

**Alaska State Library  
Historical Collections**

Guide to Collection

**Alyeska Central School**

**PCA 468**

1 Box

Processed by: James Simard,  
June 2007

**ACQUISITION:** The collection was donated by the staff of Alyeska Central School in June, 2007 as the school was closing its doors. Acc. # 2007-017.

**ACCESS:** The collection is available for viewing, however; the photographs may not be photocopied.

**COPYRIGHT:** Request for permission to publish material from the collection must be discussed with the Librarian. Photocopying does not constitute permission to publish.

**PROCESSING:** Like documents were arranged in chronological order.

## HISTORICAL NOTE

The Alaska Territorial Legislature in 1939 appropriated \$8,000 for the purchase of high school courses from the University of Nebraska, to be delivered via correspondence to isolated places in Alaska. In 1958 over 380 elementary courses and 980 secondary courses were purchased. In 1960 the first Alaskan certified teacher was hired to teach elementary courses. The first Alaskan course was written for grade three in 1961, and courses for all other grades were completed by 1970.

The school newsletter called the *49er* was initiated in 1973 and a school library was created in 1974. A half-time librarian was added to the staff in 1977.

In 1975, the legislature opened enrollment to any Alaskan who had not completed high school or received a GED. In 1987, a summer school by mail program was piloted to provide high school students from local school districts an opportunity to improve grades, complete courses necessary for graduation, or to maintain their learning over the summer months.

In August of 1992, the school was reorganized as a separate Division in the Alaska Department of Education. In 1993, the name was changed from Central Correspondence Study because the United States military placed students from correspondence schools on a lower tier for being eligible to enter the service. The name selected by the State Board of Education was Alyeska Central School. The school continued to use the subtitle "Alaska's Centralized Correspondence School" in publications.

In 2003, Governor Murkowski proposed the closure of Alyeska Central School, and he introduced companion bills, HB174 and SB107 to prohibit the Department of Education from offering a correspondence study program. Representative Bruce Weyrauch introduced a committee substitute for HB174, providing a "one-year transition period in which the functions performed by the Alyeska Central School can be assumed by another educational organization, such as a charter school or a school district of the state." The school became a charter school under the Yukon Koyukuk School District in the fall of 2004. In June 2007, the school was permanently closed.

The primary source of information for historical notes is "The Alaskan School That Keeps on Working," by Darby L. Anderson. See also: "Brief History of Correspondence and Home Schooling in Alaska," by Margaret Mackinnon. Both documents are located in PCA 468, Folder 1, File 1.

## SCOPE AND CONTENTS NOTE

Photographs of students and staff of Alyeska Central School. Clippings, historical reports and statistics, letters from parents and students, and related materials about Alyeska Central School and home schooling in Alaska. Included is a folder of "symbolic lessons," carried by Iditarod 17 mushers to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Alaska's Centralized Correspondence Study program and to recognize the early years when lessons were delivered by sled dogs. Finally, there are documents related to the proposed closure of Alyeska Central School, which prompted many letters to the editor and newspaper articles.

## INVENTORY

### Folder 1:

- 1 Memorandums, Reports, and Statistics, including: "The Alaska Studies Connection: Distance Education Through Tradition and Technology," by Darlene M. Wicks; "The Alaskan School That Keeps on Working: Historical Perspective, Alyeska Central School," by Darby L. Anderson; and a "Brief History of Correspondence and Home Schooling in Alaska," by Margaret Mackinnon.
- 2 Notes and Letters, from students and parents to teachers and school administrators, spanning the years 1978-1995.
- 3 Newspaper and Magazine Clippings about home-school students and families, 1975-2004.
- 4 Interviews, taken from teachers, school administrators, parents, and students, ca. 1999.
- 5 Alyeska Central School catalogs and brochures.
- 6 House Bill 174, the proposal to close Alyeska Central School, including HESS Committee Transcript for 3/27/03, with members Seaton, Cissna, Wilson, Wolf, Gatto, and Coghill.
- 7 Letters in support of Alyeska Central School and opposed to closure.

**Folders 2 - 8:** [Photographs of activities, students, school staff and instructors]

- 2 CCS / Leadership conference
- 3 Student photos 1983
- 4 Student photos 1986
- 5 Photographs of kids w/ their parents
- 6 Mini-course in history. C/S hikers cross the Chilkoot Trail.
- 7 C/S students in action.
- 8 Photographs of students and staff.

**Folder 9:** [Photographic reproductions of letters from students, carried by mushers in Iditarod 17. ]

**Folder 10:** Team photographs of the Alyeska Central School Academic Decathlon teams, 2000-2004.

**CD:** ACS Files, 2004 research docs for timeline & farewell party. [Contains digital photographs and word documents.]

**VIDEO:** *Alyeska Grads*, KTUU-TV, Late Edition, news story; May 29, 2004

**Zip Disk:** HB 174 Sp. Ed. Committee Hearings, March 11, 13, 18, 2003