

**OWLS: OLLI Winter Lecture Series 2017—
First Fridays of December, January, February**

Finale to Celebrate University of Alaska's 100th Anniversary
EMPHASIZING OFF-CAMPUS RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

- 1st December: **Russ Hopcroft**: Oceanography in the Northern Gulf of Alaska: The Seward Line
- 5th January (2018) **Dave Norton** and **Hajo Eicken**: Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL)
 - 2nd February (2018) **Brian Barnes**: Overwintering in the Arctic: Animal Strategies—
Toolik Lake Research Station

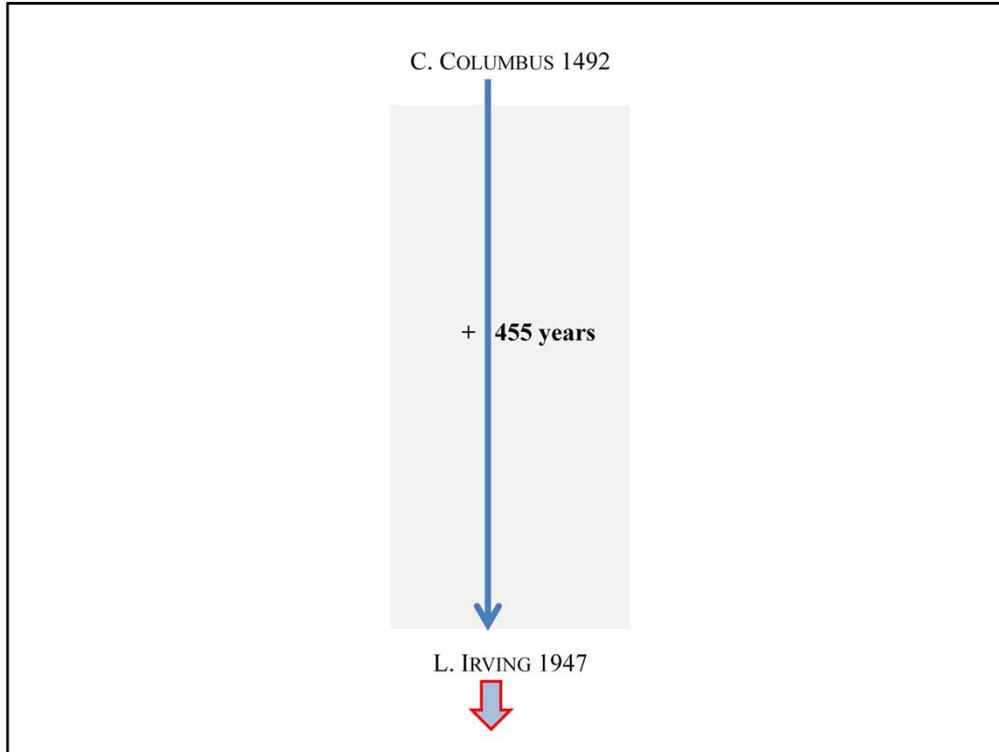
Welcome to the OLLI Winter Lecture Series—I like the Acronym OWLS—combining connotations of both wisdom and the low light levels of winter we experience at these high latitudes.

Today's speaker, **Russ Hopcroft**, will talk about Gulf of Alaska Oceanography. Next month, **Dave Norton** (that's me) and **Hajo Eicken** will talk about the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL) just outside Utqiagvik (formerly Barrow). February's OWLS speaker will be **Brian Barnes**, discussing research into animal strategies for overwintering in the Arctic, and the Toolik Lake Research Station.

With these three OWLS discussions, OLLI will round out its contributions to the 100th Anniversary of the University of Alaska by emphasizing some of the University's evolving research activities and adventures that are conducted off-campus.

Russ Hopcroft is on his way here from his busy teaching schedule on Campus.

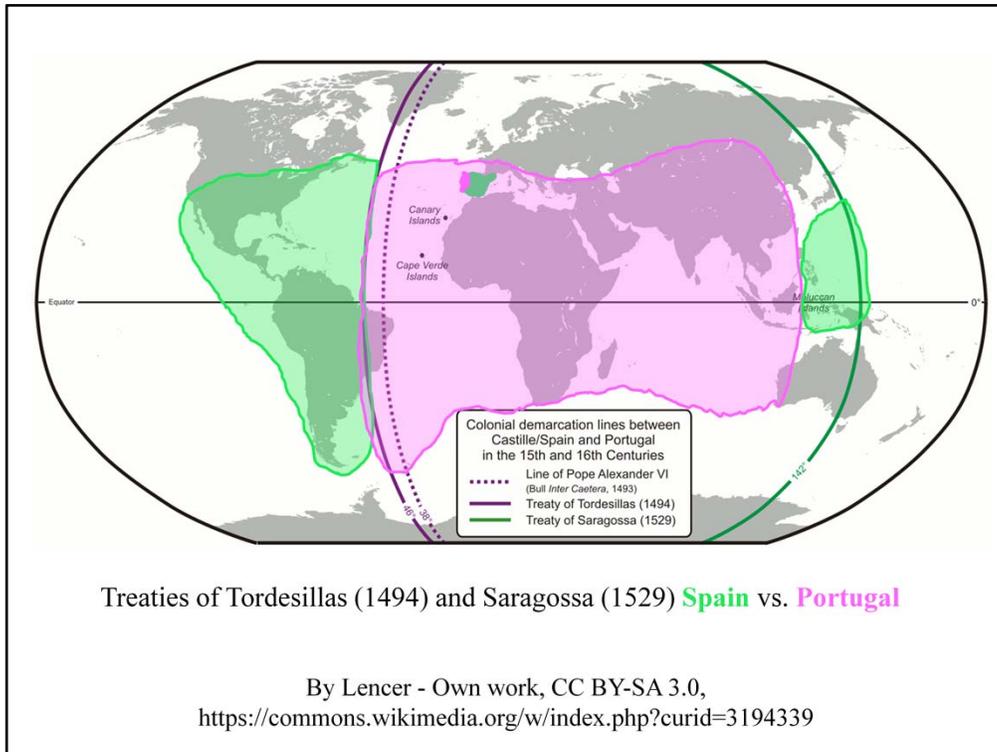
How many of us have heard someone remark, "Why should we celebrate Columbus Day—what did he ever do for _____ (Alaska)" for example?



As a kid in Massachusetts, I celebrated the 12th of October as a holiday from school, even though Columbus did not discover or set foot in that one small contiguous state in New England.

I decided to try setting the stage for this year's OWLS talks, with the proposition that Alaska and its University can—and should—trace their historical roots back over 500 years, to that brash Italian named Christopher Columbus. Although Columbus only came near the far eastern end of mainland North America, nowhere close to Alaska, his actions set in motion a chain of events and overlapping historical personalities consisting of links that continue to affect Alaska right up into the 20th and 21st centuries.

We in this room, this community, in the University, are among the very few stewards who can be expected to recognize and preserve knowledge of these links. Here they are:



When Columbus returned to Europe from the first of his four voyages to the New World in 1493, his accomplishment threatened to throw world order into chaos, by poising Spain (his sponsor) as a competitor to Portugal’s century of ascendancy in circumnavigations, explorations, expansion and colonization of the expanding world. The Vatican sought to forestall any possible strife between Portugal and Spain. A series of agreements and treaties followed, by which the known world and access to distant Asian trading opportunities would be regulated in the spirit of “No sense in having two good God-fearing Catholic nations harming one another.”

Papal Treaties, 1494, 1529

Queen Elizabeth (I) 1558-1603
Peter I-to 1725; V. Bering-1728

Catherine II-to 1796; A. Baranov to 1818
M. Lewis and W. Clark 1802-06

Charles Darwin 1831-59

G.W. DeLong 1879-81
Adolphus

L. IRVING 1947

C. COLUMBUS 1492

M. FROBISHER 1570S

J. COOK 1778

J. BARROW 1804-48

J. FRANKLIN TO 1847

K. WEYPRECHT 1875

P. H. RAY 1881-83

C. BROWER 1883-45

England was effectively excluded from lucrative trade routes to Asia by these treaties. Unless...that island nation could figure out one of two possible passages NE, NW, to Asian trade. Before Britain was a world power, QE I and Martin Frobisher (a privateer) teamed up. Frobisher got sidetracked into founding a mining “colony” on Baffin Island, where he thought that Inuits there resembled Cathay residents.

Two full centuries later, Britain had finally become a world power, when Capt. James Cook led the way with his equatorial and polar explorations. But Cook in 1778 was still looking for the elusive NW Passage shortcut to Asia, when he explored Alaska’s Cook Inlet, and when he discovered how narrow and shallow Bering’s Strait was. The U.S. had just explored its latest territorial purchase (from France) as of 1806 with the Lewis & Clark Expedition to the mouth of the Columbia River. John Barrow had been second Secretary to the British Admiralty for over a decade, when Britain defeated France’s Napoleon in 1815. Sir John Barrow undertook to put British Navy officers and men back to work exploring the world “for the good of all mankind.” Beneath this apparent altruism, Barrow still sought a combination of welfare for a peacetime Navy, and the elusive NW Passage to Asia. Darwin and John Franklin exemplify the altruism, and the tragedy of Barrow’s pushing so hard for the NW Passage, respectively.

Another altruist was the Austrian Karl Weyprecht who preached polar science in the form of international cooperation by 1875. The first IPY took place from 1881 to 1884. U.S. Polar stations at Fort Conger in Canada, and at Barrow in Alaska under Adolphus Greely and P.H. Ray, respectively, were a study in contrast.

Papal Treaties, 1494, 1529

Queen Elizabeth (I) 1558-1603
Peter I-to 1725; V. Bering-1728

Catherine II-to 1796; A. Baranov to 1818
M. Lewis and W. Clark 1802-06

Charles Darwin 1831-59

G.W. DeLong 1879-81

Papal Treaties, 1494, 1529

C. COLUMBUS 1492

M. FROBISHER 1570S

J. COOK 1778

J. BARROW 1804-48

J. FRANKLIN TO 1847

K. WEYPRECHT 1875

P. H. RAY 1881-83

C. BROWER 1883-45

L. IRVING 1947

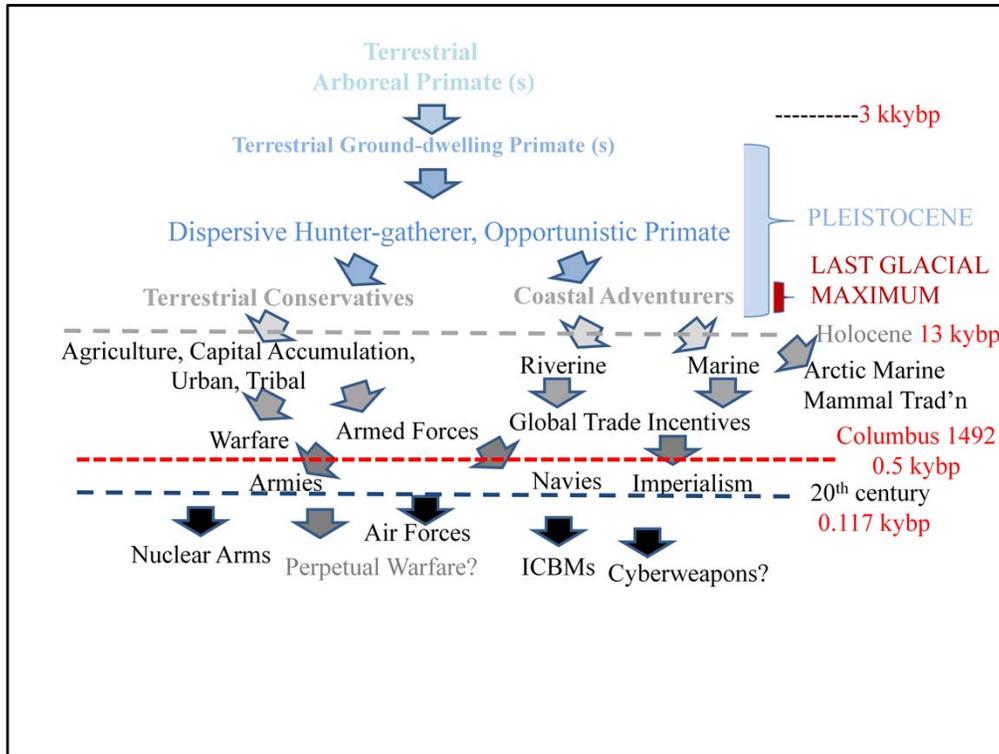
FIFTY YEARS BELOW ZERO
A Lifetime of Adventure in the Far North
CHARLES D. BROWER

In August 1883, as P.H. Ray and his men left the U.S. Army Signal Corps's IPY I station at Barrow, Charles DeWitt Brower entered it by another door to take over the building for the Cape Smythe Whaling Company. His long, colorful career at the Top of the World is chronicled in "*Fifty Years Below Zero.*" Commercial whaling sputtered and died during Brower's career, although subsistence whaling began to make a comeback, especially as attempts at reindeer herding on Alaska's North Slope did not prosper. Brower spent much time and energy in support of science.

The second International Polar Year took place in 1933-34, with the Soviet Union playing an expanded role. Soviets' scientists and technologists were keen on inserting USSR into the comity of nations by leading in aviation and ice science as WW II loomed closer. By 1937 Soviet polar achievements had impressed European and North American observers. By 1942, Lend Lease agreements furnished the USSR with aircraft flown from Montana through Canada and Alaska, to Europe's eastern battlefronts far to the west of Fairbanks and Nome.

After WW II ended, the Office of Naval Research sought to support science in the Arctic with a permanent station. Thus was conceived and supported the U.S. Naval Arctic Research Laboratory (NARL) in Barrow, under its first Director, Laurence N. Irving beginning in 1947.

Now that wasn't too painful a sprint, was it? Columbus really does deserve a nod for nudging history in a direction that favored and shaped developments in Alaska, even now, over 500 years after his first voyage to the New World.



Narrowed down by a larger overview of our species' development, my historical link-tracing covers only a tiny slice of humans' (*Homo sapiens*) overall development, from a welter of African primate species, to today's products of evolution, climate change, and...history.

Consider: In the concluding phases (1860s CE) of the international search for Franklin's Expedition that departed Britain in 1845, an American, Charles Francis Hall, talked with Inuit residents on the eastern end of Baffin Island who could recite oral history going back nearly 300 years. That oral history quite clearly identified the three expeditions by the English scoundrel, Martin Frobisher, in the 1570s. The Inuit of the Arctic Marine Mammal culture recounted what the ships did, where the strange light-skinned sailors and miners ended up, and how their own ancestors interacted with these strange people.

By comparison, tracing recorded history a little further back to 500 years (half a millennium) and to Columbus's achievements and their influence on current affairs in polar regions including Alaska is a modest exercise. Nonetheless: important!