Charles F. (Chuck) Herbert:** Chuck Herbert was one of the premier miners of his generation. Educated at the School of Mines in Fairbanks, he mined placer gold deposits, sought metalliferous lodes, and served with distinction in several public roles. During early years of Statehood, he played a crucial role in the selection of Alaska's North Slope Lands. Later as DNR Commissioner, he revitalized the State land selection process.

**Rheinart M. (Rhiny) Berg:** Berg's strength and stamina were legendary during most of his 86 years of life. He worked as underground miner in the Wrangell Mountains and Fairbanks districts, as a trapper and prospector, and found the Bornite copper-cobalt deposit. He later developed the Candle placer district on the Seward Peninsula. He gained great wealth which he mostly gave away.

#### Juneau March 2007

### **Honoring an Outstanding Statesman and Mine Attorney Active in Southeast Alaska's Mineral Industry**

**Phillip R. Holdsworth:** Phil Holdsworth's professional career extended nearly seventy years. He was a practical miner at the age of sixteen. Later he operated mines, assay labs, and mills. In World War II, he defended a Philippine mine as a guerilla warrior. After serving as Alaska's first commissioner of Natural Resources, Holdsworth became Alaska's elder natural resource statesman before his death in 2001

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**Herbert L. Faulkner:** H.L. (Bert) Faulkner's law career extended for almost seventy years. He was a sheriff, U.S. Marshall and attorney. He would represent almost every major mining company operating in Alaska during his lifetime.

Fairbanks July 2007

**Honoring Two of Alaska's Outstanding Mine Educators**

**Earl H. Beistline:** Earl Beistline has had a distinguished career as mining educator at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. Beistline brought to the classroom a unique blend of theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of mining. During all of his adult life, he has been a tireless and outspoken advocate of Alaska mining industry interests.

**Ernest N. Wolff:** Ernie Wolff was a notable personality on Alaska's mining landscape for more than sixty years. During this time he prospected, mined, taught and administered at the University of Alaska, wrote a classic book, *Handbook for the Alaskan Prospector*, and served on public bodies; all of this always in his unique style with a kind of gentle truculence.



**ROBERT F. LYMAN  
(1911-1974)**

Robert Fisk (“Bob”) Lyman is in the tradition of the intelligent, entrepreneurial, hard working, independent Alaska miner who established a mining family—now in its third generation. Bob differed from the norm in that he was better prepared technically than many miners were and the precious metal he mined was, for many years, mercury rather than gold.

Background.

Bob was born in Greenwood, South Dakota on August 7, 1911, to William Ernest (“W.E.” or “Bill”) and Laura Lucille (*née* Williamson) Lyman, the third of six children—John, Richard, Robert, Eleanor, Margaret and Laura. W.E. and Laura met at Yankton College and were married in Greenwood in 1906 by her father. Both the Lyman and Williamson families were South Dakota pioneers, and an earlier generation of each had left the East for the state of Ohio, before the Civil War. Laura was the daughter of John Poage Williamson, a well known pioneer missionary to the Sioux Indians, the author of an English-Dakota language dictionary, and a legislator for a term in the South Dakota

house.<sup>1</sup> Bob’s father, proud of the Lyman name, named his three sons Richard, John and Robert after the three sons of Richard Lyman of High Ongar, County of Essex, England, who, with his family, were the original Lymans to arrive in the New World, in 1630, and from whom all Lymans in America trace their descent.<sup>2</sup>

Bob spoke little of his forebears. A few times he called himself the “black sheep” of the family because he did not choose the usual pursuits of ranching or the ministry. Looking in hindsight over 20 years after Bob’s death, the historical record becomes highly relevant to explaining his personality and character. An address on “Characteristics of the Lymans,” delivered by Lyman Coleman in 1872 at a Lyman reunion, enumerated traits of the Lymans generally, which eerily foretell the incredible work ethic, the high moral standards and the single-minded dedication that enabled Bob Lyman to succeed as a pioneering Alaska prospector and miner under the most rugged and adverse circumstances:

“The adventurous, enterprising spirit of the Lymans, should be noted as a prominent characteristic. In every enterprise for the settlement of the country and development of its resources they have been pioneers. ... Age after age they have had a quick, attentive ear to the rallying cry, Westward, ho!

“The hardships, self-denials and sufferings of their pioneer and frontier life is another characteristic of the family. [Their] temperament ... inspires great buoyancy of spirits, irrepressible elasticity under adversity, and dauntless energy and enterprise in the pursuits of life.

“[W]e may ascribe to them many useful inventions and labor saving machines ... Many of these inventions are of curious workmanship, requiring the most skillful manipulation and combination of mechanical powers. ... evince[ing] surprising ingenuity and skill. Next in the

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<sup>1</sup> Winifred W. Barton, John P. Williamson: A Brother to the Sioux. Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919. Reprinted by Sunnycrest Publishing, Clements MN, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> Lyman Coleman, D.D., Genealogy of the Lyman Family in Great Britain and America. Albany NY, J. Munsell, 1872, reprinted by Higginson Book Company, Salem MA.

enumeration may be specified great fixedness of character and firmness of principles.”<sup>3</sup>

### Early life in South Dakota.

At the time Bob was born, the family lived in Lemmon, South Dakota, where his father was a star route mail carrier, one of the first to use an automobile.<sup>4</sup> In 1915 the young family moved to Spearfish, South Dakota, partly to escape an infantile paralysis scare, partly so that W.E. could accept a County Agent position. He recounted: “I did not continue long in this and returned to my earlier love of carrying mail. This I did all through my life, intermittently interspersed with ventures in ranching, some good, some bad.”<sup>5</sup>

Laura was a gifted pianist. She graduated from the Conservatory of Music at Yankton College, near Greenwood, and studied piano in Chicago under Fannie Bloomfield Zeisler, then the outstanding piano teacher of the country. Laura took up a musical career soon after the move to Spearfish, joining the staff of Black Hills Teachers College and giving private piano lessons there almost continuously until her resignation due to illness in the spring of 1944.<sup>6</sup>

Bob attended Black Hills Teacher’s college for one year, where his mother taught, and then transferred to Yankton College, from which both his parents had graduated. Bob enrolled September 9, 1931. He graduated three years later on June 11, 1934, with a BA degree in Physical Science (Chemistry). He took education, chemistry, sociology, English and German classes among others. He played football and ran track during his

college years. He was senior class president, Y Club president and received the Dr. Frank Conger Smith Memorial Award.<sup>7</sup> Bob’s wife, Betty Lyman, said he was given the Yankton “Y” award as the leading scholar-athlete in his senior year.<sup>8</sup> The focus and ambition were set in Bob’s life at a young age, although the particular goal was not yet in view. Bob wrote his daughter Helen, when she sought direction as a college junior: “I still didn’t have the faintest idea what I was going to do when I was a junior in college. As a last resort I spent half my credit hours during my senior year taking education so I could teach just in case I couldn’t find something better. All this taught me was that I would rather dig ditches than teach high school kids.”<sup>9</sup> Following his graduation, Bob worked with his father on the rural mail route for a year and on a homestead.

### First Years in Alaska, Marriage.

One of Bob’s classmates at Yankton was Will Goding, from Skagway in the territory of Alaska. It was the height of the depression. Seeking new horizons and adventure, as well as a livelihood, Bob went home with Will in the spring of 1935. Bob had arrived in Alaska. He took a short term job on a Coast and Geodetic Survey boat (the C&GS, known since 1970 as NOAA, or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) and another job unloading cargo from the Alaska Steamship boats at the Skagway docks. Will’s father was an engineer with the White Pass and Yukon Railroad, and that fall he secured for Bob free passage to the head of rail at Whitehorse and then down the Yukon River and into mainland Alaska and Fairbanks.

Once in Fairbanks, Bob’s first job was digging ditches for a new town sewer system. Still living hand to mouth, he enrolled in the University

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<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* at 472, 474.

<sup>4</sup> W.E. Lyman wrote: “Every owner or driver of these pioneer auto-buggies was a voluntary guinea pig, doing free experimental work for the benefit of the manufacturers every time he cranked up. . . . There never was enough money to keep these pioneer vehicles in repair.” Margaret Lyman Van Vactor, editor, *The Rippling Water-Stone House Connection*, published by the editor, ca. 1967.

<sup>5</sup> William Ernest Lyman, section of *The Lyman Family*, recorded and compiled by Margaret Lyman VanVactor, 1956.

<sup>6</sup> “Last Rites Held at Bozeman for Mrs. W. E. Lyman,” *Bozeman Courier*, July 15, 1946.

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<sup>7</sup> Yankton College transcript of Robert F. Lyman, by e-mail communications from Judi Olson at yanktoncollege.org, Aug-Sept, 2007.

<sup>8</sup> Family history photo album, by Elizabeth T. Lyman, compiled 1978.

<sup>9</sup> Letter from Robert F. Lyman to Helen T. Lyman, February 12, 1965.

of Alaska School of Mines. He lived in a yurt-like shelter near campus, made of upright poles layered over with thick moss—more like a cave than a house, but cheap and warm. Unless he was lucky enough to be invited out, his food was an unvarying daily ration costing 27 cents, consisting of hotcakes for breakfast, peanut butter on stale bread for lunch and cornmeal mush for dinner. Bob could hear the Alaska Railroad train go by the nearby tracks, heading into town. He would race to the station on his bike where he would get a job unloading, if he got there soon enough.<sup>10</sup>

In his second summer in Alaska [1936], Bob worked the season driving thaw points for the FE Company (Fairbanks Exploration Company). It was hard work, but paid enough to lift him from the grinding poverty of the first winter. His sister Eleanor came to Fairbanks in the fall to teach school and they shared an apartment.

In his third summer in Alaska [1937], Bob obtained a summer assignment as field assistant to Alaska Mining Hall of Famer, John Beaver Mertie Jr. Bob worked for Mertie for two seasons, one in the Forty-Mile district and a second on the Seward Peninsula. In the winter time he continued at the School of Mines and graduated with a B.S. degree in Mining and Geology in 1938. At the college, Bob was one of Dean Ernest Patty's geological and mining protégées, who were known at least informally as Patty's boys.

Bob's experience and practical and academic background were good preparation for teaching a course in mining and geology for the Extension Service of the Alaska School of Mines. Bob was on the School of Mines extension faculty for three years: 1939-40, 1940-41 and 1941-42. In this capacity he traveled all through the Territory of Alaska, staying for six-week periods in each community. Because classes were always held in the evening, he had plenty of time to prospect, get out and talk to old timers, and learn the locations of

possible placers from their stories of old gold strikes and prospects.

Bob went to Kuskokwim River basin. With Frank Rocheleau, who had been in his extension class in Flat, Bob blocked out pay on Donlin Creek, which joins with Flat Creek to form Crooked Creek, which flows into the Kuskokwim at Crooked Creek. In late summer 1941, Bob went into Fairbanks to order an HD-10 Allis Chalmers tractor and a Gould pump to begin operations in summer 1942. Bob's first choice was a Caterpillar D8, but the Army had commandeered Cat production.<sup>11</sup> The heavy equipment cost about \$10,000 and to buy it Bob signed away his entire salary for the next winter—\$3,500—and also took in another partner, Ken Johnston, who cosigned notes. Bob arranged credit with Harry Donnelley at the Miners and Merchants Bank in Flat, on no security beyond his good name and reputation. The machinery was to go to Bethel on the fall 1941 boat and up the Kuskokwim. Frank would freight it to the mine site during winter and also go to Flat to purchase a years supply of groceries. Meanwhile, Bob returned to his teaching job with mining extension and arrived in Juneau in November for his first assignment. He was living on his University of Alaska professor's per diem of \$4 per day.

The assignment by chance led to marriage. A secretary, Elizabeth Freeman ("Betty") Tuttle had arrived in Alaska on Columbus Day 1941 and in short order landed a job in Governor Gruening's office. She heard of the extension course from a fellow guest in the Baranof Hotel where she was staying, and decided to increase her own knowledge of rocks and minerals. Betty would say "almost immediately, I was far more interested in the teacher . . . than I was in the class. We became engaged the night before Pearl Harbor." Betty wrote, "The next day the world was turned upside down and we decided not to wait, but to get married as soon as possible." Bob left Juneau on December 17 for his next teaching assignment, in Petersburg, to be followed by Ketchikan. Bob and Betty were

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<sup>10</sup> Details on Bob Lyman's early years come from unpublished manuscripts of his wife Betty Lyman.

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<sup>11</sup> E-mail communication, Bill Lyman to Helen Lyman, January 15, 2007.

married in Ketchikan on February 13, 1942. Together they proceeded next to Wrangell. They were to finish the season in Haines, but Bob was reassigned to Seward to assist co-instructor John McAnerney with an unusually heavy enrollment. When the course in Seward was finished, Bob closed out his teaching career.

Betty continues, “It would take a volume to tell of all the events, the plans made and unmade in the next few months. The upshot of it all was Bob, being over 30, was not immediately drafted; gold mining was shut down for the duration; and in order to try and salvage his investment in machinery and pay off his debt, Bob decided to see if the long-idle cinnabar property on Return Creek, in the Yukon drainage but only about ten miles from his Donlin claims, was a viable proposition. Cinnabar was a strategic metal for the war.”<sup>12</sup>

#### The Decoursey Years.

The abandoned mercury mine on Return Creek was at Decoursey Mountain, eight miles from Donlin Creek and 30 miles from the gold mining town at Flat. Supplying at Flat, Bob and Betty backpacked from Flat to Decoursey, overnighing at two primitive rest cabins on the trail. They moved into an abandoned cabin at Decoursey. Bob began to mine and Betty learned to manage survival, living the first winter on canned and dried foods. Oddly the newlyweds enjoyed little privacy for the first two years. Personnel from the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines were active on site in geological field studies, stripping and trenching, in order to report on the scope and placement of the cinnabar ore bodies. In addition, there was more work than the partners could handle in getting the mine going, so they hired other men to assist with constructing the camp and other tasks. All personnel reached the mine by hiking in, or in the winter by dog team or tractor. There was no airfield and no radio communication. In 1943 a landing strip was completed and that same year the Bureau

of Mines established radio communications with Flat.<sup>13</sup>

Decoursey had been discovered by Matt DeCoursey, in about 1911, and the property bore his name, but under a different spelling.<sup>14</sup> In 1942 Bob Lyman acquired a four-year lease with option to purchase from Harry Brink, who, with his brother Jack, had staked the claims in 1927. At this time Bob was in partnership with the same men who had been with him in the now dormant Donlin Creek venture, Frank C. Rocheleau and Kenneth M. Johnston. In October 1942, Bob and Frank purchased Johnston’s interest.<sup>15</sup> Within months Frank’s interest flagged and was soon spent. In July 1943, he left.<sup>16</sup> The partnership split. Frank kept the Donlin Creek claims and Bob took the lease-purchase option. Decoursey was burdened with Frank’s unpaid share of back taxes. In late 1951 a welcome resolution arrived: Frank sold his Donlin Creek claims to Bob, paid his taxes from the proceeds,<sup>17</sup> and left Bob the sole owner of the Decoursey mine and of the Donlin Creek claims that he and Frank had originally intended to mine together, until World War II redirected Bob’s mining career from gold to mercury.

Decoursey had only produced about 150 (76 pound units) flasks of mercury through 1932. In his years at Decoursey (1942-1949) Bob produced 1,250 flasks,<sup>18</sup> mining nearly solo and recovering the mercury in a wood-burning two-tube Gould D retort (furnace). The 1942 operation was successful enough; when Bob’s draft number came up, the draft board advised him, in Betty’s words, “they needed the mercury more than they did him.” It was also a job that needed exceptional ability to

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<sup>13</sup> Burr S. Webber, Stuart C. Bjorklund, Franklin A. Rutledge, Bruce I. Thomas, and Wilford S. Wright, Report of Investigations: Mercury Deposits in Southwestern Alaska,, Bureau of Mines, R.I. 4065, May 1947, page 30.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* page 30.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* page 30.

<sup>16</sup> Letter from Betty Lyman to George and Mabel Tuttle (her parents), dated July 2, 1943.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Betty Lyman to George and Mabel Tuttle, dated December 9, 1950.

<sup>18</sup> Bob Lyman, unpublished writing.

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<sup>12</sup> Betty Lyman, “Bob Lyman’s Story,” unpublished manuscript, ca. 2000.

make do with whatever was at hand, even extending to dentistry. Betty lost a filling a few hundred miles from the nearest dentist. Bob filed down a silver dime, mixed it with a little mercury and refilled the cavity with a filling that lasted years.

After 1943, as solo operators of the business, Bob and Betty continued to hire a few men in the early years, but Bob took care of retorting and much of the other outdoor work. Betty took care of the cooking, laundry and all domestic duties as well as keeping up the books and the business end of the operation, which included compliance with many government regulations, even in the early years.

When retorting was in process, Bob got his sleep entirely in naps, having to rise and dress several times a night, walk to the retort in extreme subzero temperature, and stoke the furnace with wood to keep the temperature up. Processing the ore for a flask of mercury required five-eighths of a cord of wood. Though Bob hired part of the wood cutting job, he said that “it seemed that all my spare time was spent on the wood pile, for that was in the days before the invention of the chain saw.”<sup>19</sup>

To get the mercury to market, Bob freighted it by tractor in the early spring before break-up with three go-devils (heavy sleds) attached behind (freight distance 25 miles to Crooked Creek if shipped by water, 50 miles to Flat if shipped by air). He would return with all the supplies for another entire year’s operation. One spring a final drive pinion gear on the HD10 tractor broke while crossing an ice bridge. Break-up was imminent; repair of the breakdown on the trail was out of the question. The future for a mine in the bush hung in the balance, depending on Bob’s ability to move a 12-ton tractor plus 30 tons of freight 16 miles in a few days. The closest tractor capable of towing the outfit to camp was 50 miles away at a one-man placer gold camp. In his words: “Decisions are easy when there is only one solution—I hit that 50-mile

trail on the run.” The borrowed tractor was obtained with the promise to buy the whole mining outfit if it could not be returned before breakup. In this way, Bob acquired an HD14, which proved in the end to be useful for future mining operations.<sup>20</sup>

Another time, a 4-inch pipe cross gave way on the retort. The order for a new one missed the deadline for delivery to the fall boat from Seattle to Bethel (the Kuskokwim River port). The replacement pipe cross was shipped on the next boat, in June and arrived at Crooked Creek nearly a year after the order, where it stayed until January of another new year. After freeze-up, the pipe cross was freighted by tractor to Decoursey. Said Bob: “The end result was a delay of two years on half the mercury production and three years on the other half. Due to a drop in the price of mercury during this time, our financial trials from the broken pipe crosses were greater than our tribulations from the tow tractor purchase.”<sup>21</sup>

Bob and Betty found happy family tranquility in the midst of punishing hard work and the high risk of failure inherent in the Decoursey operation. They began their family during the Decoursey years and had three children, Helen Todd in 1944, William (“Bill”) Tuttle in 1945, and Spencer Williamson in 1949.

Betty traveled to Maine in 1944 to be with her parents for the birth of the first child, Helen, born August 16. Bob received the wire announcing her birth on August 17, and he sat down to write a long letter to Betty, expressing his happiness and giving the news: “About the only thing of interest in the mail was the settlement sheet for 138 flasks of mercury sent to Fairbanks. [Harry] Donnelly had opened the letter in Flat and deposited the \$25,944.00 to our account.” Continuing, Bob wrote about the weather:

“It is still raining quite hard. I like the sound on the roof. I wish you were here to listen to it with me. ... The rain would not mean that the plane couldn’t land or that the tractor would get stuck like it used to

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<sup>19</sup> Robert F. Lyman, “28 Years in the Bush,” speech written for Knife and Fork Club presentation, given in Corvallis, Oregon, November 29, 1970.

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

– it would not mean that every drop was retarding our work and making the men gloomy – it would be just a peaceful friendly rain that wasn't hurting us in any way and just by its sound alone was doing a lot of good. ... Perhaps in our jumbled life here at the mine we didn't ever ease up enough to see the beauty of our environment ... At last with relative few worries on my mind I now am realizing the ease of mind I had so long wished for.”<sup>22</sup>

### Mining Gold at Snow Gulch.

Decoursey played out in 1949 and Bob and family moved into Crooked Creek where Bob worked on the Kuskokwim riverboat “Hazel B” in 1950. The family also lived an interlude up river at the Red Devil mine. In spring 1951, they moved to their original 1942 destination, the gold placer at Snow Gulch, which ran into Donlin Creek. The operation was successful, and with the proceeds the Lymans bought a new Chevrolet and with a family now of four (Douglas Poage was born in 1951), they visited friends and family throughout the lower 48 states. The Lymans continued to mine at Snow Gulch through 1956 when the fixed-price of gold finally overcame any potential profit.

One of the successful side products of the Snow Gulch years was that Bob learned to fly in 1955 and subsequently acquired a Super Cub. Four years later, in 1959, Bob was to check out in the larger Piper Comanche, which he rented to fly the whole family on a vacation and visiting circuit around the south 48.

In the summer of 1957, Bob contracted with a leading lower-48 mining company, Cordero Mining Co., to prospect the central Kuskokwim Region for mercury. In an efficient program, Bob landed prospectors and occasionally himself on the rolling barren ridge tops and then picked them up at the end of their traverses. Betty and family lived at the old mercury discovery, the Parks mine of the Willis family, a few miles downriver from Red Devil. One of Bob's prospectors, Jack Egnati, a Yupik Eskimo, discovered cinnabar at White

Mountain, on the upper reaches of the Big River, a north-flowing branch of the upper Kuskokwim.

### The Mine at Red Devil.

During the successful years at Snow Gulch, Bob had put his profits into the fabulously rich mercury mine of Red Devil and became a major stockholder and director, but the mine failed to make a profit due to poor management, and Bob became increasingly alarmed. In the fall of 1957, Bob, Betty, and family moved across the river from Parks and began to build a house near the Red Devil airport. Betty became the postmaster of the new Red Devil post office. On November 9, 1957, Bob was asked to take over as general manager of the Red Devil mine. Betty continued to serve as the postmaster, and she also became the office manager for the mine, tending to the inventory and purchase orders and keeping up the payroll (up to 80 men) and other company records. The mine was much larger than any of Lyman's previous ventures. It took administrative skill as well technical ability to run. Red Devil was discovered by a young berry picker, staked in 1933 by Hans Halvorsen, and produced intermittently from 1939-1951. Most production was after 1952. The operation for Alaska Mines and Minerals, Inc., under Bob's leadership, was the most productive in the mine's history, with total recorded production of over 32,000 76 pound flasks of mercury through 1963, with an additional 4,000 flasks produced from 1969-71. Bob led the mine operation until 1963.



*Bob Lyman underground at Decoursey Mountain; circa 1940s  
Photo from the Lyman family collection*

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Bob Lyman to Betty Lyman, from Decoursey, August 17, 1944.

## White Mountain.

Managing the Red Devil mine running out of ore was a chore that Bob was willing to forego, and in the spring of 1964 he and Betty took a long-deserved vacation on a cruise ship to the South Pacific Islands. In 1963, the Lymans, took up mining the White Mountain discovery of Jack Egnati, with a totally Lyman crew, joined most summers by an interested prospector or one of the boy's friends. Bill and Doug were now married, and their wives joined the crew. The deposit lent itself to a family operation. Cinnabar was found in high grade masses in the faulted limestone hosts. Bob set up a jig plant to concentrate the dense cinnabar that also occurred in a workable placer below the lode. Most of the ore could be sold as concentrate, but Bob also set up a small retort in Corvallis, Oregon which, in the winter of 1964-65, the Lymans had adopted as their permanent winter home.



*Bob Lyman, circa 1959, was general manager of the Red Devil mercury mine from 1957-63.*

The Lymans had settled into a predictable cycle, based on mercury mining that benefited the entire family. It was ended by a tragedy. On September 13, 1974, Bob was killed in a tractor accident at the mine. His grave lies on the hilltop at White Mountain overlooking the Lyman Hills,

which were named for him. The inscription engraved on the headstone reads:

Robert F. Lyman  
1911-1974  
Beloved Husband and Father  
Pioneering Miner Metallurgist  
He had the courage of  
his dreams.

## Bob Lyman's Legacy.

Bob Lyman left an Alaska legacy from young extension instructor before World War II to his tragic death as Alaska's top mercury miner in 1974. The scientists of the U.S. Geological Survey and his mining contemporaries recognized his great ability and talents. The Lyman Hills and the Lyman Fork of the Big River were named for him in honor of his contributions to Alaska's mining industry.

Bob Lyman also left a lasting mining legacy in his family. He had intended to go back to Snow Gulch, and had taken in some equipment. After he died, the rest of the Lymans went back to Snow Gulch in 1975 to carry on, but the results were discouraging. Bill and Spencer moved on, and went to work at the Schwartzwalder Mine near Golden, Colorado. Doug continued to return to Snow Gulch, still hoping. Spencer decided to rejoin Doug and Linda in 1980. At the tail end of the 1982 mining season, they found the Snow Gulch gold in large quantity.

Spencer met Carolyn in Anchorage and they were married in 1984 at Snow Gulch. They have lived there since, carrying on with the placer mining. Spencer's efficient washing plant and over 20 years of steady production on Donlin are a tribute to Bob's earlier work. A third generation of Lymans is showing the ability to carry on the legacy; teenager Aurora is proficient with the three-yard excavator at Snow Gulch. Bill, Spencer and Doug, like their father, possess an easy aptitude for designing, building, operating and repairing every kind of machinery and equipment, and all three learned to fly.

Doug went on from Snow Gulch to work for Westgold and Placer Dome, companies engaged in the major hard rock exploration of Donlin Creek downstream from Snow Gulch. Doug also worked in hard rock and placer gold at several Alaska sites: Nolan Creek, Stuyhok, Nixon Fork and Bear Creek. In 2001 Doug began working at the McGrath Airport and today is the Airport Manager at McGrath.

Bill Lyman's mining career took him from Alaska to the Schwartzwalder Mine (uranium) near Golden, Colorado, to the huge Ertsberg Mine (copper) owned by Freeport Indonesia in Irian Jaya, to the Haile Mine (gold) in Lancaster County, South Carolina. In 1991 he moved his family to Tucson, Arizona, where he is Engineering Manager for Vroom Engineering & Manufacturing.

Helen Lyman graduated valedictorian of the senior class of 1962 at East Anchorage High School, taught two years in the Peace Corps in Nigeria after college, lived in Virginia, Wyoming, and Georgia, and settled in Portland, Oregon in 1978. Inactive in the Oregon State Bar, she is employed at the northwest law firm of Lane Powell PC, and uses her vacation time to visit family in the Alaska bush or in Tucson, Arizona.

Betty, who will be 89 in December 2007, has returned to Alaska every summer since Bob passed on. She lives in Portland near Helen in the winter and with Spencer and Carolyn at Snow Gulch in the summer. Despite her privileged upbringing in Minnesota and Florida, Betty was always fascinated with the pioneer life and wanted to live it from the beginning. She became Bob's mining partner, companion and confidante. Composing the preface to an unfinished book of their life together, Betty wrote: "It was during a true Indian summer day in September that we laid him to rest in a grave atop a ridge overlooking the cinnabar mine and all the surrounding country he had made so much his own. I knew a unique life had ended and that to me, who had been fortunate to be a part of that life, it was an end to the way of life we had shared. What Bob accomplished and how

he did it would be impossible today. I hope family and friends will be curious to know just how it was."

**Written by Helen T. Lyman, with editorial contributions from C.C. Hawley and T.K. Bundtzen, September 2007.**

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*From left to right: Spencer, Betty, Bill, Doug, Bob and Helen Lyman on the Kuskokwim River; the mining camp Red Devil can be seen in the background; 1962*

## WALLACE MARTIN CADY (1912-1991)

Wallace (Wally) Cady worked as a geologist in Alaska only briefly. Yet in a five-year period from 1941 to 1946, Cady deciphered the geology of a tract of Alaska larger than Vermont, the Central Kuskokwim region. Concurrently, as an “economic” geologist, he worked closely with Alaska small miners to increase the flow of the rare metal mercury that was vitally needed for the war effort. He assembled and trained a crew of young scientists in both economic and general geology. Under field conditions that now would be deemed primitive and impossible for productive work, Wally Cady made work fun. His geological work in Alaska was succinctly described by USGS colleague Bruce Bryant: “With the help of Robert E. Wallace, J. M. Hoare, and E. J. Webber, he made the pioneering study of 10,000 square miles, an area larger than the state of Vermont, which had a population of only 300 at the time. This was before the days of helicopter support, and travel was by boat and by foot. USGS Professional Paper 268 summarizes the results of this work.” This work amply justifies his induction into The Alaska Mining Hall of Fame.

Wally Cady was born on January 29, 1912 in Middlebury, Connecticut to Frank William and Marian, nee Kingsbury, Cady. Both parents were descendents of early settlers of the region. Frank was professor of English at Middlebury College and Wally and his siblings Howard and Frances grew up in the shadow of the campus. It was a lively family, with Wally, the elder son, leading the pack and Frances trying to keep up with her brothers. An outdoor life appealed to Wally from his earliest years. As a Boy Scout he rose to the rank of Eagle Scout and had the opportunity to camp in the Olympic Mountains of Washington and Cache Le Poudre in Colorado. With a crew of select Eagle Scouts, Cady built trails in Glacier National Park, Montana. Later in Alaska, Cady assumed the look of a sourdough with flannel shirt and trademark head gear, a crushed felt red logger’s hat. His ability

with an ax indicated that the right to wear such a hat was earned.



*Party of geologists and geotech assistants on the bank of the Kuskokwim River; circa 1943. Wallace Cady is fourth from the left. Photo from the U.S. Geological Survey Archives.*

Wally graduated from Middlebury College in 1934. Out of respect for a favored professor, he majored in biology but with the knowledge that he would be a geologist like his relative, noted geologist Gilbert Cady. His interest in geology had been especially influenced by Professor Bruno Schmidt—who earlier had been his scoutmaster. After graduation from Middlebury, he immediately enrolled in the graduate school at Northwestern University where he earned a Master’s degree in geology in 1936. His thesis, “Aerial and structural geology of the north end of the Taconic Syncline”, was the first of his many papers dealing with the geology of Vermont. Wally then commenced work on his Ph.D. under Marshall Kay at Columbia. Because of press of other work, and a World War, Wally did not complete that degree until 1944.

Before the war, Wally spent two seasons in the Olympic Mountains studying manganese deposits under Charles Park (C.F. Park, Jr.) for the U.S. Geological Survey. In 1941 Cady began full time work for the USGS. Under what now seems like extraordinary prescience, Alaska had begun to tool up for war in the late 1930s and by 1939, military construction projects began to remake the territory. Wally was sent north to lead a project nominally aimed at mercury, a metal that would be needed as the fulminate to detonate high explosives, and for

anti-fouling paint, as well as for common medicinals.

Cady left Seattle for Alaska on the S.S. Yukon of Alaska Steam on June 4 1941. Bob (Robert V.) Cushman, who would assist Wally, was on the same voyage but not yet officially employed by the Survey. Cady had been told to hire his assistant when he reached Alaska. Wally, who had known Cushman from Middlebury days, told Bob that he would be hired if he could reach Alaska on his own. Cushman took advantage of steerage rates to arrive with Wally in Seward where he was immediately hired.

Also on the ship were two school teachers from Oregon, one of whom was a vivacious brunette of Finnish descent named Helen Raitanen. Before he had formally met her, Wally told Cushman “See that girl there? I’m going to marry her.” By the time the four day trip between Seattle and Seward was over, the two were seriously in love (Cushman commented that they were “lost”), and were preparing for a mid-winter marriage. The marriage lasted until Helen’s death in 1986.

After assembling their gear in Anchorage, Cady and Cushman headed for Sleetmute, the center of mercury activity on the Kuskokwim. Bush pilot Don Glass took off from Lake Spenard with a heavily laden float plane carrying four passengers, Wally, Cushman, and cook-camphand Herschel “Buck” Landreau and Buck’s wife. At Sleetmute, Wally and Bob soon met old timers Nick Mellick Sr. and Oswald Willis. Willis had discovered the first substantial mercury deposit in the Kuskokwim almost thirty-five years before. He furnished the men a cabin and produce from his garden, as noted by Cady “without thought of remuneration”. That first summer Cady and Cushman mapped the Red Devil, the Alice and Bessie, the Barometer, and various other Willis prospects and began the geologic reconnaissance of the region. Before he left Washington D.C. for Seattle, Wally had requested an alidade, then a standard mapping instrument. He was assured that he would not need one—that he could do quite well with only his Brunton compass. But for accurate mapping of the

mercury mines, Cady found that an alidade was desirable. Cushman was impressed by Cady’s ingenuity when Wally fashioned a plane table by nailing three legs on an inverted (and empty) powder box, then placing a second and movable box on top, which with the Brunton used as an open-sight alidade, made a functional plane table and alidade set up for underground mapping.

A great deal of innovation was also needed for efficient regional mapping. No base maps were available but by 1941, the Air Force had trimetrogon aerial photographs of the region. Cady, with a great deal of help from Robert (Bob) Wallace, contributed greatly to development of aerial mapping—first tried out on a large scale in Alaska in the Central Kuskokwim region. An account of this work was published by Wally in 1945 in the journal of the New York Academy of Science.

The Kuskokwim mercury project that had begun pre WWII with a staff of two greatly accelerated in 1942 after the declaration of war. The first trip was leisurely and touristy. On the second trip, the deck of the S.S. Alaska was overflowing with automobiles, airplane parts and other military supplies. The trip, although pleasant, had a definite war-time feel. Cady’s field party was also enlarged. One addition was a man of extraordinary intelligence and ability, Robert Wallace, who became a party chief under Cady. Wallace later recalled the pleasant trip up the Inside Passage but also the frustration of finding their gear after it had been jumbled by internal transfers, then reloading on the Alaska Railroad for the trip between Seward and Anchorage. Eventually Cady and his crew had to unload the box cars to find their equipment and supplies before it could be loaded on float planes of Woodley Air Service for transfer to the Kuskokwim. Bob Wallace thought some of their work along the Kuskokwim had a Huck Finn-like character, as the men rode the stern-wheeler Wallace Langley up and down the Kuskokwim. The crew shared their life on the “Mississippi” with laden barges and unobtrusive sand bars, but they also had some non-Huck Finn experience with the more current shear pins and the kickers that

propelled the small boats that they used for project work.

Over the next few years Cady and Wallace were assisted by several geologists including Jacques Robertson, at first a cook; S. F. Johnson; George Gryc; Robert Chapman; and Joseph Hoare. In 1943 a brilliant figure, E. J. Webber, was added to assist Cady and Wallace and direct some of the project activities. To complement the USGS for detailed work near the mines, a Bureau of Mines team was added, trenching and sampling the known mercury deposits. Basically under war time informality, the USGS and Bureau acted as unpaid consultants to the hard rock miners, and there was a great deal of mutual respect between government men and miners. Cady especially appreciated the innate curiosity and intelligence of Russell Schaeffer and the several abilities of more formally trained Bob Lyman.

In 1943, emphasis on the project swung toward regional mapping studies. Under Cady's direction, Webber, Wallace and Joe Hoare mapped immense regions of unknown Alaska using foot traverses and river boats with an occasional lift from pilots such as Bob Vanderpool. Mercury was not neglected with Cady, Wallace, and Webber working on the deposits within their mapping areas. Cady, assisted by C.A. Hickox, mapped and described the deposits of the Cinnabar Creek area, which had only been discovered by Schaeffer in 1941.

The field work for the Kuskokwim project was essentially wrapped up by 1945. Cady and Joe Hoare completed most regional work. The men then brought detailed studies at the DeCourcy mine and the Red Devil mine up-to-date. Joe Hoare continued field work in the area for the next few years. The report from the project was not completed until 1953, but the essential results had been the passage of knowledge to the miners and an increased flow of mercury from the Kuskokwim Region. Beginning in 1946, Cady returned to work in his beloved Vermont.

Cady's work in Alaska furnished the foundation for our understanding of stratigraphy,

structure, and economic geology of the Central Kuskokwim region. It shows a greater appreciation of geomorphology than often given now. Cady recognized that the shallow mercury deposits could have been completely eroded in uplifted regions while preserved in areas with little regional uplift. He identified and photographed regional erosional surfaces in work still not duplicated.

Cady continued productive work in geology for the next forty or so years, mainly in three geographic areas, Vermont, the Olympic Peninsula of Washington, and Montana, all under auspices of the USGS. Even with preoccupation on the Kuskokwim project, Cady had completed his doctoral thesis in 1944. Its title "Stratigraphy and Structure of West-Central Vermont" barely reflects the extent of the work that went into the study. Geologist James B. Thompson, Jr., then at Harvard, remarked: "Few doctoral theses have involved as much work . . . [it] covered at 1:62,500, an area equivalent to about four and one half fifteen minute quadrangles. Not shown was a considerable amount of detailed reconnaissance in surrounding area . . . Wally's map and his interpretation of it marked a major advance in our understanding of the geology of western Vermont, and still stands, in its essentials, as the basis for most of the recent reconstructions".

Wally returned to Vermont in 1946 under another USGS study of strategic mineral deposits—the study of the talc and asbestos deposits of the eastern Green Mountain region. In 1946, Wallace, wife Helen and their first child, John, were in Montpelier, Vermont where Wally was mapping the quadrangle of the same name out of the newly established USGS branch office. Thompson notes that "During its heyday the Montpelier office served informally as the focal point for all of the geologists then working in Vermont . . . Wally was acknowledged as the Dean of the group . . . his standard response when deeply impressed by someone's brainchild, was to announce "I'll be a stud buzzard". A culmination of work out of the Montpelier office was a centennial geologic map of Vermont in 1961.

Wally fought for the continued operation from the Montpelier office, but lost the battle to bureaucrats who thought, with at least some justification, that more centralization would lead to cost savings and greater efficiency in the USGS. The Montpelier office closed after a productive life of about one and one-half decades.

In 1960 Wally resumed work in the Pacific Northwest, work which had begun before WWII. He moved with Helen and by now larger family of son John, and daughters Norma and Nancy to Denver, Colorado, home of the Survey's Rocky Mountain regional center. Partly because of recognition of plate-tectonics as an embracing structural theory, Wally's work began to change. His seminal work synthesizing New England geology had essentially been completed as he left New England for Denver. The result of about two decades of work was published in 1969, as "Regional Tectonic Synthesis of Northwestern New England and adjacent Quebec" as Geological Society of America Memoir 120. That synthesis was anchored in classical structure and stratigraphy, work that did not mesh with plate-tectonics. His work in the Olympics, however, strongly reflected the new concepts. In 1973 Cady wrote a summary article on "The Earmarks of Subduction", published in a review volume titled Implications of Continental Drift in the Earth Sciences.

By 1975, Wally's work in large-scale structural geology was recognized internationally. He received an appointment to lecture at Voronezh State University, USSR, on "problems of modern tectonics". Wallace and Helen Cady spent four and one-half months at the University, making many friends in the process. Later Helen, always a gracious hostess, made Soviet scientists at home in Denver as they passed through on the way to international conferences.

Other recognition followed. In 1983, Cady received Department of Interior recognition: "combining special competence as a field geologist with an exceptional ability to interpret his findings in a regional setting, he has been a strong and influential guiding force within the earth science

community in establishing a fundamental structural and stratigraphic framework for key portions of the North American continent".

Wally suffered a severe blow in 1986 when Helen died. Friends began to notice that Wally's health was failing. As his productivity fell, Wally was frustrated because he had unfulfilled objectives.

Wallace Cady died in Denver April 4, 1991. As noted by Bruce Bryant, Wally retained his heritage as a Vermont Yankee to the end—he had "a generally quiet manner, underlain by friendliness and a dry but bawdy sense of humor. He pursued . . . geology with total commitment". Cady was survived by three children, John, Norma, and Nancy, each with noted professional careers, and his sister the Rev. Frances Grauman.

**Compiled by Charles C. Hawley, October 2007.**

#### **Sources:**

In 1992, the Vermont Geological Society sponsored a symposium in honor of Wally Cady on the "Bedrock Geology of Vermont." The symposium was held on February 29, 1992 at Norwich University, Northfield Vermont. Papers were published in *The Green Mountain Geologist*, no. 4, volume 18. Specific papers on Wally are as given below:

Paul Washington, "Stratigraphy of the Camro-Ordovician Shelf in Western Vermont: The legacy of Keith, Bain, and Cady" p. 13-15.

James B. Thompson, Jr., "Wallace Martin Cady: Vermont Geologist", p. 16-18; also compiled works by W. M. Cady on Vermont, p. 19-21

Robert Cushman, "A Tribute to Wally Cady," p. 22-23

Bruce Wilson, "W.M. Cady, 1912-1991", p. 24-25

Bruce Bryant, "Memorial to Wallace M. Cady," Bulletin Geological Society of America.

Florence Cady Grauman (sister), Obituary. In the magazine of Middlebury College, fall of 1991

Robert E. Wallace, letter to John Cady, April 4, 1991

Annotated 8 mm motion pictures (converted to DVD) taken by Wallace Cady in Alaska 1941-45, mainly narrated by Robert Wallace and Robert Cushman with preface by John Cady

Personal remembrances



*Russell Schaeffer at Cinnabar Creek; 1958  
photo from the Lyman family collection*

## **RUSSELL SCHAEFFER (~1905-1960)**

Russell Schaeffer was one of Alaska's 'tough guy prospectors'. He was in the same class as Gus Uotilla or Frank Birch who, by themselves or with a wife or a partner or two, accomplished amazing feats of mining and prospecting in one of the true backwaters of the Alaska wilderness—the Kuskokwim Mineral Belt. At the start of his career in the early 1940s, Schaeffer had a partner, Harvey Winchell, but Schaeffer became more of a loner—flying, mining, and retorting mercury ore by himself. Schaeffer was not a hermit; he made good friends with the Lyman family and with people along the Kuskokwim. He accepted the scientists of the U.S. Geological Survey, one of whom, Pete Sainsbury, was about as tough as Schaeffer, and a good friend. Schaeffer enjoyed some time off in the winter months staying with the Parents at their road house at Crooked Creek and he was by no means a woman-hater. In letters he wrote, he alluded to the desire to find a 'good wife' but never married. He just never found a woman who would share his rigorous life.

This brief note about Russell Schaeffer is a work-in-progress. We do not know his birth place

or birth date. He died in the late fall or winter of 1960. The exact time of his death is uncertain, as he was alone. Bob Lyman, disturbed by lack of radiotelephone communication from Schaeffer, flew over to Schaeffer's mine at Cinnabar Creek on the Holitna and found him dead, apparently from a heart attack. Bob buried Russell at the mine. We do know that Russell had a sister, Frances Maclure, as she and a partner took over and operated Schaeffer's Cinnabar Creek mine at his death.

Schaeffer was a prospector and a miner. As a prospector he found the Cinnabar Creek deposit, second only to the Red Devil as a mercury producer and the complex, gold-tungsten-polymetallic deposit at Fortyseven Creek in the Holitna region. Schaeffer and his partner Harvey Winchell found the Cinnabar Creek mercury deposit in 1941. It was the first of several discoveries in the area. Small scale production commenced immediately, although it was not until 1955 that Schaeffer began to produce extensively from the deposit. The actual discovery at Fortyseven Creek was made in the fall of 1947, hence the name, but Schaeffer had been with the U.S. Geological party in the summer of 1947 when quartz veins and mineralized float were noted on the divide between Boss Creek and the Holitna River in an area that drained into the Muklulik River. At the end of the Survey's season, Schaeffer went back into the region and found rich gold-and tungsten-placers in the creek draining the divide and massive mineralized quartz veins at the head of the creek that he named Fortyseven Creek. The discovery was complex and needing some help, Schaeffer struck a deal with Bob Lyman. Bob would help Schaeffer prospect Fortyseven Creek for a month, then Schaeffer would join Lyman in working the mercury lode at DeCourcy Mountain. It was a good plan and it ultimately worked, but not without some adventures. Robert Vanderpool Sr., pilot from Sleetmute flew the men into Fortyseven Creek, and was supposed to pick them up about December 1<sup>st</sup> to go to DeCourcy. The weather turned bad, but Vanderpool slipped in and picked up Schaeffer and some of their gear. There wasn't room for Lyman, who set up camp. A major blizzard hit the country and it was days before Vanderpool could get in for

Lyman. Bob told his adventures to his brothers who at the time published the Bozeman (Montana) Courier. Bob predicted that Schaeffer would make several major discoveries in the almost unexplored Holitna region and Fortyseven Creek was number one.

Schaeffer was a keen observer and a competent practical geologist and mineralogist. Wallace Cady of the USGS was so confident of Schaeffer's competence that he based his description of Fortyseven Creek on Schaeffer's observations (Cady and others, 1955, p.120-121). The mineralogy at Fortyseven Creek was complex. Schaeffer found lode gold and identified the tungsten minerals scheelite and wolframite, also lead sulfosalts, argentite, and small amounts of gold and silver tellurides in a gangue of quartz and locally abundant tourmaline. Schaeffer mined both placer gold and placer scheelite from a single paystreak on Fortyseven Creek. The lode deposit is still of interest. It was explored by Anaconda in the early 1980s and later by the late Clarence Fry and Associates.

Theresa Parent remembered Russell Schaeffer when she was a child and teenager growing up in Crooked Creek, a small native community along the Kuskokwim River. "Russell Schaeffer was a kind man and was always polite and very respectful with the members of the Crooked Creek community. During his prospecting expeditions that took place throughout the region, he always landed on a sandbar below the village of Napaimiut for supplies and for refueling his 'Stinson' and later 'Cessna' aircraft. Frequently, he would hire a local 'bush whacker' to help him clear brush along claim lines and help with other prospecting activities".

Schaeffer experimented with mercury recovery and built his own retorts. His first experiments in the early 1940s were hazardous to his health and possibly that of Bob Wallace and the other Survey geologists camped near him at Cinnabar Creek. Wallace helped Schaeffer with the first retort and later wrote about it. In principle mercury recovery is simple if potentially hazardous.

The mercury sulfide mineral cinnabar is heated, the sulfur is driven off, and the remaining mercury, now a liquid, is condensed and drawn off. In commercial reactors of the time, the sulfur given off combined with oxygen to form gaseous sulfur dioxide. In Russ's primitive retort, the mercury tended to recombine with sulfur about as fast as it was liberated. Wallace suggested that they mix the cinnabar with the tin cans that accumulated at every camp. Wallace's idea worked. As the sulfur was driven off it combined with iron in the tin cans to make a form of iron sulfide, and allowed the pure mercury to be drawn off. Wallace later wrote, "The black stuff that had clogged his condenser was meta-cinnabar. The residue of combined sulfur and iron clearly was a form of marcasite, and sparkled like the fools gold it was."

Russell Schaeffer was a quick learner. Before his untimely death in 1960, he was ranked with Bob Lyman as Alaska's premier mercury miners.

**Compiled by Charles C. Hawley, October, 2007**

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*Secretary of State Hugh J. Wade administers the oath of office to Phillip R. Holdsworth, Alaska's first Commissioner of Natural Resources, as Governor Bill Egan watches; May 1, 1959. Photo credit to Alaska Polar Regions Collection, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.*

## **PHILLIP ROSS HOLDSWORTH (1910-2001)**

Phil Holdsworth's professional career extended nearly seventy years. He was a practical miner at the age of sixteen. Later he operated mines, assay labs, and mills. In World War II, he defended a Philippine mine as a guerilla warrior. Embarking on a life largely devoted to Public Service in Alaska, Phil Holdsworth attained the role of Alaska's elder natural resource statesman before his death in 2001.

Philip Ross 'Phil' Holdsworth was born August 21, 1910 in Grants Pass, Oregon, to Philip Harold and Florence, nee Ross, Holdsworth. The founder of the American family was William Holdsworth, who emigrated from England to Traverse City, Michigan in 1858. William's wife, Mary (Saunders) came from England's historic mining region, Cornwall. Phil Holdsworth's father, Philip Harold, was a trained mining engineer.

The Holdsworths first came to Alaska in 1913. Philip Harold, accompanied by his wife, Florence,

three-year old Phil, and his sister Bertha, constructed and operated a small, lode gold mine near Moose Pass. The family remained in Alaska for three years, but returned to Washington State in 1916.

Phil first mined at age sixteen (1926) in a family operation at Ewing's Landing in British Columbia, where he learned the skills of a miner such as mucking, timbering, and handling explosives. He also learned to complete laboratory assays for metals such as gold, a skill he would use later in Alaska. In the winter of 1928-29, Phil enrolled in the University of

Washington in a program that stressed both mine engineering and geology. The professor who taught assaying selected Holdsworth as his assistant because Phil knew more about the subject than he did.

At a time when the Great Depression had just begun, Holdsworth balanced periods of education with periods of mining to earn the funds to continue his education. In April, 1931, Phil returned to Alaska where he was hired as assayer at the Nabesna hard rock gold mine in the northern Wrangell Mountains. Within a month, he also was in charge of construction and operation of the mill. Initially a gravity mill, Phil added flotation and cyanidation circuits which with the gravity circuit extracted almost all of the gold in the ore.

In 1934, Violet Opel "Peggy" Walsh came to Nabesna to visit relatives. Peggy's relatives operated the Nabesna Road House where Phil and Peggy met.

The couple was married in December 1936 in Fairbanks. In 1937, they returned to Washington where Phil completed his degree in Mining

Engineering at the University of Washington. They then embarked on the adventure of their lives. On their honeymoon trip, Phil accepted the job offer of mill superintendent at the Mindanao Mother Lode gold-copper mine in the Philippines. The mine, then in an expansion phase, was much larger than the gold mine at Nabesna, Alaska. It employed 1,000 men and produced \$400,000 worth of gold and copper each month from 1,000 feet below the surface—half of which was below sea level. Holdsworth's responsibilities at Mindanao were soon expanded as he designed and built the tailings dam, helped sink the main shaft, and added power to the operation. The remote Mindanao mine was essentially self-sufficient; it had a sawmill that milled 13,000 board feet of timber per day and a large machine shop. Phil and Peggy thoroughly enjoyed their almost pioneer life—which, however, was due to change.

War hit the Philippines in December 1941 and the mine that had produced metals was soon producing the materials for a guerilla war. Phil was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the Philippine Army, but resigned in May 1942, when the Philippine Army surrendered to the invading Japanese. The Holdsworths then joined a guerilla band of Filipinos who were continuing the fight. Phil's experience, mechanical ability, and reservoir of materials at the mine aided the cause, as in the case of jury-rigged mines: Many years later writer Marguerite Reiss quoted Peggy Holdsworth's wartime diary:

*“(Phil) opened Jap mines (found washed up on the beaches) and salvaged the powder for use in our land mines. We experimented developing a tank or truck mine . . . the charge was approximately 25 lbs of powder . . . packed into a rectangular welded container with a gasket-sealed head and an . . . electric blasting cap as detonator. The prime mover was current from a Miners Cap-Lamp battery set up through a tension switch . . . By using a No. 22 or 24 single cotton covered wire and burning the insulation off, a nearly invisible “trigger” wire was obtained.”*

Phil's small guerilla band had little time to carry out their clandestine operations. The Japanese occupied the Mindanao mine on May 9, 1942, but by that time, the Holdsworths had moved into a remote shanty supplied by loyal miners at night. They were betrayed by one disloyal man, who lived only two more days before being dispatched by Filipinos whose loyalties were with the Holdsworths. On July 1, 1942, Phil and Peggy Holdsworth were captured by a force of twenty Japanese. They spent almost all the next three years in prison camps or in forced marches between camps.

Phil and Peggy were imprisoned until February 3, 1945. They had been more fortunate than many, but Phil's weight was down to 152 pounds and Peggy's to 81 when they were finally found by American troops led by General Douglas McArthur.

During their captivity Peggy's spunk had earned her grudging respect from her Japanese captors. Furthermore, the Filipinos regarded Phil and Peggy as heroes. For their own part, the Holdsworths remained close to Alaska's vigorous Filipino community for the rest of their lives. However, heroism is not always well treated by the bureaucracy. Officials could not decide whether Phil should be treated as military, as a short term Lieutenant in the Philippine Army, or as a civilian guerilla. Holdsworth never received veteran's benefits that should have been his as a matter of equity if not law.

Phil and Peggy returned to Alaska in 1946 where they joined old friend Ole Haugland, a pre-war gold miner at Nabesna, who rebuilt the Chistochina Road House at Mile 32 on the Tok Cutoff.

During the late 1940s, Phil worked on several mining projects in Alaska and Washington. He believed in the potential of the Willow Creek district near Anchorage. However, operating conditions were difficult with a scarcity of experienced miners and a fixed price of gold, and the post-war projects failed. In 1949, Phil joined

the Corps of Engineers at Fort Richardson, where he managed construction projects at both Richardson and Elmendorf. Still living the Alaska dream, the Holdsworths obtained a federal homestead near Wasilla. Phil commuted to work on the base in a little Cessna aircraft. When they left Anchorage, Phil and Peggy donated their 160 acre, proved-up homestead to the Girl Scouts of America. Augie Hebert remembered the gift, “This extremely valuable acreage would have meant a fortune to Phil had he kept it. His legacy on behalf of the Girl Scouts of America will never be forgotten.”

An event in 1951 caused reorganization in the Holdsworth home. Phil’s younger sister Clementina died, leaving David (9), Phyllis (7), and Bruce (4) orphans. There was a real possibility that the children would be separated and placed in foster homes. Peggy convinced Phil to adopt the children a year later.

In 1952, Phil was appointed to head the Alaska Territorial Department of Mines. In his confirmation hearings, Phil affirmed that he favored Alaska Statehood, although earlier, he had been skeptical about its economic viability. Gold dredges still operated at Fairbanks and Nome, but with marginal economics because of inflation and the fixed price of gold. The discovery of a rich copper strike at Bornite suggested that new exploration could revitalize mining, but the discovery of the Swanson River oil field on the Kenai in 1957 indicated that oil and gas would soon play an important role in Alaska’s economy. As Commissioner of the Territory’s Division of Mining, Holdsworth acted as an advisor to the Alaska Constitutional Convention (November ’55 to February ’56). At the convention, Phil became good friends with pioneer Alaska economist George W. Rogers who advised the convention on the drafting of the Natural Resource Article (Article VIII) of the Constitution with Phil’s special insight and advice. Rogers wrote, “Much of the specific provisions in Article VIII benefited from his (Holdsworth’s) experience in development and management. Phil played a major role in this project and in selling it to the Convention.” As Chairman of the Alaska Land Board in 1957, Phil

helped draft the Alaska Lands Act and played a significant part in drafting the Oil and Gas Conservation Act.

The Swanson River discovery was a powerful factor in the favorable consideration of Alaska Statehood by the United States Congress. In 1959, William A. ‘Bill’ Egan became Alaska’s first governor. Republican Holdsworth was so well regarded throughout Alaska that he was appointed by Democrat Governor Egan as the state’s first Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Although both Egan and Holdsworth were dedicated to the State’s best interests, they had somewhat different philosophies on resource management. An event in Egan’s first days may have exacerbated their differences. Shortly after Egan’s inauguration, he became critically ill and at times was near death. Many of Egan’s executive roles were undertaken by Secretary of State Hugh Wade. During Egan’s illness, DNR Commissioner Holdsworth and Director of the Division of Lands Roscoe Bell, had to consummate land selections as part of the Statehood Act. Some lands available for selection were on Alaska’s remote North Slope.

Holdsworth favored selection of the lands, although their merit as future oil fields was regarded with skepticism in academia and the oil industry. Some in the fledgling DNR, chiefly geologist Tom Marshall, believed strongly in the oil potential of the North Slope selections. Others saw the North Slope selections as just a way to help the U.S. Bureau of Land Management out of the daunting task of surveying all the navigable lands on the slope that would belong to the new state anyway.

When Egan returned to his role as Governor after his lengthy illness, he expressed to Holdsworth reservations about selecting the remote North Slope lands. The 1959 Statehood Act awarded ninety (90) percent of the revenue derived from oil and gas under Federal ownership to the new State of Alaska anyway—so why absorb the burden of administering the remote region? Holdsworth and Marshall stuck by their geological guns, and were aided by the views of Deputy Commissioner of

DNR, Charles Francis Herbert, a long time confidant of Governor Egan. The three changed Egan's mind, and in 1963, Alaska made the critical Prudhoe Bay selections.

The Juneau years were exciting for the Holdsworth family. Phil's adopted children, then approaching their teen years, noted that their stepfather loved to entertain informally at home: "there was a near constant parade of oil men, legislators, hard-rock miners and others of note visiting our home on 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Juneau and feasting on roast venison and moose steaks." The children recalled that, "in a family setting, he (Phil) was strict but fair; he provided us . . . a model for life based on truth, trust, honor." Perhaps intuitively, David and his younger siblings recognized that their parents, because of the travails of their life together, "had an uncommon closeness and loyalty to one another that lasted for the rest of their lives."

Phil continued to serve as DNR Commissioner through both of Egan's first terms. The critical sales of the selected North Slope oil lands did not take place until the following Hickel administration, but Holdsworth left a legacy in a tight well-organized department with considerable expertise in petroleum and non-fuel minerals. His subordinates in the department remembered him as a fair and efficient leader who paid attention to the ideas and needs of his staff.

After his retirement at the end of the first Egan administration Phil returned to industry. He managed the Alaska affairs of Denver-based Inexco Mining Company. He also began to receive public recognition. He was named Alaskan of the Year by the State Chamber of Commerce in 1971. In 1968, as lobbyist for the Alaska Miners Association (AMA) Holdsworth urged a fair and equitable settlement of the Native land claims, a view not held by some in AMA. During hearings on U. S. Senator Gruening's native claim settlement bill, a member of AMA's Land Use Committee testified that natives "were not owed one acre of ground or one cent of taxpayer's money." Holdsworth, the lobbyist for the AMA, contradicted

the previous testimony. Egan cabinet member Joe Henri wrote "Phil affirmed that there was a moral, public responsibility to equitably settle the Native land claims." By the time the settlement was finally made (1971), most miners in the AMA changed their minds and endorsed the final settlement.

Public service again called Phil in the 1970s. The 1959 Alaska Statehood Act included a provision to facilitate the care of Alaska's mentally impaired. It required that one million acres of State-selected lands be set aside by the new State for revenue generation devoted to mental health programs. Holdsworth advocated a three part solution to Alaska's mental health issues: first, a blue ribbon panel to identify needs and solutions; second a monetary grant for construction of facilities; and third, and most critical, a Mental Health Trust Fund, funded from proceeds from a 1,000,000 acre estate set aside for mental health. However, in the years following Statehood, the state ignored the last item and nearly half of the lands originally set aside for mental health needs were sold or leased to third parties. According to economist George Rogers, "Phil was the first to call attention to this outrage and soon his voice was joined by family and friends of the mentally ill." Holdsworth and Rogers continued to work on the problem. The issue was finally resolved in 1994. The settlement included provisions originally advocated by Holdsworth nearly 20 years before.

Phil also served on the Alaska Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission (FSLUPC) established under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. He continued to serve on the Commission until the passage of the 1980 Alaska National Interest Conservation Act (ANILCA). His work on the FSLUPC is remembered with appreciation by commission co-counsels John Katz and Esther Wunnicke.

In the 1980s Phil continued to represent the AMA and the Resource Development Council for Alaska (RDC). As a matter of course, legislative leaders routinely asked Phil for his council on natural resource legislation. It is doubtful that any significant piece of natural resource legislation

passed in those years without review by Holdsworth.

In later years, Peggy's health began to fail and Phil devoted himself to her care. Peggy died on November 12, 1993, in Anchorage. For years afterward, Phil retained physical vitality remembered by those who tried to out-dance him at senior functions or out-climb him in the hills. At last Phil's strength and memory began to fail. He died in Anchorage on June 3, 2001. To those who served with him, Phil will always be recalled as Alaska's resource statesman, a man to whom all Alaskans are indebted.

**Written by Charles C. Hawley, October 2006**

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## The Stroud Case

### HERBERT LIONEL FAULKNER (1882-1972)



H.L. (Bert) Faulkner's law career extended for almost seventy years. He was a sheriff, U.S. Marshall and attorney. He would represent almost every major mining company operating in Alaska during his lifetime.

Bert Faulkner was born on November 14, 1882 in Maitland, Nova Scotia. His father, who was originally from Boston, died when he was 5. He completed high school in Nova Scotia. He worked in Boston on an ice wagon, moved to the Red River Valley of North Dakota eventually ending up in Ketchikan, Alaska in 1903 working for the Tongass Trading Company. In 1904 he was appointed Ketchikan police chief. He held that position until his assignment to Juneau in 1907 as U.S. deputy marshal. Soon after, he began studying law at night at the law office of Lewis P. Shackelford.

Faulkner as U.S. marshal was to investigate a murder that would ultimately garner national attention. The following are his words:

*"This is a case which attracted national attention. The commission of Stroud's first murder was during my term as U.S. Marshal.*

*I think I can give you an outline of the facts from my memory. A motion picture was produced a few years ago, depicting Stroud's life. However, the producers, in dealing with the facts, exercised a wide degree of poetic license and mingled some fiction with reality. I do not think I shall ever forget the Stroud case. The facts are as follows:*

*One evening in 1909, about 8 p.m., I walked down town in Juneau on my way to my office. At the corner of Fourth and Franklin Streets a man named Dickinson was standing near the front door of his home. He called to me and said something unusual had happened in a little two-room cabin next door to the Dickinson home. He had heard a gunshot and a man had run out of the cabin and down Franklin Street toward the waterfront. I pushed open the door of the cabin and it opened against a dead man's body lying on the floor. He had been shot through the heart. We sent for the coroner. We had no clue then as to the identity of either the dead man or his assailant. The local police man arrived a little later at the morgue and he said the dead man had been employed as bartender at a local tavern. After 3 hours of investigation and inquiries, the local town policeman, Mulcahey, and I found that the dead man and a young man named Stroud were rivals for the favors of a local prostitute. We visited the lady's place of abode and found the young man, who gave us his name as Robert Stroud. After rather lengthy questioning and the discovery of a revolver which proved, on examination the next day, to have been the murder weapon, I got oral statements from both Stroud and his lady friend to the effect that the woman had, early the evening, quarreled with the dead man; he struck her in the face and left her: she told Stroud of this and Stroud shot and killed his rival. He finally admitted the killing, but claimed it was justifiable homicide. Stroud said the woman, at the time she had told him of the quarrel with Stroud's rival, had urged him to*

*commit the homicide. She denied making such a request although she wanted vengeance. I arrested them both. The woman was not prosecuted. Stroud pleaded guilty to first degree murder and was sentenced to life imprisonment in the United States penitentiary at McNeil's Island, State of Washington. I had notified Stroud's mother, who lived in Kansas City, Missouri, and she and her daughter came to Juneau, where they spent practically the remainder of their lives at hard work, devoting all their earnings to pay the expense of numerous attempts to have Robert paroled or pardoned.*

*A short time after he had arrived at McNeil's Island, he stabbed a guard in an attempt to kill him. He was then transferred to another U.S. Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. There he stabbed another guard and killed him. Then he was convicted and sentenced to death. His mother continued her efforts to save him and went to Washington, D.C. to present a petition to President Woodrow Wilson for commutation of sentence to life imprisonment. Wilson was on a tour of the south at the time and she found him in New Orleans. He was riding in some parade in a limousine with open windows. She succeeded in thrusting her petition through the window, and Wilson granted her an interview and commuted her son's sentence to life.*

*After that, Stroud stabbed another guard at Leavenworth, but, since the guard did not die and Stroud was already under two life sentences, no further punishment could be given him; but he was transferred to the U.S. prison at Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay, where he became engaged in the study of birds.*

*One day a bird with a broken leg found its way into his cell. He cared for it and was able to heal the leg. He then became interested in birds. He read everything available on the subject and wrote a book about bird life. This attracted widespread attention and many attempts were made by individuals, groups, organizations and newspapers to obtain a pardon for him in his*

*advancing years. All these failed. He died in 1963 after having served about 55 years in prison.*

Faulkner married his wife Roma Jameson on May 8, 1911. Roma had come to Juneau as a teacher in 1909. She was a graduate of the University of Washington. Her brother Earl Jameson, a reporter predicted that if she would come to Alaska she would marry the first man she met after coming down the gang plank. Jameson checked the new arrivals for news items as did Marshal Faulkner, whose job it was to check arrivals for wanted persons. An introduction was easily arranged and marriage confirmed Jameson's prediction. They would have two children Jean and Malcolm.

Faulkner passed the bar in 1914 and took over Shackleford's practice. Shackleford's principal client was the Alaska Gastineau Mining Company, led by Bartlett (Bart) Thane. Thane was developing a world class mining operation in Juneau at the time. Thane and Faulkner immediately developed a friendship. A very important component of Thane mining operation was the development of a hydro-electric project on Federal lands. Faulkner secured a 50 year power permit for the Salmon Creek and later in 1915 Annex Creek power projects into what would become the Joint Power Permit. It was the first federal power permit issued in Alaska and consider by the American power industry as a model.

Faulkner understood the labor unrest in the mining industry that was sweeping the country. One of the principal changes proposed was for miners to go to an eight hour work day. Faulkner convinced Thane to change to an eight hour work day before it became law because he said, "It is inevitable and you will build good will if you implement it before it becomes law."

Thane introduced Faulkner to the principals of the Kennecott and Wendell P. Hammon. He would grow his practice to represent Kennecott, Nome dredging, United States Refining Co., Chichagoff Mining Company, Kensington Mines, Jualin and Alaska Juneau Mining Company.



*B.L. Thane, H.L. Faulkner, Gov. Troy, B.M. Behrends, Mr. Ishikawa, E. Gastonguay, W. Tolch, Mr. Tomita*

In addition to having several large mining clients, Faulkner was a very active trial lawyer defending many individuals for various crimes. The following is one such case in his words:

### ***U.S. vs. Scataglini***

*This was a case of a clever defendant in a criminal trial, who was able to deceive the judge, jury, prosecuting attorney, and his own lawyer.*

*Ettore Scataglini was a young Italian who had worked in the Alaska Gastineau gold mine. He quit the mine and tried to make a living driving a passenger taxicab between Juneau and Silverbow Basin, four miles from Juneau, where the main buildings of the Alaska Gastineau mine, including the machine and blacksmith shops, bunkhouses, boarding house, etc., were situated. He was indicted for assault with a dangerous weapon on a miner at the dry room in the bunkhouse.*

*Scataglini was a happily married man with a 7-year-old son, law-abiding, well liked, sober and industrious. The miner in the case had circulated a rather slanderous statement and rumor accusing Scataglini of having illicit relations with the wife of*

*another miner. Scataglini was indignant about this and on a trip to the Basin he searched for his accuser and found him in the dry room. All parties at the trial, including the defendant, his accuser, and an eye witness, agreed that Scataglini, who was a tall, handsome, muscular man, pushed his accuser against the wall, demanded a retraction of the slander, and threatened to beat him, although no blows were struck. The accusing witness and his friend, who corroborated him, went further in their statements and said that Scataglini had pulled a revolver from his hip pocket*

*and said he would kill his accuser. Scataglini denied this very emphatically. These two witnesses both said the gun had a barrel 16 inches long. I had never heard of a revolver with so long a barrel and it seemed quite incredible that anyone would or could carry such a long instrument in his hip pocket. I, therefore, did not cross examine the two witnesses but confined my argument to the jury to the apparent falsity of their testimony concerning the 16-inch barrel. The jury acquitted the defendant on the first ballot.*

*About a month after the trial I was in the local gun store and I asked the owner whether he had ever seen a revolver with a 16-inch barrel. He said "No." Then he reflected and said, "Yes, I had one here a year ago." I said, "Where is it now?" The answer was, "I sold it to Ettore Scataglini."*

Faulkner continued to represent Bart Thane and his associated companies even after Thane's untimely death in 1927. In 1934 the Alaska Juneau mining company negotiated the purchase of all of the Alaska Gastineau properties and assets. Faulkner represented the Alaska Gastineau company. Philip Bradley then president of the Alaska Juneau Gold mining Company was so impressed with Faulkner that following the

purchase he hired him as chief legal counsel and placed him on the A-J's Board of Directors which he remained on until 1956.

Faulkner was a sole practicing attorney until 1934 when Norman Banfield joined him. Norman, like Bert, was self taught.

Robert Boochever, retired justice of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, moved to Juneau in 1946 as a young attorney, and became a partner in Faulkner's law firm in 1947. "Faulkner was very honorable, very studious. When I first went into the firm, I would try to be the first in the office and the last to leave, but I couldn't do it. He was always there earlier and stayed later."

In addition to representing mining companies Faulkner also represented fishing and utility companies, including Alaska, Electric Light and Power. With the advent of statehood Faulkner focused on protecting his clients to make sure that there mining claims, tidelands, rights of way etc. were protected.

In 1959 Faulkner retired to Oakland California where he continued to practice law on a part time basis.

At his death on June 28, 1972, he was still practicing law; he died suddenly of a heart attack, in court in San Francisco while arguing a case. He was member of the bar for 59 years in continuous practice in Alaska, the State and Federal Courts in California, and the Supreme Court of the United States.

His Law firm that he founded 93 years ago still exists today in Juneau as Faulkner Banfield.

**Written by David G. Stone, March 2007**

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*Photo courtesy of the E. Beistline family*

## **EARL HOOVER BEISTLINE (November 22, 1916-Present)**

Earl Hoover Beistline has had a distinguished career as mining educator at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks and was the preeminent leader of the Alaska Mineral Industry. Beistline brought to the classroom a unique blend of theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of mining. During all of his adult life, he has been a tireless and outspoken advocate of Alaska mining industry interests.

Earl Beistline was born in Juneau, Alaska on November 22nd, 1916, to Ralph and Catherine Beistline. Ralph came to Alaska in 1908 to help build the famed 'Million Dollar Bridge' over the Copper River, the construction of which insured rail access from Cordova to the Kennecott copper mines in the Wrangell Mountains. Later, Ralph Beistline spent a number of seasons hoisting frozen, gold-bearing gravels to the surface for underground drift mines in the Fairbanks and Richardson mining districts of Interior Alaska, before deciding to settle down in Juneau. Eventually, Earl's father would work on a variety of job assignments for the Alaska Juneau (AJ) Gold Mining Company and its predecessors for nearly 30 years.

Earl Beistline grew up in Juneau during a time when the community was prospering due to high gold prices beginning in 1934 and benefiting from the operation of an efficient and successful, large scale, underground mining operation—the AJ mine. During its heyday, the famed AJ would provide about 1,000 jobs to the economy of Juneau, then a town with about 5,000 residents. Earl would later recall: “When I heard talk of the Great Depression during my teen age years, it just didn't apply to Juneau. There were plenty of employment opportunities for anybody who wanted to work in those days”.

In 1934, Earl entered the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines in Fairbanks, which became the University of Alaska the following year. He enrolled as a student in the School of Mines and earned a B.S. degree in Mining Engineering in 1939. To earn money for school, Earl worked summers at either the AJ Mine in Juneau or in the thaw fields of the USSR&M dredge fleet near Fairbanks. Earl also kept busy in the winter sports arena in both the University of Alaska (UA) hockey and basketball programs. In 1936, he played his part on the UA 'Polar Bears' hockey team with classmates Glen Franklin, Patrick O'Neil, Gordon Picotte, and Erwin Clahassey. At the 1936 Anchorage Fur Rendezvous, a combination of UA and Fairbanks hockey teams defeated teams from Anchorage and Palmer, and won the Fur Rondy hockey championship. Later that year, at the Ice Carnival held in Fairbanks, the UA 'Polar Bears' hockey team defeated the highly favored Dawson, Yukon team by a score of 6-5. Earl also co-managed, with Patty O'Neil, the 1936 and 1937 UA 'Polar Bears' basketball team.

After earning his mining engineering degree in 1939, Earl wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life. He audited several geology classes, worked part-time in the Territorial Assay Lab, located on the University campus in Fairbanks, and labored for the FE Company. In 1940, he and others dug out (by hand) the rotten, wooden hull of Dredge #7 on Fish Creek and installed large steel plates for structural reinforcement. In 1941, he worked for FE

supervising drilling, blasting, and mucking crews in the Nordale and McCarty gold mines near Cleary Hill.

On September 17, 1941, Earl Beistline joined the National Guard, and was inducted into Company C, Fairbanks Unit, as a Second Lieutenant. Then along came December 7th, 1941 and the country was at war. He served in the 890<sup>th</sup> Chemical Company, a part of the 11<sup>th</sup> air division of the U.S. Army Air Corps. “Most of my duties revolved around the manufacture of chemical bombs for the Aleutian Islands campaign”, Beistline would later relate. Beistline was eventually promoted to the rank of Major and discharged in 1946, when he returned to Fairbanks.

Beistline’s career in the mineral industry would quickly crystallize after his return to Interior Alaska. In a recent interview with the writer, Earl said: “The year 1946 was a banner year for me, when important events changed the direction of my life”. Topping the list was his courtship and marriage in August, 1946, to Dorothy Hering, a beauty queen, and daughter of a well known Fairbanks family. Family tradition has it that Earl had a bet with his buddies that Hering, whom he did not know, would win the crown of Miss Winter Carnival for 1946. Dorothy won. Earl was then persuaded by his friends to use the money that he’d won to take the queen out to dinner, which he did. Earl and Dorothy were married several months later. The couple would have four children, Ralph, Bill, Catherine (Kathy), and Linda. All four children still live in Alaska. Dorothy, his incredibly supportive wife during Earl’s career at the University, and who would later become one of Fairbank’s top professional florists, passed away in 1996 after a short battle with cancer.

During the summer of 1946, Beistline devised a new method for sampling placer concentrates while working on a gold dredge on Caribou Creek east of Fairbanks. He would later write a thesis about it, earning an Engineer of Mines (E.M.) Degree from the School of Mines in 1947.

In the fall of 1946, shortly after his marriage to Dorothy, an event occurred that would change Earl’s professional life. Lou Jordan, a Professor of Mining Engineering at the School of Mines, abruptly resigned for personnel reasons, and left Alaska for the Lower 48 States in September—at the start of the school year. UA Dean Ernest Patty called Earl on the telephone and asked him to come up to his office on campus as quickly as he could. Upon his arrival, Patty asked Beistline if he would be willing to take over the teaching responsibilities of the former Professor Jordan for one year, pending the hiring of a permanent replacement. Earl accepted Patty’s offer, which would begin his 36-year career as an educator at the University of Alaska. Lothar Fieg, who was a mining engineering student at the time (Class of ‘47), remembers: “Earl took over Jordan’s place with no advanced notice and by a diligent effort, quickly became an excellent instructor”.

Even though teaching would soon dominate his life, Earl would still continue to work as a practicing mining engineer. During the summer of 1947, he worked in Columbia at the invitation of former student colleague, Patrick O’Neil, the Vice President of South American Gold and Platinum Company. Earl’s American Association for the Advancement of Science presentation in Fairbanks later that year emphasized both engineering and geological aspects of the Columbian placer deposits being mined—including one platinum placer larger than Alaska’s Goodnews Bay district.

Beistline’s career with the University quickly spiraled upwards. After becoming a Professor of Mining Engineering in 1946, President Bunnell appointed him Dean of the University of Alaska School of Mines in 1949, a post he held under several reorganizations until retirement. On June 2, 1960, Beistline, still the Dean of the UA School of Mines, accepted the position of Dean of Faculty for the entire University of Alaska system, replacing Charles Sargent, a professor of Civil Engineering, who wanted to return to teaching and research. Earl would serve as Dean of Faculty for 10 years. On July 2, 1970, Beistline was named the first Provost of the University of Alaska’s Fairbanks

campus, a position he held through much of the 1970s. During ensuing years, Dean Beistline also served twice as the Academic Vice President for the Statewide University of Alaska system. For short periods, Beistline was the Acting President of the University of Alaska during the administration of President William R. Wood.

Some of Beistline's duties at the University of Alaska were not related to teaching a mining curriculum or the managing of academic affairs. In the late 1960s, during the height of the Viet Nam war, student activists announced that they would hold a series of demonstrations on the UAF campus. Remembering the recent violence at campuses around the country, some on the Faculty Senate urged Beistline to expel the organizers, which included some faculty members. Instead, Earl met with the demonstrators and afterwards recommended to President Wood that he set aside a day for the demonstrations, which he did. That day, Earl joined the students around the Bunnell Fountain in the center of the UAF campus, where they sang songs, gave speeches against the war, and read poetry. Dean Beistline later said he disagreed with the opinions of the anti-war activists, but not with their right to express their views. There was no violence or disorderly conduct on that day nor was there ever on the campus of UAF thereafter.

During Beistline's tenor as UA's chief advocate of mining education, there were significant changes taking place as the Alaskan Territory became the 49<sup>th</sup> State. The fixed price of gold had caused the gold industry to decline and base metals did not recover after WWII. At Statehood, there was practically no hardrock mining industry left in Alaska, so mining education at UA had to respond to these realities. In 1962, after nearly 40 years of existence, the School of Mines was included into the College of Earth Sciences and Mineral Industry. In 1975, the core of the old School of Mines became the School of Mineral Industry, later changed to School of Mineral Engineering in 1984, which remained under that name until the recent organization to School of Engineering and Mines in 2005.

Perhaps the most difficult reorganization took place in 1975, when the geology program left the College of Earth Sciences and Mineral Industry and was transferred to the College of Environmental Sciences. Dean Beistline strongly opposed the reorganization, and tried to stop the geological faculty from being transferred; however, he was not successful, despite his considerable influence on campus. The writer was the President of the Student Mining Society on the UAF Campus during 1973, when the reorganization was being formulated, and remembers this was a very contentious time indeed.

The always dynamic Beistline moved to change programs in response to the ever changing needs of mineral education and research. In 1966, after years of diligent work, Dean Beistline established the Mineral Industry Research Laboratory (MIRL), appointing Dr. Ernest 'Ernie' Wolff as its first director. MIRL quickly began to produce valuable compilations of past Alaska mineral deposit and mines information, which served as useful guides for the newly emergent mineral exploration industry. MIRL's important research continues today.

In 1979, with colleague Ernest Wolff, Beistline organized the first spring Interior Mining Conference held in Fairbanks. The first several conferences were held on the campus of the University, and knitted together university and government-funded, applied research with the needs of the re-emergent placer gold mining industry. Although other aspects of mining would eventually replace the 'placer only' theme, the now biennial 'Interior Mining Conference' remains an important, applied educational vehicle to this day and a core activity for the Fairbanks Branch of the Alaska Miners Association. In 1981, Beistline designed and created the Petroleum Engineering Program, in response to the growing needs of the State's petroleum industry.

Although known to many as a professional administrator and mining educator in the University of Alaska system, it is difficult to understate Earl Beistline's professional achievements. In 1957,

Beistline was elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), in recognition of his contribution to engineering sciences, and applied mineral research. In 1969, Earl was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Law degree from the University of Alaska. In May of 1971, he was designated Engineer of the Year by the Alaska Society of Professional Engineers. In 1982, Beistline authored 'Placer Mining Methods' for the McGraw Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology. He was chosen University of Alaska-Fairbanks Distinguished Alumnus for 1975 and awarded the Distinguished Alumnus of the School of Mineral Engineering in 1992.

Earl Beistline retired from the University in 1982, after 36 years with the institution, but his good works would not end there. In 1986, Earl was the motivating force behind the establishment of the Alaska Minerals Commission. He served as chair until the mid 1990s. The eleven continuing members of the commission have since had a demonstrative positive influence on minerals policy and business climate in the 49<sup>th</sup> State. This organization will now have to take the lead and tackle some important policy and regulatory issues affecting the Alaska Mining Industry today.

In 1997, Earl and long time friend, former University of Alaska President William R. Wood, were the driving force in the establishment of the Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation. Earl served as its first President until 2003. Beistline served on the National Mining Hall of Fame's (NMHF) Board of Governors from its inception until 2005. Earl was able to convince the NMHF of the important contributions that some Alaskans made to mining, which resulted in the induction to the HMHF of Stephen Birch, Clarence Berry, Alfred H. Brooks, Fred Bradley, John Treadwell, and Ernest Patty. It is said that Earl threatened the Board of Governors with "sending permafrost to Colorado" if his Alaskan nominations were not approved. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Earl Beistline himself was inducted into the National Mining Hall of Fame at a ceremony in Leadville, Colorado.

During the 1990s, Beistline partnered with colleague Ernie Wolff to serve as advisors to author Leslie Noyes, while she researched for her book *Rock Poker and Paydirt: The History of Alaska's School of Mines and its Successors*. This book, which was published in 2001, has become the accepted summary on the history of mineral education at the University of Alaska.

In his retirement years, Beistline was very active as a professional consultant for GHD Resources (GHD), a successful placer mining firm active in several mining districts in Interior and Western Alaska. During much of the 1980s, Earl's association with GHD revolved around his expert knowledge of the placer deposits of the Circle Mining district, notably the Eagle Creek placer. Many Alaskans know Earl for his very active roles in the Pioneers of Alaska Igloo #4, the Alaska Miners Association, Society of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers (SME), Boy Scouts of America, various Lions Clubs, Rotary, and the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce. Until recently, he has spent much time at his retirement cabin near Central in the Circle Mining district, where he greatly enjoys gardening and simpler tasks in life.

Perhaps the best way to remember Earl Beistline's achievements is to review what others have said about him. Ray Smith, who taught at the UAF School of Mines Program and later became the President of Michigan Tech University, wrote for Earl's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration: "I want to let you know how much I hold you in high esteem and how you have always been a model on how I wanted to live my life. You (Earl) have made superb contributions to Alaska mining, your University, and to the Fairbanks Community".

Don Dafoe, the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs for the Southern Region (Anchorage Campus), of the University of Alaska, remembers in 1996: "Earl was the 'go-to-guy' within the State Administration during the late 1960s and early 1970s.....He took whatever position that was asked of him and did the job very well. If there was ever a 'Medal of Honor' to be awarded to anyone in the University system, it

should go to Earl Beistline. I cherish his friendship and that of his wonderful, late wife Dorothy”.

Patrick O’Neil, one of many well recognized School of Mines Graduates (41), states: “We worked together as athletic managers at the School, then in the mining club and other activities.....as Dean, Earl played an important role in getting me started in my South American adventures, and later in mining camps throughout the world”.

David Summerfeldt, who was a transfer student from Lafayette University pursuing a B.S. Degree in Geology at the SME during the 1960s, remembers Earl: “He held his position in the (UA) administration and commanded tremendous respect and credibility with an efficient ‘hurry-up’, but happy, no-nonsense style that accomplished things effectively—Dean Beistline didn’t like to waste time”. Many other students remember Beistline with similar respect, and nearly all cherish their association with Earl learning underground mining skills in the maze of tunnels beneath the University of Alaska-Fairbanks campus.

Many other colleagues in the mineral community regarded Earl as a walking encyclopedia of Alaska mining, and would put to use his excellent, well organized files in his often visited office on University Avenue in Fairbanks.

A true inspiration to students, co-workers, and the mining industry at large, Earl Hoover Beistline has tirelessly worked as an educator, avid historian, and active member of many civic and mining organizations for many years after his ‘official’ retirement.

**Written by Thomas K. Bundtzen, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007**

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*Ernest in 1974; from the E.N. Wolff family collection*

## **ERNEST N. WOLFF (1919-2005)**

Ernie Wolff was a notable personality on Alaska's mining landscape for more than sixty years. During this time he prospected, mined, taught, administered, wrote, and served on public bodies, always in his unique style with a kind of gentle truculence. Ernie's style of teaching was pragmatic with few inspiring lectures but a great deal of hands on work. After demonstrating a mining or blasting technique, he expected his students to be able to accurately repeat the performance. Ernie knew all the common arts of mining and, by teaching about them, preserved them for future generations. He was a student of Alaska history and of the lives of the prospectors who found Alaska's wealth. He wrote a fascinating book about one of those personalities, Frank Yasuda, and interviewed countless others. Most of us know something about Ernie Wolff simply because he was a visible part of the Alaska mining scene for so long. But Ernie's easy-going nature masked a much more complex personality than most of us knew.

Ernest N. Wolff was born on April 24, 1919 in the small town of Newport, Minnesota. His

father was an architect; his mother was a nurse who put her profession on hold until Ernie, one of three boys, was out of high school. In the early 1930s Ernie and his family moved to northern Minnesota near the Canadian border. This move required Ernie to go south to the Iron Range in order to attend high school. Without realizing it, Ernie's youth exposed him to the true meaning of new wealth: his home was surrounded by farms, lumber operations and not far away, the great Minnesota iron ore mines which fueled the United States' growing iron and steel industry. When Ernie wasn't in school he worked in the lumber camps and there gained an abiding respect for the loggers as: "the most honorable profession in the world, next to mining".

When Ernie left high school he attended junior college on the Iron Range for two years. It cost Ernie all of \$5 per semester to attend but at the depth of depression, \$5 was a hefty investment in education. In 1938 he left junior college to continue his education as a mining engineer at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, then the School of Mines. When asked the all too common question, "Why Alaska?" Ernie said simply that the feeling "Go West young man" was still prevalent in people's thinking. Ernie indicated that he was always a bit of a contrarian so going north seemed the thing to do.

Ernie spent \$33 on a train ticket to Prince Rupert (which, 60 years after the fact, he still felt was too much) and started north to Alaska. His first summer in Alaska instilled in Ernie a longstanding curiosity which never left him – his interest in the history of nicknames. At this time in American history, virtually every male of any repute on the frontier had a nickname and Ernie was no exception to the rule. It seems that before Ernie left Minnesota, some of his logging friends gave him two wool shirts to keep him warm during the cold Alaskan winters. Since it was still the Great Depression and most men in Alaska were lucky to have a single shirt on their back let alone two, Ernie turned out to be one of the better equipped and better dressed men on the job. Ernie's summer job as a laborer on the Alaska Railroad brought him into contact with another Minnesotan who liked

fancy belts. In order to separate these two flashy characters, Ernie was given the nickname Shirt Minnesota and the other Minnesotan became Belt Minnesota. From that day Ernie was fascinated by nicknames. He gathered a collection of nicknames and the stories behind them, eventually discussing nicknames and listing some of them in his book about Frank Yasuda.

During the following two years Ernie finished his degree in Mining Engineering graduating in Mining Engineering in 1941 from the Fairbanks school. Like many students at Fairbanks during the depression, Ernie was able to attend school because of interest taken and aid given by University of Alaska President Charles Bunnell. Bunnell told Ernie that he could live in an old cabin and even loaned him a claw hammer to pull the rusted hasp. During the summers Ernie worked with the Alaska Territorial Dept. of Mines. When Ernie graduated in 1941 he landed a job at the newly formed College Observatory where he worked until 1948, eventually becoming the director of the facility from 1946-1948.

Ernie reserved his summer times from 1941 through 1950 for prospecting and mining in the Chandalar, Manley, Tolovana, Circle and Koyukuk districts. He later maintained that it was during this period that he was introduced to the richest gold placer deposit of his experience. It was at Big Creek in the Chandalar. It was not a particularly nuggety creek but it contained abundant fine gold. Lots of big rocks and a thawed streak down the middle, helped thwart the attempts of early drift and surface miners to remove the gold left buried there. Ernie began to prospect the creek in 1946 with partners Joe Regnier and Vince Magnuson. In 1948 the partners resolved to complete drilling the creek; Joe was to drill and Ernie to help with the drill and pan and keep the records. As summer approached, an incoming plane replenished their supplies and brought an elderly Japanese. Ernie knew immediately that it must be Frank Yasuda, a man that he had heard of often since arriving in Alaska ten years before. Yasuda was called the "Japanese Moses" because he had led disease plagued Eskimos from the Barrow region far to the south

where he founded the village of Beaver on the Yukon.

Yasuda had been confined to an internment camp during World War II and was but a shadow of his earlier self; nevertheless he was determined to visit a prospect that he remembered from long ago. Frank's strength failed and the miners brought him back to camp where they fashioned a trade. They would take Frank to his prospect and Yasuda would assume the cooking chores. During the long days of summer Ernie and Regnier learned to love the old man. Both men thought Frank Yasuda was the only truly great man they had ever known. The drilling project was completed in September and the men headed back to civilization. The drill had proved the richness of the placer but it proved too difficult to mine with the small equipment available to Ernie and partners.

Ernie also had a notable part of a consolidation of the Chandalar District. Eskil Anderson, a sometimes Territorial Mining Engineer, had been approached by several individuals who believed that the Chandalar District had potential for lode as well as placer gold. Anderson enlisted Ernie Wolff's help in the reappraisal of the district. The men slowly gathered up lode and placer prospects that they placed in a corporation, Little Squaw Gold Mines. Ernie was named a Director, serving in this capacity for nearly forty years. When asked about Ernie's involvement in Little Squaw Mines, Eskil maintained that Ernie liked to stay out of the limelight but was a guiding force in the company's up and down history for four decades. As in most good mining camps, men come and go but the camp lives on, in this case as Little Squaw Gold Mines, currently a public company based in Spokane that recently resurrected the district and began work anew, taking up where Ernie and Eskil left off.

In the fall of 1950 Ernie arrived in Fairbanks fresh from a summer of prospecting and mining in the Chandalar District. Never much of a temperance leader, Ernie's first purchase, even before he reached his cabin on Noyes Slough, was a case of beer. As he walked down First Avenue

along the Chena River he was hailed by another future Fairbanks legend, Captain Jim Binkley of Riverboat Discovery fame. Jim and Ernie were friends and Jim offered a ride in his boat, the Godspeed. When Ernie stepped ashore at his cabin, he paid Captain Jim with the only legal tender he had - a bottle of beer. Captain Jim gladly accepted and thus made Ernie one of the first paying passengers of Captain Jim's long and distinguished riverboat career.

After a decade of prospecting Wolff decided to build up his geologic skills. In 1951 he enrolled in the first geologic field course offered by the School of Mines. The course was taught in the Bonnifield district south of Fairbanks by Ward Bond and an able staff. (In later years, Ernie taught this course.) Ernie took his wife Ann along on the trip. Ann's acceptance as camp cook was gained easily by her delicious blueberry sourdough hot cakes.

Ernie and Ann were childless, but soon decided to adopt. It was a decision he never regretted and recalled with a grin that he could get out of bed, heat water, make a bottle of baby formula for his daughter Libby, change her diaper, feed her and get back in bed without waking up. The vision of Ernie in his longhandles feeding an infant is hard to swallow, but knowledgeable sources assure that his story rings true. Eventually Ernie, Ann and then Ernie's second wife Joanne Redhead Wolff adopted and raised five children.

In 1957 Ernie admitted to reaching the first of several cross-roads in his life. He realized that he enjoyed teaching and that he needed more education if he was going to advance past the Instructor level. Ernie enrolled at the University of Oregon in Eugene. He bought a house there and moved his family to Oregon. He received his Masters Degree in Geology in 1959 and shortly thereafter moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, where he began teaching at Colorado State University. Ernie pursued his teaching career at Fort Collins but continued to work on his PhD degree which he received from the University of Oregon in 1965. During this period Ernie spent the winters teaching

and the summers doing field work in eastern Oregon. However, Dr. Wolff longed to return to Alaska. In 1966 his opportunity came: he was offered a research position with the Mineral Industry Research Laboratory (MIRL) of the University of Alaska-Fairbanks. His new boss was Dean Earl Beistline, a long-time friend from Ernie's previous involvement at the University. Ernie began teaching and research at MIRL where he became its first Associate Director in 1969—effectively operating the Institute under the general guidance of Beistline. Wolff retained this position until his retirement 17 years later in 1983. Ernie remembered his efforts there as being focused not on new scientific discovery but on practical problem solving for Alaska's mining industry. Even so he recognized that Alaska's placer mining industry had to modernize to operate in the complex matrix of technological advance, political activism and environmental awareness. In 1979, Wolff, Beistline and a few others promoted a Fairbanks based conference on placer mining that could be sponsored by the Alaska Miners Association. The conference is the forerunner of the biennial conference now held in Fairbanks. Although the conference now emphasizes hard rock, it continues to seek and promote placer mining themes.

The Institute also recognized the coming computer generation when MIRL published Report No. 16 that documented all the mineral resources of Northern Alaska from computer generated files. The study was authored by Lonnie Heiner and Ernie Wolff.

Ernie's landmark publication at MIRL is, however, his handbook for Alaska prospectors. Wolff's Handbook for Alaskan Prospectors stands as a valuable and fascinating contribution to Alaskan containing abundant theoretical and pragmatic material. The book, first published in 1964, is an historical gold mine of practical, common sense prospecting techniques. Further, the book remains a snapshot of a way of life quickly receding into mining lore. Where else can you learn how to read a topographic map, identify minerals by classic means, hard face a pick point in your own forge and construct shelter without hammer and

nails? When asked why he wrote the book, Ernie indicated that he felt there was a huge gap between practical mining knowledge and “the stuff we learn” in college. It was his goal to fill that gap for the Alaska prospector. Ernie’s book went through two editions and several printings and still retains the original flavor which makes it a must for any collection of Alaskana.

During the early 1970s Ernie not only taught but he encouraged his students to strike out on their own. He, along with geologist Pete Sandvik, were instrumental in helping a young, bold entrepreneur named Lawrence (Lonnie) Heiner and geologists Jeff Knaebel and Eddie Chipp start Resource Associates of Alaska (RAA). Although Ernie doesn't claim much credit for his role with RAA, those of us who worked for the firm know that he was integral to its early survival. Within ten years RAA was a multi-million dollar corporation that eventually grew into an international mining company.

As time passed, Ernie guided MIRL through the copper craze of the early 1970s, the base metal madness of the mid-1970s, and the biggest gold boom in history in the early 1980s. Over the years Ernie obtained his Professional Engineer's License, his Professional Surveyor's License and also became a Certified Professional Geologist. But he also witnessed his mining industry become saddled with burdensome regulations, many of which seemed to be designed to prevent mining in Alaska. Ernie decided his time in the driver's seat had come to an end. In 1983 he retired from MIRL and in 1985 was honored with both the School of Mines' Outstanding Alumni Award and Distinguished Service Award. Ernie was also named to the Alaska Mineral Commission that had been established by the legislature to recommend policies that would promote the Alaska mining industry.

But retirement only sped up the pace of life for Ernie Wolff. He continued to review placer gold prospects around the state and to act as an expert witness when the need arose. He once cautioned about being overly optimistic by stating “A pessimist is an optimist with experience”. He

became a founding Director of Fairbanks Exploration Inc., a local mineral exploration company, and was always an effective and plain-spoken advocate for the Alaska mineral industry. He was an integral force in the Alaskan Independence Party. And above it all Ernie remained a practical, no nonsense miner's miner.

A perfect example of Ernie's pragmatic approach came some ten years after his retirement when an aspiring miner from Texas informed Ernie that he had a new device for recovering fine placer gold, a claim Ernie had heard countless times in his career and one which was usually based on junk science. This particular man wanted Ernie to ship 40 tons of fine gravel from the south bank of the Yukon River just down stream below Coal Creek in the Circle District, a place Ernie knew well from past personal mining experience. The would-be miner was going to ship the gravel to Texas and run it through his fine gold device and see what he got. Ernie thought this idea bordered on daft so he suggested a much more cost effective approach: Ernie would send the man several size fractions of fine placer gold purchased from the local assay company. The man could then spike barren gravels from his native Texas with a known amount of gold, run it through his system and see what he recovered. Simple, practical, economical Ernie sent the gold. He never heard from the man again.

In 2001 Leslie Noyes, after a decade of active collaboration with Ernie and Dean Beistline, published a history of the University of Alaska's School of Mines. The book titled *Rock Poker to Pay Dirt* ties the School's history to mileposts in the history of Alaska itself. Wolff's influence is felt throughout. This book could not have been written without Wolff and Beistline as active collaborators.

Ernie's professional accomplishments, significant as they were, are greatly over shadowed by his human side. Through the good and the bad, Ernie's seemingly endless store of compassion has touched the lives of many people over his long lifetime. Ernie always seemed to be helping someone in need, as illustrated in the following tale.

Early one cool fall morning in the late 1980's, Ernie and the author were heading out to the Cleary Summit area north of Fairbanks to evaluate the underground workings of the old Nordale gold mine. On the way to the mine they stopped at his work shed where he kept the hard hats. He opened the shed door and stepped inside. There, on an old couch, was a rumped young man, fast asleep. Ernie stopped, looked at the man and said "Hmm, there's somebody on my couch." He quietly retrieved the hard hats and we left the man still asleep. Ernie did not speak of the incident until asked who that man on his couch was. Ernie simply said "I don't know." What was obvious to Ernie was that the man needed a place to sleep.

Ernie spent the remaining years of his life actively supporting his life-long loves – his family, the Alaska mining industry and the Alaska he called his home. Ernie passed away in Fairbanks on May 3, 2005 at the age of 86. His rare combination of technical training, hands-on experience and human compassion make Ernie Wolff one of the few men who clearly qualify as an Alaskan "gentleman scientist".

**Compiled and written by Curt Freeman with the aid of Joanne Wolff, October, 2007**

**Sources:**

Leslie Noyes with collaboration of Earl H. Beistline and Earnest N. Wolff: *Rock Poker to Pay Dirt: The History of Alaska's School of Mines and its Successors*, University of Alaska Foundation

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Ernest N. Wolff, 2000: *Frank Yasuda and the Chandalar*

Personal memories

## **Distinguished Alaskans Aid Foundation**

The Alaska Mining Hall of Fame Foundation was incorporated as an Alaska non-profit corporation on April 27, 1997. The Foundation was organized exclusively for educational and charitable purposes, including donations to organizations that are tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code. On September 17, 2003, the IRS confirmed the 501(c)(3) status of AMHF, and further categorized the organization under codes 509(a)(1) and 170(b)(6).

The foundation is a non-membership corporation that depends on services provided by its officers and directors, others interested in Alaskan mining, and on donations and grants.

The Foundation is especially indebted to eighteen (18) persons who have each contributed \$1,000 to become 98ers, in honor of the first stampedeers to Alaska in 1898 at Nome.

### **The 98ers**

Dr. Earl Beistline	John Mulligan
Thomas K. Bundtzen	Patrick H. O'Neill
Glen Chambers	Elmer E. Rasmuson (d)
Douglas Colp	William Stroecker
Wendell Hammon Jr.	Dr. Robert H. Trent
Dr. Charles C. Hawley	Mitch Usibelli
Dr. Walter Johnson	Joe Usibelli, Sr.
Wallace McGregor	Dr. William R. Wood (d)
James Moody	Dr. Kenneth L. Zonge

(d = deceased)

Most of the 98ers are recognizable as miners of national or international reputation. The late William R. Wood was President, Emeritus, of the University of Alaska. Dr. Wood suggested the organization of the Foundation. The late Elmer E. Rasmuson was an Alaska banker and benefactor, long interested in Alaska natural resource history. Dr. Walter Johnson's career was mainly in Native public health, but he knew many pioneer Alaskans. His own research has taken him to Sweden and Norway in search of the true story of the so-called

The Foundation is seeking about ninety more 98ers, but it welcomes contributions at every level. For further information contact:

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