

## NOTICE OF MEETING TUESDAY

April 22, 2025

in person at  
410 Cushman  
Fairbanks Distilling



### Program

**There is NO ZOOM this month.**

**At 5 PM, those wishing to try libations will meet and at 6 PM, owner Patrick Levy will present on history of the building and tour of the original home of the Fairbanks Fire Department and then City Hall before becoming a distillery.**

**Monday, April 21, 2025**, the Morris Thompson Visitors and Cultural Center will have a presentation on the 1918 sinking of the SS Princess Sophia, **Doors open at 6:15 PM and program starts at 6:30 PM.**

Silas Firth of Anchor Point's Standing Tide Productions will discuss the history of the sinking, its effects on Alaska history and the development of a documentary that memorializes the event. A "sneak-preview" screening of parts of the upcoming film will be shared.



## AGENDA 21 April 2025 FGS

This meeting is a talk/tour, so we will keep the official meeting brief.

Genealogy questions and tips are always welcome!

Meet at 5pm for drinks (optional) at the Fairbanks Distilling Company, with the talk/tour beginning at 6pm. Discussion and approval of the Minutes from the March meeting.

Officer's reports:

President Amy Stratman:

Vice President Janet Richardson:

Secretary: volunteer needed.

Treasurer Aldean Kilbourn:

Unfinished Business: Princess Sophia display update?

New Business: Discussion about the May meeting.

Announcements: See you at the May meeting!

Continued from page 1 - Princess Sophia

While the film is not completed, it explores Alaska's deadliest maritime disaster, which took place in Lynn Canal 30 miles northwest of Juneau. The SS Princess Sophia was carrying prospectors and others on one of the last steamship runs of the season out of the Klondike and Interior of Alaska, headed for Vancouver and Victoria. In a blinding snowstorm and off-course, the Sophia ran aground on Vanderbilt Reef at 2 am, where it remained for over forty hours, until the hull was torn open and it sank to the sea floor with no survivors.

Many small communities lost prominent citizens in the sinking, but the tragedy has largely been forgotten, particularly outside Southeast Alaska. Filmmaker Silas Firth said he was surprised this history isn't taught in high school history classes and remarked that his goal is "...to keep this story alive, to honor those who were lost, and to examine the unique culture and period of history the Sophia represented and what we can learn from that today."

## Accidental Genealogy by James T. Bartlett

Some of your members might remember the murder of Cecil Wells at the Northward Building in October 1953. It was quite the sensation, in part because Cecil's wife Diane was accused of the crime alongside her lover, Black musician Johnny Warren. In Jim Crow-era America, that was almost more scandalous than the murder itself – at least according to the newspapers and magazines of the time

When I began to reexamine the case for my true crime book *The Alaskan Blonde*, I hoped that I could locate Marquam Wells, the only son of Cecil and Diane, who had been just three years old when he was so tragically orphaned.

Thanks to that unusual first name I found him quickly on Facebook, though in fact the person I had found was the son of the original Marquam (and who, like his father, goes by

Mark). Alas he and his father had had a complicated relationship, and they had not spoken for over 20 years – though using “Marquam” on Facebook was a son’s hopeful attempt that one day his father might look him up, and they would reconnect.

Mark Jr gave me the last known contact details of his father, and I called and left a message. Amazingly, less than half an hour I got a call, and Mark Sr seemed excited to be able to finally discuss and write about the moment that had, of course, changed his life. Then, two weeks later, he sent me a polite letter stepping back from the project.

I was in a quandary about whether to inform Mark Jr that his father was still at the same phone number, but after much agonizing I decided it wasn’t my decision to make: perhaps if Mark Sr had mentioned his son in our conversation, I would have.

Moving on over several years of research, I made frequent use of Ancestry, Facebook and the many other resources – print and online – and in doing so I created some moments of what I call “accidental genealogy.”

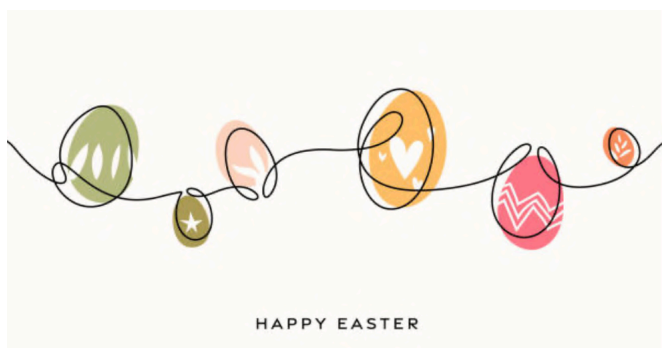
Firstly, about a year ago I got a message from someone asking if I could pass on the details of Mark Jr: it was from Jody Butler, Mark Jr’s younger half-brother. He and Mark Jr had fallen out of contact following their parent’s divorce when they were teens, and he had recently come across the book and recognized the name Cecil Wells.

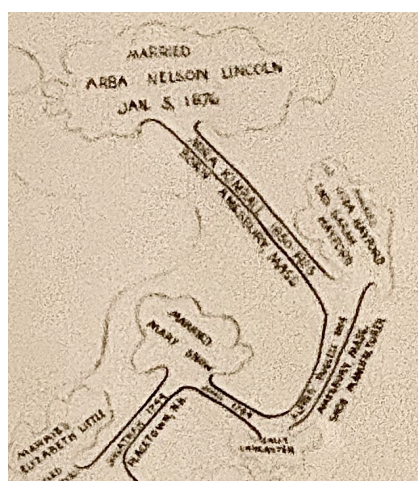
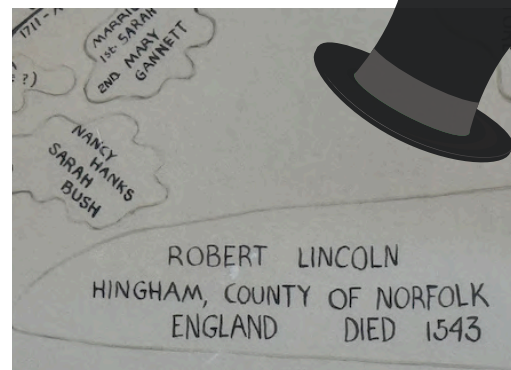
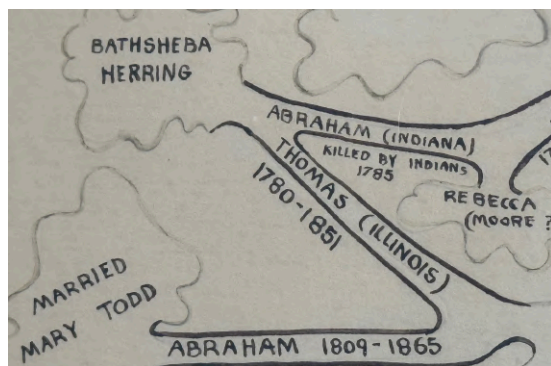
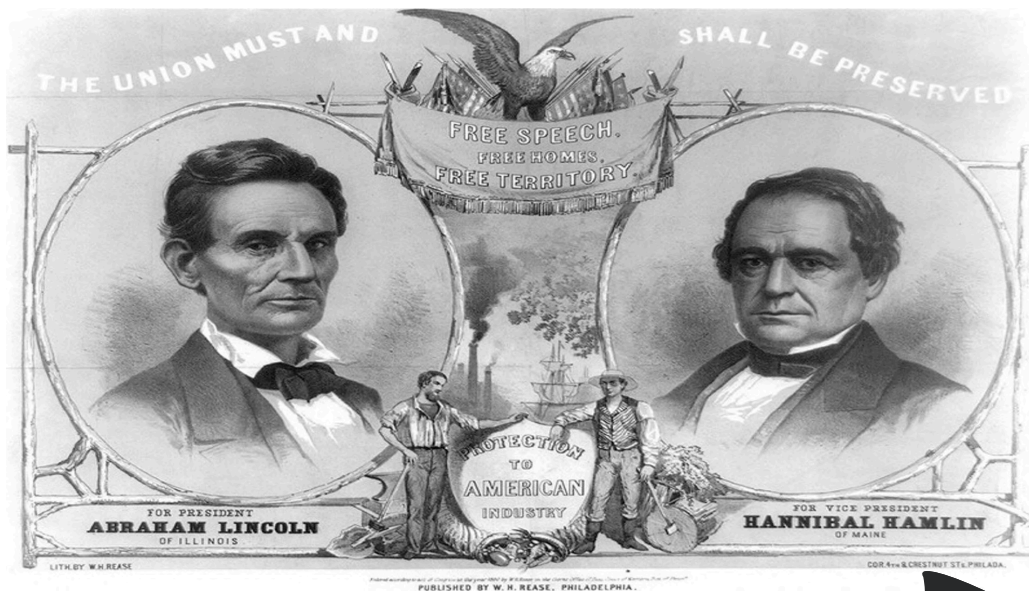
Then, just several months ago I received an email from Stacy Garcia, one of the children of Darrell Rafferty. Rafferty was the son of Cecil’s eldest daughter Phyllis, and a grandson of Cecil’s. I had interviewed him a couple of times during my research, and he had sent me some personal family photos of Cecil, Diane and others – including ones featuring Cecil and Walt Disney!

Sadly, Stacy told me that Darrell had passed away just before the book was published, but that he was very excited to read it. Like many others of his family who were just children at the time, the murder was never discussed (at least when they were in earshot), and it had been a gap in their lives.

Now Stacy was thrilled to read the story, even if it was in a rather bittersweet way, and a week or so later she emailed to says she had bought copies for her four children that Christmas! I never imagined my book about a 70-year-old murder in Fairbanks, Alaska, would be a holiday gift, but I guess that too was a result of some accidental genealogy.

N.B. You can see all Darrell’s pictures, police/FBI documents and more items related to the case at [www.thealaskanblonde.com](http://www.thealaskanblonde.com)





Charles Lincoln of North Pole, Alaska, presented his speech "Growing Up Lincoln" during our February meeting. He shared his framed, hand drawn family tree during the program. He is related to President Lincoln, via the Lincoln family of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1600's. Growing up, he wasn't sure if the tree was accurate, but it was a great conversation piece.

Turns out, with today's genealogy being easier to research, the tree appears accurate. Arba Nelson Lincoln is Charles great grandfather.



Charles wife Dawn was also in attendance at the Feb meeting, and we want to note she has a cooking channel on YouTube. The link is <https://www.youtube.com/@DawnofCooking>



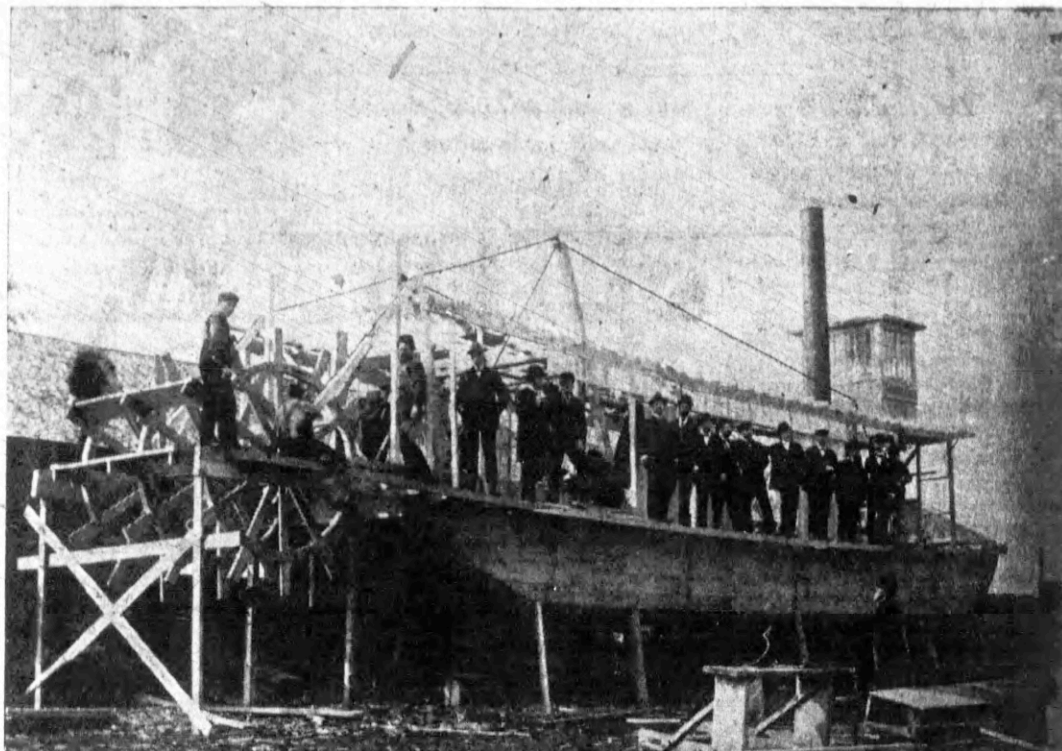




L. SATURDAY EVENING, MARCH 12, 1898.

## WILL DREDGE TANANA RIVER.

A well equipped party preparing to explore the Yukon's Big Tributary.



By courtesy of the Soo.

In their own steamer, a river boat of the accepted Yukon type, a party of Minnesotans propose this coming summer to penetrate and explore a section of Alaska now unknown, the Tanana river district. They have been told that it is rich in gold, for the Indians have brought out the free metal from its gulches and creek bottoms. They hope to find it so. Whether they do or not, they will spend two years in the country and perhaps longer.

The ordinary, every-day Klondiker has become so common a figure that neither he nor his projected travels attract much attention. He is no longer a novelty. But the gentlemen interested in the undertaking here outlined are neither ordinary themselves nor are they proposing to follow in the footsteps of hundreds of others who have made their way into Alaska. In the first place, they are all men of means and of particular and peculiar fitness for that which confronts them, and in the second, they are accepting a hazard quite beyond that of the gold hunter who by a well defined and well traveled way pushes on over the passes into Dawson City.

As a starter it will be well to name the members of the party. E. M. Wells, the business manager, is from St. Paul, as are also Sidney A. Warner, T. L. Morgan, J. W. Morgan, Thomas Rowlands and J. E. Orme. Dr. F. H. Fowler is from Minneapolis, S. C. Sargeant, Frank L. Gibbs and Anton Olson from Taylors Falls, H. C. Sperbeck from New Richmond, Wis., and W. B. Barlow from Canton, N. Y. They are organized as the Tanana Mining company, and in their ranks represent en-

gineers and machinists, boilermakers, a physician, a pilot, a photographer and an assayer.

"Our plan," said Mr. Wells to a Journal man, "is to start from here March 17. Arriving at Tacoma, where we will outfit, we will take a sailing vessel we already have under charter. We will reach the mouth of the Yukon in time to be well up river by July 15. I understand that in warm seasons the ice hardly goes out before July 1. Arrived at the juncture of the Tanana, we shall boldly ascend its course. The stream, though unexplored, is declared to be navigable, so we expect little trouble."

The accompanying halftone presents the members of the party and the boat. Her peculiar lines, those paid special attention to in all the Yukon boats, stand forth clearly. It will be noticed that her planking is marked in sections. She has been put together this winter over at Stillwater, and the markings are for identification when she is reconstructed at the mouth of the Yukon. Just at present she is on her way to the coast, having been shipped in advance of the party.

Her length is sixty feet, beam of twelve feet and a draught of eighteen inches. The engines are thirty horse-power. Her equipment will include a hydraulic dredge to be worked on board the barge to be carried, and a steam frost extractor. The latter contrivance is an invention of Sperbeck, one of the party, and its efficiency is rated at that of twenty-five men with picks. The pump, of course, is to be worked on the bars and in shallow water. It has a capacity of forty cubic yards per

hour. The boat will run twenty-two tons weight. The barge will be of the same width as the boat, but twenty feet shorter.

A returned miner from the Yukon knows of the presence of gold in the Tanana valley, and it is on his information that the expedition is making its way northward. Associates of his are to conduct a similar company. The Tanana is inaccessible to packers, and boats offer the only means of reaching the great treasure-house hidden in its hills. In his report, Captain Ray, U.S.A., spoke favorably of the Tanana river.

The company has been organized on a partnership basis, all the men have been carefully picked by those who originated the scheme, and if success is to reward careful preparation and a business-like hunt after the yellow grains of sand, it certainly should smile on these bold Argonauts.

To those not familiar with the geography of Alaska it may be pointed out that the Tanana is a stream of some size emptying into the Yukon a distance below the great bend of the river and Fort Yukon. The headwaters find their supply in the same mountain fastnesses feeding the Copper river on the east and the Forty Mile and Sixty Mile creeks and the White river on the west. The Tanana itself flows north. The Copper river empties into the Pacific some miles from Cook's inlet, and the others mentioned find the Yukon not very far from Dawson City. The Klondike runs its course on the other side of the Yukon.



Frank L Gibbs came to Alaska in July 1898 from Taylors Falls, Minnesota. On the 1900 census at Fort Independence (near Nome), we see him with friend and fellow prospector Anton Olson (Anton died in Fairbanks in 1922 and is buried at Clay St Cemetery).

Frank soon worked at Fort Gibbon, Tanana, Alaska.  
He worked various steamships, one being the USAT Jefferson C Davis as engineer.

Frank Gibbs died on the ship Princess Sophia, when it sank on Oct 25, 1918 near Juneau, Alaska. His ticket was to Seattle. We know he left Alaska at times for the winter, so we can assume he was traveling south for the winter.  
He was single, no children. His mother was his next of kin.

The Weekly Alaska Citizen April 5, 1915



John Carroll, W. B. Cummings-R. Barlow, George Trahy, Frank Huprich, Walter Johnson, George Huprich and Frank L. Gibbs, who will be employed on river steamers this summer, arrived from the Outside Monday on their way to Tanana.



Checked by A.B.Cole  
& R.E.Robertson.

## INFORMATION SHEET.

Name.. **FRANK L. GIBBS**.....  
 Lost from the wreck of the steamer Princess Sophia, Skagway to Vancouver, Voyage No. 391. Wreck occurred on Vanderbilt Reef, about four miles from Sentinel Island Light and forty-five miles from Juneau. The Princess Sophia belonged to the Canadian Pacific Steamship Company. Body recovered and brought to the undertaking parlors of the C.W. Young Co., at Juneau, Alaska.  
 CAUSE OF DEATH:--Accidental Drowning

Sex.. **Male**...; COLOR & NATIONALITY.. **White**..-**American** AGE.. **46**

COLOR OF HAIR.. **grey**.... HEIGHT.. **67 in.**.. WEIGHT.. **165**. COMPLEXION.. **dark**

DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH.....

RESIDENCE... **apparently has been at Tanana, Alaska, enroute to Seattle, Wash.**

DENOMINATION..... LODGE AFFILIATIONS.. **Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association No. 38, Seattle, Wash; Dalles Lodge No. 68, State Lodge No. 3, Knights of Pythias, Grand Domain of Minnesota; Masons (but where not stated)**

NAME OF FATHER..... BIRTH PLACE.....

MAIDEN NAME MOTHER..... BIRTH PLACE.....

MARRIED..... WIDOWED..... SINGLE.. **Yes**..... DIVORCED.....

OCCUPATION:--PROFESSION..... TRADE.. **Asst. Engr., U.S.A.T. "Gen. Jeff. G. Davis"**

OTHER INFORMATION... **Apparently in service U.S. Army in Army Vessel Service, as identification credential card; bearing his name; and purported picture found - card signed by Harry L. Twaddle, Acting Q.M. U.S. Army; on this card he states he was born Dec 31, 1871; married no; American citizen by birth yes; height 5 ft. 7 ins., weight 165 lbs., color white; complexion dark; hair grey; eyes dark; and that dependent's name is Mrs. Mary A. Gibbs, Taylors Falls, Minn.**

NEAREST RELATIVES..... **See above**

**Apparently Mrs. Mary A. Gibbs, Taylors Falls, Minn.**

OTHER NAMES AND ADDRESSES FOUND ON DECEASED.. **Mrs. Mary A. Gibbs; Taylors Falls, Minn.; J.C. Murray, 604 Mission - Savoy Hotel, Seattle, Wash.; John A. Burby, Room 241 P.O. Bldg., San Francisco, Cal.; Depot Quartermaster, U.S. Army, Seattle, Wash.; also Quartermaster, Ft. Gibbon, Alaska.**

WAS DECEASED INSURED.. **Yes**..... INSURER.. **Apparently Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association No. 38, Seattle, Wash.**

WHERE BURIED..... IF SHIPPED, HOW & WHEN?.....

GENERAL INFORMATION & REMARKS & LIST OF PERSONAL PROPERTY FOUND ON BODY...

**1 U.S. Army, Army Vessel Service Identification Credential (See above); 1 Steamboat Inspection Service U.S. License to Chief Engineer of Steam Vessels, serial No. 61016, issue No. 2, 3; file No. L 800, issued to Frank L. Gibbs, July 27, 1918; 1 Steamboat Inspection Service U.S. License serial No. 59783, issue No. 1, 1, File No. L 800, to Frank L. Gibbs, issued Sep 5, 1914; 1 personal record U.S. Army vessel Service giving name as Frank L. Gibbs, together with continuation sheet, 1st page signed by Frank L. Gibbs July 6, 1917, at Ft. Gibbon, Alaska, and continuation sheet signed July 6, 1917, at Ft. Gibbon, Alaska, in presence of Harry L. Twaddle, 1st Lieut. 14th, Inf., A.Q.M.; 1 permanent pass on St. Gen. McDowell issued to Frank L. Gibbs, at Ft. McDowell, Cal.; 1 certificate card that Frank L. Gibbs is member of Tanana Loyal League in good standing; 1 individual transfer slip of Frank L. Gibbs, enroute from Fort Gibbon, Alaska, to Seattle, Wash., signed by Jay E. DeWolf, 1st Lieut. U.S.G.A.Q.M. (see other side)**



continued (see other side)  
 1 letter dated Feb 27, 1918, on letter head of War Department, Office of the Department Quartermaster, Santa Fe Building, San Francisco, Cal., File No. 20A (Gibbs, F.L.), addressed to Frank L. Gibbs, ordering Gibbs to Alaska for duty 1918; 1 card No. 18054, dated Seattle Mar. 1, 1917, issued by Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association No. 38, showing receipt of dues of \$12.00 from F.L. Gibbs for dues from Jan. 1, 1917, to Jan. 1, 1918; another similar receipt card No. 3156, dated Seattle, March 2, 1918, showing receipt dues from F.L. Gibbs from Jan. 1, 1918, to Jan. 1, 1919, Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association No. 38; 1 unsigned pay voucher for \$47.50 of War Department, Q.M.C., to Frank W. Peterson, for services at Oakland July 6, 1918, from Sept 28, 1918, to Oct 16, 1918, apparently on U.S.A.T. Gen. Jeff. C. Davis (this voucher is in duplicate); 1 letter of advice No. 272, from The First National Bank, Seattle, Wash., addressed to Frank L. Gibbs, stating "we have received this day for your account and at your risk securities purporting to be as follows: \$3000.00 Second Liberty Loan Nos. 420516-7-8"; 1 receipt Seattle Mar. 13, 1918, No. 0086, signed by W.M. Coombs, F.S., stating has received \$1.20 from Bro. F.L. Gibbs for Assessed Red Cross Fund for Apr 1/17-Apr 1/18; 1 notice from State Lodge No. 3, Knights of Pythias, Dallas Lodge No. 68, stating dues of \$1.50 due; 1 letter (in duplicate) dated Fort Gibson, Alaska, signed by Anthony S. Johnson, 1st Lieut. 30th, Batt. U.S.G. Commanding Post, directing Mr. Guy H. Bergman, Pilot Steamer Davis, Mr. Harry M. Swartz, Chief Engineer Steamer Davis, Mr. Frank M. Gibbs, Asst. Engineer Steamer Davis, Mr. William Corning, 1st Mate Steamer Davis, to proceed to Seattle, Washington, and report to Depot Quartermaster for orders, entitled "Special Orders No. 121, six receipt receipts No. 38403, St. Michael, \$20; No. 28277, \$20.00, Tamm, No. 181028, \$40.00, on back "sent to Mrs. M.A. Gibbs"; No. 179349, \$20.00, on back "sent to M.A. Gibbs, Taylors Falls, Minn."; No. 38058, \$20.00, and No. 169184, \$20.00 each endorsed on back sent to "Mrs. M.A. Gibbs, Taylors Falls, Minn." 1 Canadian Pacific Railway exchange Order for one first class Limit ticket Vancouver to Seattle, No. 32308, written across face in ink "10/30th/18, No. 4174, bearing on back stamp of Skagway Agent C.P.Ry.; 1 very small book, leather, stating on front cover "The Merchants National Bank, St. Paul, Minn., in account with Frank L. Gibbs"; showing on inside deposits May 8, 1910, 800.00, Dec 23 1910 800.00, Mar 23 1912 125.00, Dec 4 1912 800; also contains notation No. of bonds 420516-7-8, and addresses W. Johnson, 1515 Belmont St., Seattle; also Room 412 Alaska Bldg., McDonald, also "H.J.R. 412-7th Coronado - 2501 Highland Ave., L.A.; C." card of "John A. Bury, Room 241 P.O. Bldg., San Francisco, Cal.", card of "J.C. Murray, 604 Mission - Savoy Hotel, Seattle, Wash."; 1 White Pass & Yukon Route form 40-A, Chair No. 11, Car. 1, No. 1927; 1 letter from "Kallispell, Aug. 16, 1918, addressed Dear son Frank and signed Mother"; 1 letter dated San Francisco, Aug 6 1918, addressed "Dear Mr. Gibbs" and signed "Rubie"; 3 Third Liberty Loan bearer bonds, each for \$100.00, Nos. 5198407, 5198405, and 5198406; 5 United States War Savings Certificates, Series of 1918, each completely filled with 20 war savings stamps, all made out to "Frank L. Gibbs, Tamm, Alaska," No's. 01708869, 01152630, 00965710, 36114179, and 36114178; United States currency \$465. in silver (U.S.) \$4.50; 1 gold Waltham watch, open face, with gold chain and nugget charm attached; 1 Masonic pin; 1 3d liberty loan celluloid button; 1 Red Cross button; 1 pair eye glasses and case; 1 black leather bill fold pocket case.

Frank Gibbs died with many papers and items found on his body.

Some of the deceased on the Princess Sophia had no items at all, some only their watch or ring, and some, like Frank, had a long list.

Research by Amy Stratman

**We have all probably seen the map of Alaska transposed over the lower 48, but this really puts the size of Alaska in perspective!**



**REMINDER: FGS MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR THE 2025-2026 YEAR ARE DUE STARTING JUNE 1, 2025.**

**SINGLE \$25**

**FAMILY \$30**

**CORPORATE - \$25**

Mail checks (FGS or Fairbanks Genealogical Society) to P.O. Box 60534, Fairbanks, AK 99706 or use PayPal at the Fairbanks Genealogical Society's website  
[www.fairbanksgenealogicalsociety.com/membership/](http://www.fairbanksgenealogicalsociety.com/membership/)

**THE TAPROOT IS NOT SENT OUT IF DUES HAVE NOT BEEN PAID BY JANUARY OF EACH YEAR.**



## Cemetery Corner by Janet Richardson

Lena Wishengrad Ferguson

Lena was born about 1893 in Russia according to a 1930 US Census taken in Fairbanks, Alaska where she was 37 years old. She was married at the time but was listed as head of household and the sole occupant. Her name was Lena Lawson.

She had formerly lived in Biloxi, Mississippi evidenced from a newspaper article about her death in the Biloxi Daily Harold, August 4, 1954 p12. The article focuses on her Jewish burial in Fairbanks.

Mrs. Lena Lawson married Harold Larn Ferguson in Fairbanks, Alaska on October 1, 1931. The marriage certificate indicates she was 38 years old and divorced. Her husband was 36 years old and never married.

Lena unexpectedly passed away on July 2, 1954 at her home at 638 Fifth Ave. in Fairbanks, Alaska. She was buried at Clay Street Cemetery in the only known Jewish burial grounds in Alaska, as requested by her brother, J. Wishengrad.

Her husband, Harold, passed away one year previously and is buried at Birch Hill and she was survived by her brother-in-law, Roy Ferguson, who is also now buried at Birch Hill.

### FORMER BILOXIAN FINDS ALASKAN BURIAL PLOT

The death in Fairbanks, Alaska, this month of Mrs. Lena Ferguson, a Jewess, led to the discovery by Jack Frankel, formerly of Biloxi, USO-JWB worker in Alaska, of an old and long unused Jewish cemetery plot in Fairbanks.

Believed to be the only Jewish burial ground in Alaska, the plot became the last resting place of Mrs. Ferguson whose Jewishness came to light after her brother, J. Wishengrad, Catskill, N. Y., wired a local funeral chapel requesting that his sister be buried according to Jewish law.

Since the only rabbi in Alaska, Chaplain Jacob Rubenstein, was away on visits to Jewish GI's stationed at remote installations, Mr. Frankel and Robert Bloom, a Jewish settler, officiated at Mrs. Ferguson's funeral.

The cemetery plot had not been used for more than 25 years because other deceased Jews in Alaska are customarily sent to the states for burial. Prior to Mrs. Ferguson's interment, the plot held five bodies.



## **Passing of Cam and Bob Carlson** (this was sent to us to post)

Spring's promise is upon us. Woodland violets in bloom, working the garden dirt, large V-formation flocks of trumpeter swans overhead, honking their way up the coast to Creamer's Field in Fairbanks. All of it gently and softly eases the deep ache and sorrow at the core of my being. This past winter, we tragically lost our beloved Folks. Our father and mother passed on together, seemingly simultaneously, only two months apart.

It is hard to fathom that these two were independently living in their precious house on the hill among the birch trees, a house they built together 55 years ago. Functioning together, they were a complete unit, fully immersed in their myriad activities of connectedness to the Fairbanks community. Then suddenly it all changed overnight, and after several months of agonizing medical events for each of them – they are now gone in a flash. Through the events of these past months, time has passed both painfully slow and breathtakingly fast... all at once.

On September 24th, Mom woke to a large brainstem hemorrhage, leading to a MedFlight to Anchorage, with Dad at her side. She was left with a severe stroke. At the same time, Dad's squamous cell cancer became metastatic, and life got increasingly complicated and exhausting for both of them. As Mom endured moving through different levels of hospitalization, rehab, and a skilled nursing facility, Dad was steadfastly at her side every day. For many days...weeks... we took him to radiation treatment, followed by time at Mom's bedside, where he sat faithfully, being her "Rock". Often over the months, we told ourselves things couldn't get worse... and then they did. It was surreal to have both Mom and Dad moving through life-ending medical events simultaneously.

It was an honor to be able to shepherd them through all of this, with the tireless help of my siblings. Many times, we said "Thank heavens, they had 3 kids!" It is a great comfort now to know they felt supported and deeply loved by us to the end. I have deep admiration for their bravery and strength through all of it – Mom working so hard in rehab therapies in hopes of returning home, and Dad so devoted to keeping Mom's spirits up and showing his love for her, even as he was enduring daily cancer pain of his own.

Dad passed over on December 24th, Christmas Eve... and Mom followed on March 1st. In recent years, they both often expressed they had lived full, richly rewarding lives. The country boy and city girl from Wisconsin lived their best lives together in "The Northland". As we begin to get our feet back under us, full obituaries for each of their amazing lives will follow. We are planning a Celebration of Lives for mid-July in Fairbanks.

Spring's promise trickles into my heart, with new growth and evidence of the perpetuity of life all around us. Sweet memories of our dear Folks are abundant.,



## Minutes for March 25, 2025 Fairbanks Genealogy Society meeting

### Attendance:

Aldean Kilbourn      Amy Stratman      Kris Thiltgen  
Leonard Thiltgen  
Karen Tanner      George Dalton

### on Zoom

Mr. Whitekeys    Cheryl Berrong   Elizabeth Cook   Shirley Sterner   James Bartlett

President Amy Stratman opened the meeting at 6:03pm.

Motion made by Kris Thiltgen and Karen Tanner to approve the minutes of the Feb meeting. Elizabeth Cook seconded the motion. All approved except correction of date.

Amy reported the following:

James asked who was this man he was researching and where did he come from?

Amy made an Ancestry tree; turns out his name wasn't his real name.

Amy might be able to put on a program on this research, so many twists and turns from the original basic question.

Janet Richardson

Mr. Whitekeys is presenting tonight and next month will be at Fairbanks Distilling.

She commented how ironic her article on Chena cemetery in March Taproot was mirrored in the News-Miner this morning about archeology at the site of Chena.

Amy - I was doing research on a Clay Street person who died close to Chena during that timeframe; wondered why is he buried at Clay Street Cemetery.

Aldean - Treasurer's report

Check 2984.16 in checking (\$1000 from Pioneer Foundation); still no Doyon check but I have a letter that we received

156.00 to reimburse Amy for website, paying 9 years out.

296.00 US post office box; up \$20 from last year; discussed earlier that we would keep.

Saving had 13 cents interest for February; 1741.03;

Question - do I pay the Lynden bill from both or only from one account?

"no income from savings, so take out of savings to pay Lynden billing, "recommends Elizabeth.

Princess Sophia exhibit update;

MTV&CC has MOA and insurance; Juneau says it will cover insurance to MT, Tania will cover at MT; so far nothing heard from Loussac Library. FGS doesn't have any way to get insurance. So far, no way I've been able to get Juneau to send the exhibit.

Silas Firth will present in MTC&CC auditorium on Monday, April 21, 2025, at 6:30; doors will open at 6:15.

James asked about UAF's coverage for insurance; Aldean talked to Angela Linn, and she said museums cover as a rider. Elizabeth suggested that MT get a rider. Aldean explained that MT carries the expenses; all the organizations are tenants and pay a lease payment.

Aldean explained that Loussac isn't responding to emails or phone messages; Aldean thinks the issue is Loussac has to deal with the Anchorage Municipality's risk management department that isn't acting rapidly

I (Aldean) used some of my Alaska air miles to get Silas and his wife Leslie from Anchorage to Fairbanks on the 20th and back to Anchorage after the 21st presentation at MT.

Valerie at Fairbanks Pioneer Home wrote and asked us to come back to talk with new residents. Aldean thinks she can help; wants to know more about AI doing genealogy research.

To expand your research using an AI tool, Go to FamilySearch/Labs

Scroll down to "Expand your search with Full Text", then click "Try it", then, "Go to Experiment".

Tried using John or Jay Leach;

Filter using Washington state; biography. Try other filters

Dad is Jerry R Leach; mother is Jeanne. A lot of choices to scroll through.

Another example

George Vidas, Fairbanks

Harry Badger noted in Vidas' probate records, an example of finding other names not indexed.

Eventually found out all kinds of things about him, including the name of his gravedigger (at Clay St Cemetery), Vincent Matetich, who was a master gardener.

Can type in the city, state and might come across something.

Irene Sherman - arrested; 1951 judge dismissed assault charge, (an example of uncommon search).

Vital Statistics - could be in Ancestry but not all info is indexed.

Ancestry

Go to Probate for year died, go through folder to find year, then look for person (not index however!)

Another example, hunting for a pilot named "Speed Dryer", maybe it's a different spelling, uncommon name, but common words! Supposedly he crashed with passengers on board as stated in the probate records of another person, Civil Aviation Board might have investigated the crash (1943), no NTSB in existence back then; so far Amy has not found if crash even occurred, but the people she's looking for do not have death certificates either "Story just gets weirder". Difficult research. - Amy

Break for refreshments.

7pm program - The Alaska Union by Mr. Whitekeys