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TAKE AN ARTISTIC TOUR OF INTERIOR ALASKA HISTORIC SITES

Historical artist and writer Ray Bonnell has published a book entitled, “Interior Sketches – Ramblings around Interior Alaska historic sites.” It takes readers on a tour to 60 Eastern Interior Alaska historic locations.

Each book entry features one of Ray’s detailed pen & ink historical drawings plus an essay describing a historic site. His work draws on 30 years of tramping the back roads and trails of Eastern Interior Alaska—visiting old mining camps, roadhouses, homesteads, villages and other sites. Wherever he travels he takes numerous photographs and notes, and produces myriad sketches, recording as he says, “snapshots in time of these historic resources before development, vandalism, accidents and time erase them from the landscape.”

Included are endangered historic sites like Richardson Roadhouse, as well as sites that have disappeared, such as the Fairbanks coal bunkers. Also featured are historic preservation success stories like the Cleary-Chatanika Schoolhouse; and museum pieces such as a century-old toboggan freight sled at the Circle District Museum in Central.

Ray’s book guides readers from Boundary at the Canadian border to Manley Hot Springs in the west, and from Circle Hot Springs and Eagle in the north to Valdez Creek and Kantishna in the south. All of the sites are on or near the road system, so people can drive or walk to most of them. In keeping with the book’s historical and artistic nature, Ray painstakingly hand-drew the included map that shows the general location of historic sites.

The sites featured in the book first appeared in Ray’s newspaper column, “Sketches of Alaska,” which is published in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. He has been producing the column for the past 3 ½ years, and in 2011 it received the Contributions to Alaska History Award from the Alaska Historical Society.

Ray attended college in Anchorage, Alaska, graduating from Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology and art. For the past three decades Ray has lived in and explored Eastern Interior Alaska.

For more information about the book, or to schedule an interview with Ray, call (907) 452-5455 or e-mail him at pingo@mosquitonet.com.

Helpful links:

- Cover for book
- Sample Chapters
- Map for book
- Author’s photo
- Author's blog
Ray is a free-lance artist and writer living in Fairbanks, Alaska (the golden heart of the Interior.)

The Northern Mines Region of California was his stomping ground as a youth. The area is dotted with abandoned mines, hydraulic digging and Indian campoodies. It was there he became enthused with mining history, Native American culture, and the aesthetics of decay as the works of man gradually merged back into nature.

Graduating from Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology and Art, he also studied both those subjects at the graduate level at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Ray has been tramping the back roads and trails of Eastern Interior Alaska for 30 years, documenting (through photos, sketches and notes) its mining camps, homesteads, cemeteries and other historic sites. His goal has been to record a “snapshot in time” of these sites before accidents, development, time, and vandals erase them from the landscape.

Over those thirty years he has been producing detailed pen and ink drawings of the region’s historic buildings and equipment, and since 2010 he has also been writing a column in the *Fairbanks Daily News-Miner* about historic sites around Eastern Interior Alaska. In September of 2011 his column received the Alaska Historical Society’s “Contributions to Alaska History Award.”
Take an artistic tour of Eastern Interior Alaska historic sites with Fairbanks artist and writer, Ray Bonnell. For the past 30 years Ray has been tramping the back roads and trails of this vast but sparsely populated region. His destinations have been old mining camps, roadhouses, homesteads, villages and other historic locations.

Some of those sites are being preserved, but many are fading away—the result of accidents, development, time, and vandalism. Several of the historic structures that Ray has visited have already disappeared or undergone dramatic changes. Perhaps just as significant, the memory of these sites is fading as the old-timers who lived this history die or move away.

Ray feels it is important to at least record a “snapshot in time” of these sites, so on his trips he takes numerous photographs and notes, and draws reference sketches. The sketches evolve into detailed pen and ink drawings, and the notes become essays.

Many of those essays and drawings end up in his newspaper column, Sketches of Alaska, which is published in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. His column received the Contributions to Alaska History award from the Alaska Historical Society in 2011.

Sixty of those snapshots, selected from the first two and a half years of Ray’s column, appear in this book. Each entry consists of a pen-&-ink illustration and essay. All of the sites are on or near the road system, so you can drive or walk to most of them if you are so inclined. A map of Eastern Interior Alaska showing the general location of sites is included. In keeping with the historical and artistic nature of the book that detailed map was hand-drawn and inked by Ray.
Interior Sketches
Ramblings around Interior Alaska historic sites
Text and drawings by Ray Bonnell

Interior Sketches
Ramblings around Interior Alaska historic sites
Ray Bonnell

For 30 years Fairbanks artist and writer Ray Bonnell has been tramping the back roads and trails of Eastern Interior Alaska, visually documenting the region's historic resources. Let him guide you on an artistic tour of some of these locations.

- Sixty historic sites featured.
- Each entry includes a detailed pen and ink illustration plus essay,
- All sites originally appeared in Ray's award-winning newspaper column, Sketches of Alaska.
- All sites are located near the road system so you can visit most of them.
- A hand-drawn map of the region showing the general location of sites is included.

Use Interior Sketches as a guide book while you explore the back roads of Eastern Interior Alaska, or just enjoy it from the confort of your easy chair.

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Interior Sketches
Ramblings around Interior Alaska historic sites

Take an artistic tour of Eastern Interior Alaska historic sites

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Some of these sites are being preserved, but many are fading away—the result of accidents, development, time, and vandalism. A few of the historic structures he has visited have already disappeared or undergone dramatic changes.

Through his essays and detailed pen & ink drawings Ray has been taking “snapshots in time” of these historic sites. Many of those snapshots appear in this book. Interior Sketches guides readers from Boundary at the Canadian border to Manley Hot Springs in the west, and from Circle Hot Springs and Eagle in the north to Valdez Creek and Kantishna in the south.

- Sixty historic sites featured.
- Each entry consists of a detailed pen & ink illustration plus essay describing the site.
- Sites included were selected from the first two and a half years of Ray’s newspaper column, Sketches of Alaska. That column received the Contributions to Alaska History award from the Alaska Historical Society in 2011.
- All of the sites are on or near the road system, so the reader can drive or walk to most of them.
- A reproduction of a hand-drawn map of Eastern Interior Alaska showing the general location of sites is included.

“Ray is not only a talented artist, but also a wonderful writer. We thoroughly enjoyed the book.”
Christine Upton

“Excellent book. Truly amazing drawings and great historical articles. A great read.”
Dave Dreydoppel

Ray graduated from Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology and art. He then studied writing at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

He has lived in and explored Interior Alaska for over three decades. Since 2010 his column about Interior Alaska historic sites has appeared on a regular basis in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner newspaper.

Interior Sketches
Ramblings around Interior Alaska historic sites

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Contact: pingo@mosquitonet.com - (907) 452-5455
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Interior Sketches II
More ramblings around Interior Alaska historic sites

Continue your artistic tour of Interior Alaska historic sites

Fairbanks artist and historian Ray Bonnell has been tramping the roads and trails of Interior Alaska for over 30 years, searching out old mining camps, villages, and other historic locations.

His goal had been to record “snapshots in time” of these sites before time, development, and vandalism erased many of them from the landscape. While some sites are being preserved, others have already disappeared, and the changing climate in Interior Alaska is putting even more historic sites at risk.

Since 2010 he has been producing a historical column entitled “Sketches of Alaska” for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner newspaper. Through his column essays and detailed pen-and-ink drawings Ray has been sharing these “snapshots in time” with the public. Each column received the Contributions to Alaska History award from the Alaska Historical Society in 2011.

His first book on Interior Alaska historic sites, published in 2013, brought the first 2 1/2 years of his column into one collection. This second book covers an additional 2 1/2 years of the column. Many of the column essays were revised and updated for this book.

Interior Sketches II takes readers from Northway Airfield near the Canadian border to Manley Hot Springs in the west, and from Circle in the north to Talkeetna in the south.

- Sixty additional historic sites are featured.
- Each entry consists of a detailed pen-and-ink illustration plus essay describing the site.
- All of the sites are on or near the road system, so the reader can drive or walk to most of them.
- A reproduction of a hand-drawn map of Interior Alaska showing the general location of sites included.
- Numerous additional pen-and-ink drawings of Alaskan scenes are also included.

Ray Bonnell graduated from Alaska Methodist University (now Alaska Pacific University) in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in anthropology and art. He then studied writing at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks.

He has lived in and explored Interior Alaska for over three decades. Since 2010 his column about Interior Alaska historic sites has appeared on a regular basis in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner newspaper.
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