



# Waterlines

Fall 2014

## *Thelma C* Exhibit Design Workshop November 10

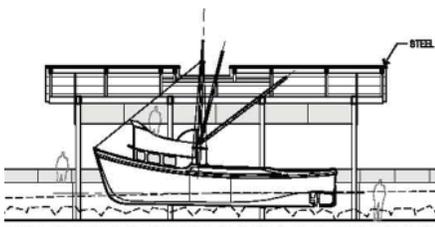
As part of the design process of the *Thelma C* Exhibit, KMM will host a public workshop at Fishermens Hall, 7-9 p.m., Monday, November 10.

The meeting is the first in a series of meetings which will invite the public into the discussion of historical themes and stories associated with the boat, and how to include those stories in the exhibit.

A main theme of the exhibit will be the 1964 Good Friday earthquake and tsunami and the impact of the event on Kodiak's waterfront and fishing fleet. The exhibit will also explore Kodiak's salmon fishing and processing industry, wooden boat construction, and the day to day lives of commercial fishermen at sea.

The museum is hoping to hear from the public on these themes as well as other stories and themes which have not yet been considered, but which might be included in the exhibit. Including the public in the interpretation process is a primary goal of the project.

The *Thelma C* was constructed in 1965, one of hundreds of boats built to replace vessels lost in the 1964 earthquake and tsunami. KMM believes the *Thelma C* is the last of these "earthquake," boats in existence.



*Thelma C* Exhibit construction plan.

## Harbor Lights Festival Comes Again December 20

Kodiak Maritime Museum's 2nd Annual Harbor Lights Festival illuminates St. Paul and St. Herman Harbors again on Saturday, December 20th, from 5-9 p.m..

The festival features Kodiak vessels decorated with lights to brighten the darkness of late December and competing for "Best Decorated Boat." Residents and visitors can walk through both Kodiak harbors and cast their ballots in Fishermen's Hall on the evening of December 20th. The top three vote-getting boats will receive prizes donated by KMM and local businesses.



*Chirs and Jai Nan Fiala admire their boat, the U-Rascal, at last years festival. Photo: Pam Foreman.*

Kodiak Maritime Museum volunteers will serve hot and cold drinks and Christmas cookies in Fishermen's Hall throughout the evening. Live holiday music will also be featured in the Hall. St. Innocent's Academy Choir and Isle Bells performed last year.

More than 30 boats, a kayak, and an airplane participated in last year's event, and almost 300 people cast ballots for "best decorated vessel." The single engine airplane which buzzed the harbor was a crowd pleaser with lights on its wings and fuselage, but did not garner enough votes to place in the prize winning top three.

The top three vote getters last year were the F/V *Stella*, the F/V *Clyde*, and the F/V *Gallant Girl*. All three vessel owners received gift certificates from Sutliff's Hardware.

## Harbor Lights Poster Design Contest

As a way to support local graphic design artists while encouraging participation in the event, Kodiak Maritime Museum is sponsoring a Harbor Lights Festival poster design contest, with a \$100 cash prize for the best poster design. The contest is open to the public. The poster will be displayed around town and on the museum's website and Facebook page .

Poster designers should incorporate event details in an attractive 11 x 17 inch format, deliverable as a pdf file. Contact the museum at 486-0384, or email [toby@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org](mailto:toby@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org) for poster design details. The deadline to get your poster design to the museum is November 21.

## From the Wheelhouse —

After a busy salmon fishing season, the board and I came back to an equally busy season of maritime history in mid-September.

The *Thelma C* Project is the main item of business at hand this fall, and we're looking forward to the public interpretive workshop next week at Fishermen's Hall. (See page 1- "Thelma C Exhibit Design Workshop.")

The workshop is intended to let the public know what stories the museum is planning to tell as we design the exhibit to place the *Thelma C* in the larger context of Kodiak's maritime history.



*Russian Orthodox icon found on the Thelma C in 2012.*

It is also a way for the museum to hear from the public on what folks think about our design plans.

The staff and board of KMM intend to use the boat and interpretive panels and a cell phone tour to explore several themes related to Kodiak's maritime history.

As many museums have done before, KMM museum could simply decide on its own what stories the exhibit

should tell. However, including the public in the process of interpreting historical artifacts and community history is an increasingly common way for museums to connect with their communities and to help those communities take ownership of their historical legacies.

The museum also sees the boat exhibit as a way to strengthen the public's connection to Kodiak's harbor. While the harbor is a busy working area and the heart of the downtown core, it is also the oldest harbor in Alaska, and a historically important site.

Regarding the heart of the downtown, the museum is also hard at work organizing the 2nd Annual Harbor Lights Festival, which happens this year on Saturday, December 20th. While we hesitate to predict how many boats will participate and how many people will come down to see them, we're hoping for an even bigger and better turnout this year.

In the meantime, Happy Thanksgiving to all our friends and supporters!

-Toby Sullivan, Executive Director

### KODIAK MARITIME MUSEUM

P.O. Box 1876, Kodiak, AK 99615 (907) 486-0384  
 info@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org / www.kodiakmaritimemuseum.org

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## Longtime KMM Board Member Betsey Myrick Steps Down

Longtime KMM board member Betsey Myrick resigned from the board in October. Betsey joined the board in 2005.



*Betsey Myrick cleaning a Uganik beach during the 1989 Exxon Oil Spill.*

Betsey's hard work and attention to detail contributed to the success of many projects, including displays, the newsletter, and fundraisers. She also served as Secretary. Her quiet steadfastness will be missed.

Born on an island in Rhode Island with ancestors in the Nova Scotia ship building trade, the sea has always been part of Betsey's life. After following

her fisherman husband Chris to Kodiak in 1970, they began fishing a salmon set net site in Viekoda Bay in 1980 with their two daughters. In 1986 they moved to Trap 6 in Uganik Bay.

In the decades since then Betsey watched the setnet fishery go from wooden skiffs with 35 horsepower outboards to aluminum boats, net rollers, pressure washers, and much larger engines. Betsey cleaned beaches around Uganik Bay during the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill and saw fish prices rise again after the lows brought on by the advent of farmed fish in the mid-1990s. While Betsey and Chris still spend time in Uganik every summer, their daughter Adelia now runs the fish site.

Betsey says, "Every time I see the Kodiak boat harbors, I realize we have a living, breathing display of maritime life right before us, without walls. The holiday Harbor Lights festival is a great way for families to experience this."

## Do You Want to Get Involved with KMM?

KMM is looking for new board members to help steer the organization through the *Thelma C* Project and beyond. If you have a desire to see Kodiak's maritime history preserved and a few hours a month to devote to making Kodiak a better place to live, we'd love to hear from you.

Contact the museum at 486-0384, or President Wallace Fields at wfields@gci.net, or 486-8370

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## 2014 KMM Harbor Tour Highlights

Kodiak Maritime Museum had a successful harbor tour season this summer, with five visits by the Holland America ship *Amsterdam* between May and September. The museum conducted two tours per ship visit, and hosted 127 passengers from all over the world on a walking and learning expedition through Kodiak's St. Paul boat harbor. In May, the museum also hosted a dozen young people and their chaperones from Tatitlek, a village in Prince William Sound. KMM has been conducting the 90-minute tours since 2011.

Tour guides Ani Thomas and Toby Sullivan escort visitors from the gangway at Pier II to the boat harbor, with stops at points of interest along the way. Each tour is slightly different as the tour guides take advantage of stacks of crab pots, trawl and seine nets, longline gear, and loitering sea lions to educate visitors about Kodiak's fishing industry and the island's long relationship with the sea.



Tour Guide Ani Thomas gives tour ship visitor the low down on Kodiak's fishing fleet.



Holland America *Amsterdam* visitors follow tour guide Ani Thomas towards the harbor.

Ani Thomas brings two decades of maritime experience to the tours, as a former Fish and Game technician, a commercial fisherman, and partner with her husband in a fish retailing business. Toby Sullivan has fished out of Kodiak since 1975.

Holland America plans ten ship visits to Kodiak in 2015, and KMM will provide tours for each visit. Two independent ships, the *Crystal Symphony* and the *Silver Shadow*, also plan to visit Kodiak in 2015.

In 2012 and 2013, the museum provided a special tour for a small group of *Crystal Symphony* passengers- "The World of the Alaskan Fishermen." The tour featured tours of both St. Paul and St. Herman harbors, a walk through of the crab boat, *Trailblazer* with Wayne Baker, the vessel's skipper, and lunch at the Powerhouse restaurant with Mr. Baker and KMM Director Toby Sullivan

The museum also conducts tours for independent visitors and is working on a 2015 schedule for these tours.



Students, teachers, and chaperones from Tatitlek tour the Kodiak harbor in May.

## Thelma C Exhibit Site Survey Completed by Kodiak Land Surveying

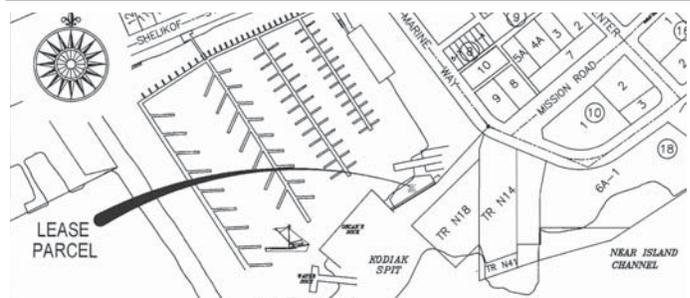
As the *Thelma C* Exhibit Project moves forward, KMM has reached a tentative agreement with the City of Kodiak to pursue a long term lease agreement for the exhibit on City owned land on the Harbor Spit, adjacent to Oscar's Dock. The *Thelma C* will be sited in a small plaza on the site with a protective roof over the vessel.

The exhibit site's boundaries were surveyed last spring by Kodiak Land Surveying, a local surveying firm. Title research was conducted by Western Alaska Land Title Company. Both firms donated their services to KMM free of charge as in-kind contributions.

The lease will provide the site to KMM for 20 years at a minimal cost to the museum. The City will continue ownership of the parcel, while the museum will retain ownership of the *Thelma C*, and responsibility for its maintenance.



KODIAK  
LAND SURVEYING  
SURVEYING KODIAK SINCE 1988



# The Early Days of the King Crab Fishery



*King Crab processing, unknown Alaskan cannery, 1929.  
Photo: Carmen Finley blog*

King crabs in three species live across the top of the North Pacific and the Bering Sea from Japan to British Columbia, and people have been eating them for thousands of years. No one tried putting crab meat into cans however, until the Japanese pioneered the technology in the 1880s, initially from their home islands, and eventually using factory ships in the Sea of Okhotsk and the western Bering Sea. In 1930 the Japanese began fishing for king crabs on the American side of the Bering Sea as well. The first canned Japanese crab arrived in the U.S. in 1906, and by 1939 the American market was importing 400,000 cases of king crab meat a year from Japan. The fact that some of this crab meat was eventually caught in Alaska did not go unnoticed by the Alaskan canning industry.

By the early 1930s, Alaskan salmon processors had been looking for another way to make money with their plants for years. The Alaska Packing Company put up an experimental pack in Seldovia in 1920 and through the '20s and '30s fishermen and canneries from Hoonah to Kodiak harvested, processed and sold canned king crab meat in ever larger amounts, with varying success.

One of the pioneers in this effort was “Kinky” Alexander, a salmon cannery man, who experimented with king crab at plants on Kodiak Island, at False Pass, and at Seldovia. In the mid '30s, Pacific American Fisheries set Alexander up with an experimental cannery in Seldovia to work on ways to process king crab and shrimp more efficiently.

Alexander's work got the attention of Lemuel G. Wingard, the head of the U.S. Bureau of Fisheries in Alaska. In 1938, Wingard persuaded private investors to back a crab finding and processing expedition to Alaska with the *Tondelayo*, a steel hulled 113 foot former San Francisco lightship. Wingard hired Alexander to refit the ship with canning equipment and it headed north in August 1938.

Through the fall of 1938 the *Tondelayo* worked from Seldovia to the Aleutians, canning king crab caught by local salmon fishermen and a few Puget Sound trawlers who came north for the venture. While the expedition proved that king crab could be caught and processed on a fairly large scale, the venture was a bust for the investors, discouraging further private financing in a possible king crab industry.

Touting the 1938 expedition as proof of concept however, Mr. Wingard then persuaded various Congressmen and Senators, and even President Roosevelt, to fund a much more ambitious crab survey with \$100,000 in Federal money. Roosevelt was reportedly skeptical of the venture until the Interior Secretary brought in some whole king crabs. Roosevelt was duly impressed, and okayed the funding.

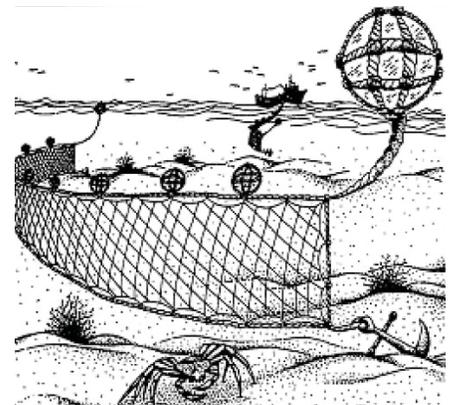
Beginning in August 1940, the *Tondelayo* and the halibut schooner *Dorothea* caught and processed crab from Kodiak to False Pass. They experimented with trawl nets, crab pots, and tangle gear, or “diver” nets. The 200 fathom (1,200 feet) tangle nets were six feet high and were strung like fences on the bottom to snare perambulating king crab.



*Lemuel G. Wingard, U.S. Fisheries Agent.  
Photo: University of Alaska, Fairbanks Archives*

Early on however, it became apparent that the cork floats which held the nets upright on the bottom were being crushed by the depths to which they were being submerged. Without the necessary buoyancy the nets were lying flat on the bottom and the crabs were walking right over them. The bartenders and fishermen of Cordova solved the problem by donating a supply of recently emptied beer bottles, which, when sealed up, made excellent tangle net floats.

The *Tondelayo* and the *Dorothea* came north again the following March, this time accompanied by the 63 foot seiner *Champion* and the 54 foot seiner *Locks*. The 1941 expedition surveyed from Southeast Alaska to St. Lawrence Island, finding notable king crab populations in the southeastern Bering Sea and around Kodiak Island. In December 1941 however, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, and six months later bombed Dutch Harbor and invaded Kiska and Attu. Further Federally subsidized king crab surveys would happen after the war, but combat operations put an end to those efforts for the duration.



*Tangle Net Gear*

# What Was a Salmon Worth in 1962?

Salmon fishermen have seen prices go up and down over the years, but how have prices tracked over the long run, adjusted for inflation? A 1962 settlement letter from the San Juan Fishing and Packing Co. to Uganik setnet fisherman Al Owen tells the story.



Al Owen.  
Photo: Deedie Pearson

Al Owen came to Kodiak with his family in 1941, helped build the Navy Base in Women's Bay, worked for a fishermen's union in Anchorage, served as an Alaska State Senator, and in 1955 helped write the Alaska Constitution. He was also a salmon fisherman, and fished the *Marmot* on the west side of Kodiak in the late 1940s and then as a setnetter in Uganik into the 1970s.

Until the early 1970s, fishermen were paid by the fish rather than by the pound, as it's done today, so to convert

Al Owens' 1962 salmon prices per fish into 2014 dollars per pound, KMM weight averaged the fish by species, calculated the 1962 price per pound, and adjusted those prices for inflation. (According to the U.S. government's Consumer Price Index, today's dollar is worth 7.88 times less than in 1962!)

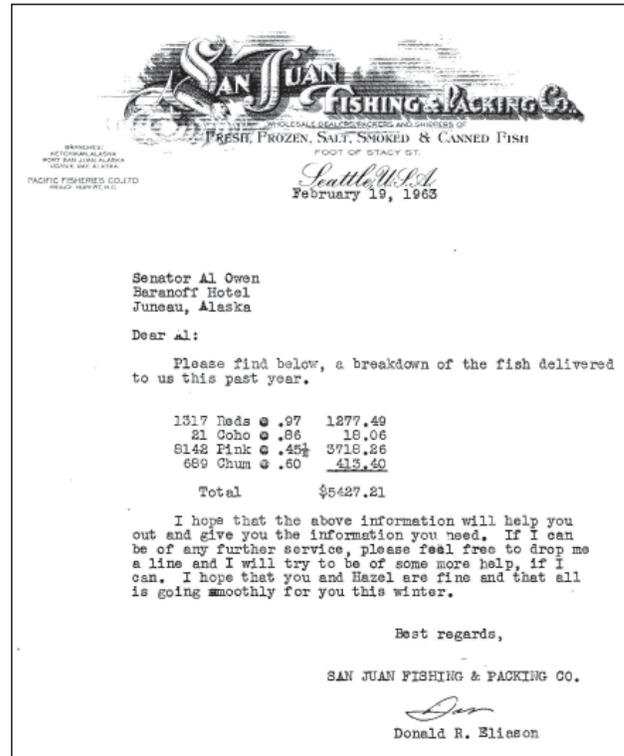
What we found was this, in 2014 dollars:

	1962 ex-vessel / lb	2014 ex-vessel / lb
Sockeye	\$1.36	\$1.88
Coho	\$0.97	\$0.63
Pink	\$1.03	\$0.28
Chum	\$0.79	\$0.40

It would appear that, adjusted for inflation, sockeye prices are better these days, but fishermen today get paid only a quarter of what they got in 1962 for humpies, half as much for chums, and a third less for cohos. The fact that fishermen today have to ice or refrigerate their fish at their own expense lowers the ex-vessel value of today's salmon even more.

Fish pricing has always been a black art, and it's hard to say exactly why sockeye prices have gone up somewhat in 50 years and prices for everything else have declined so dramatically, but the decline of the canned salmon market and competition from farmed salmon and other forms of protein are no doubt part of the equation.

The silver lining in all this is that since the State of Alaska took over salmon management from the Federal government following statehood in 1959, the number of salmon returning to



Kodiak has increased dramatically, allowing fishermen to make up in volume what the fish lack in value per pound.

In the early '60s, annual Kodiak area sockeye catches averaged around 500,000 fish and pink salmon catches were around 10 million fish a year. In contrast, in the 2000s, catches have averaged about 4 million sockeye and 20 million pink salmon a year.



San Juan Fishing and Packing Company, Uganik Bay, circa 1950  
Photo: Ivan fox

Why the switch from being paid per fish to being paid per pound? Until the early 1970s, salmon were unloaded with a "pugh," a rake handle with a single metal tine on the end, like a pitchfork tine. The fish were speared in the head and tossed from the fishing boat to the tender, and from the tender into the plant. It was fast and easy. A guy counted the fish coming across with a clicker, and fishermen were paid

for each fish, with different prices for each species of salmon.

The pughers were supposed to stick the fish in the head, but pugh holes in the body were common, and fish quality suffered. Eventually, the processors outlawed pughs and ordered fishermen to pitch the fish by hand into brailers, which could be hoisted aboard the tender and weighed precisely, and fishermen began getting paid by the pound.

## Gear in the Water- the Evolution of Halibut Hooks and Gangions by Deb Nielsen

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines gangions as lengths of moderate-weight line bearing hooks attached at regular intervals to a ground-line.

About a foot and a half long and spaced 9 to 25 feet apart along the groundline, a gangion setup spreads the bait scent over a greater area of ocean floor. It also gives the roller-man time to handle fish as the groundline is hauled over the rail.

Gangions haven't changed much over the years, but the hooks have improved. For years, the common J hook sufficed. The shallow breadth of the J hook let fish drop off on the way up however, which led to the innovation of the circle hook in the 1980s.

Hooks need to be sharpened, and even today, is often done by hand...one hook at a time. I can remember being given this daunting task with a tub of foul smelling gangions and hooks



*A gangion with a circle hook and a longline snap.*

coated with bits of mummified herring or octopus. Despite the smell, hours later, my galvanized tub was decorated with razor-sharp hooks like a sparkling necklace. Funny what a person can pride themselves on.

Prior to my salty days, the procedure of preparing a hook for long-lining took a lot more time and patience, and an expertise not often found on today's docks.

For starters, the hooks had no convenient "eye" machined into them. The shank of the hook ended in a flattened bit, designed to stop the slide of a tightened knot. The process of hand-tying a line from the ground-line onto each hook was known as gangioning...which came from the use of the ganging knot. The line came to be called a gangion.

In essence then, the assembled long-line gear is just a "gang of hooks" hanging out in a nautical neighborhood waiting for some action- one might call it fishing, "Gangion Style."

## Alaska Fresh Seafoods, Historic Processing Plant, Demolished



*Alaska Fresh Seafoods, March, 2014*

Alaska Fresh Seafoods, a historic seafood processing plant on Marine Way, was demolished in October. Adjacent to Trident Seafood's iconic processing ship *Star of Kodiak*, the plant had been in operation under various names and owners since 1965, and over the decades sent millions of pounds of crab and other sea creatures to their doom, while providing a market for hundreds of Kodiak fishermen. It closed in March.

The original plant was built by Roy Furford, who owned dungeness crab processing plants on the Washington coast in the early 1960s. In 1965, seeing opportunity in Kodiak as the king crab fishery boomed, he built a plant on a barge wedged into the shore of Near Island Channel, just south of the site of the Alaska Packers Association plant, which had been washed away by the March 1964 tsunami.

Furford called the plant Point Chehalis Packers. It became Swiftsure Processing in the 1970s, and about 1980 became Alaska Fresh Seafoods under owners fishermen John Hall, and Ted and Gary Painter, marketing man Ted Otness and plant manager Dave Woodruff. The plant's final owner, North Pacific Processors, kept the name.



*Crab live tank being hauled away from Alaska Fresh Seafoods, October, 2014*

In the early 1970s Furford also hauled the former Puget Sound ferry, *Skookum Chief*, north and began operating it as another crab processing plant just south of the St. Paul harbor breakwater. That plant, eventually owned also by North Pacific Processors, closed in the 1980s and the *Skookum Chief* was hauled away. Pacific Seafoods now occupies the site.



*Standing on the dock at Alaska Fresh Seafoods about 1980, from right to left, plant manager Dave Woodruff, fisherman Vern Hall, Senator Ted Stevens, fisherman Dave Hernsteen, fisherman Bill Alvert, fisherman Oscar Dyson, fisherman Gary Painter, and Senator Stevens' aide, name unknown.*

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PO Box 1876  
Kodiak, AK 99615  
(907) 486-0384  
[info@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org](mailto:info@kodiakmaritimemuseum.org)  
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