

The Lost Alaskans: A Civil Rights Story



Presenter: Karen Perdue
April 2, 2020

The
Insane
of
Alaska

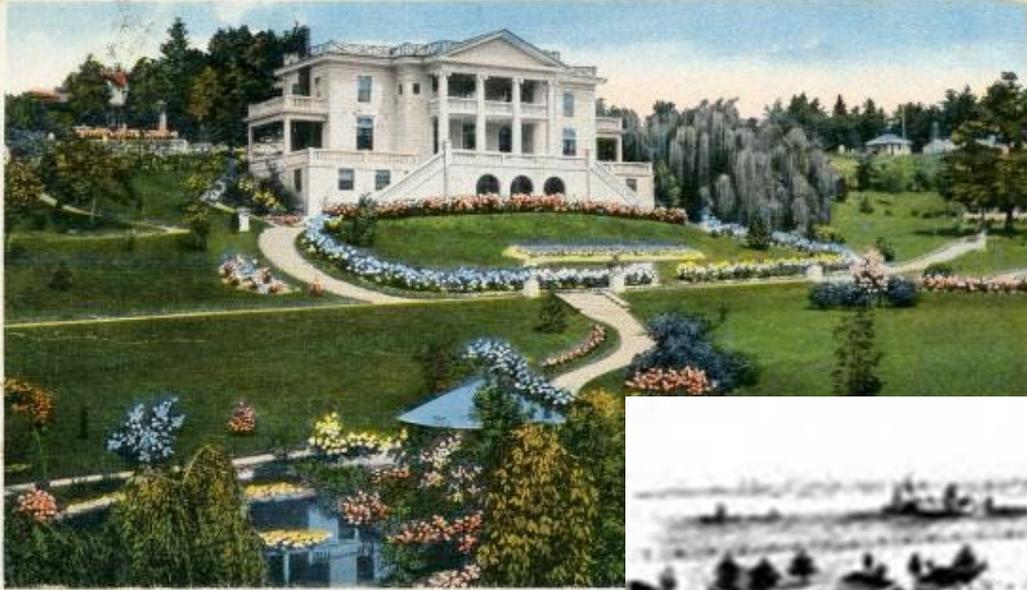


Administered Under the
Department of the Interior
at
Morningside Hospital
Portland, Oregon

NATIONAL ARCHIVES II



MORNINGSIDE HOSPITAL SERVED ALASKA EXCLUSIVELY FOR OVER 60 YEARS—4,500 ALASKANS



163. A GARDEN-SPOT-BEAUTIFUL HOME, AT MT. TABOR ELEVATION



Timeline

Alaskans Sent to
Steilacoom Asylum
(WA) & Oregon
Insane Asylum

Morningside
Hospital Opens

Alaska Mental
Health Enabling
Act passed the
US Congress

Late 1800s

1904

1910

1957

1968

Dr. Henry Waldo
Coe contract to
care for Alaska's
"insane" at Mt.
Tabor Hospital
(Portland)

*Between 3,500-4,500
Alaskans are sent
there in the 60 plus
years*

Morningside
Hospital Closed:
Destroyed by Fire

WHO WENT TO MORNINGSIDE?

Original Mental Health Trust Beneficiaries

Mentally Ill

Alcoholics with Psychosis

Developmentally Disabled

Elderly with Alzheimers and Dementias

All Had Jury Trial

THE COMMITMENT PROCESS

Arrested

- Petition filed in court by person with knowledge
- Judge issues warrant & subpoenas jurors
- Federal Marshall arrests
- Jailed and Medical Exam

Tried

- Tried by jury of 6 men
- Jailed until transportation available

Committed

- Taken by sled, wagon, boat and car to Valdez
- Sent by ship to Oregon to Morningside



02/02/2011

ITEMS OF FEES		Total	Quar- term Fees
6/1/08	File petition for Letters of Guardianship	0	
"	Order appointing guardian 500	60	
8/1/08	File Oath & Take file and appraisement	180	
	Recording 5 fol @ 30	150	
	Issue letters & file 15 - file pet app	500	
	Record 3 fol @ 30	60	
	Order appointing appraiser & oath 500	80	
	file 15 - file inventory & appraisement	80	
	Record 6 fol @ 30	180	
	But. copy letters of guardianship 2 fol @ 100	200	
	" " " " 6 fol	180	
			Rep 12/21/08
8/1/08	Examining Final Ac 150	150	
	Filing petition " Order " Formally 100	100	
	" Receipt Closing Guardianship		
	Filing Costs		
	Recording 6 fol @ 30 per fol	180	
	Free common during quarter Jan June		

JURY VERDICT

In the U. S. Commissioner's Court for Juneau Precinct, Alaska.

In the Matter of the Inquiry as to
the Sanity of Clara Babbage.

We, the jurors impanelled in the above entitled
matter, having been duly sworn on oath to diligently inquire, justly
try and a true verdict render, touching the mental condition of
Clara Babbage charged with being insane, and
after having heard the evidence, find that the said Clara

Babbage is really and truly insane and that he ought to
be committed to the sanitarium or asylum provided for the care and
keeping of the insane of the District of Alaska.

Dated at Juneau, Alaska, Sept 13th day of 1906.

Lloyd E. Winter

Harry E. Baerickman

Henry Shattuck

H. Ellis

John Olds

W. P. Swan

foreman

I hereby approve the above verdict.

Witness my hand and official seal this 13th day of

Sept., 1906.

A. H. Folsom
Commissioner.

OVER THE MARSHALL PASS,
FAIRBANKS-VALDES ROUTE.





Advocate



James Wickersham

Federal Judge and Alaska Representative to Congress. Fought for a Detention Hospital in Fairbanks as an alternative to jail for patients awaiting transport to Portland.



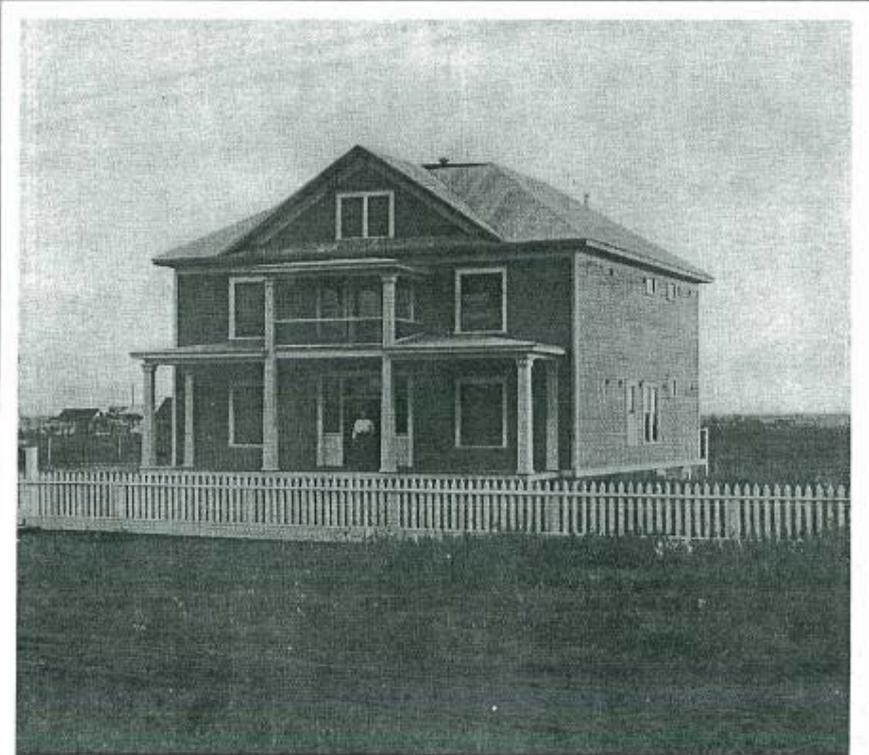
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA JAMES WICKERSHAM - BILL MCPHEE

FAIRBANKS DETENTION HOSPITAL

“In this stinking hole the United States of America keeps the insane women who fall into their clutches at Fairbanks, Alaska....Some innocent woman who becomes insane is arrested as if she were guilty of a crime and chucked into one of these dirty holes over this old rotten foul-smelling jail filled with the stench and curses of prisoners and kept there for months at a time.”

Judge James Wickersham

**January 6, 1915 letter to the U.S.
Attorney General**

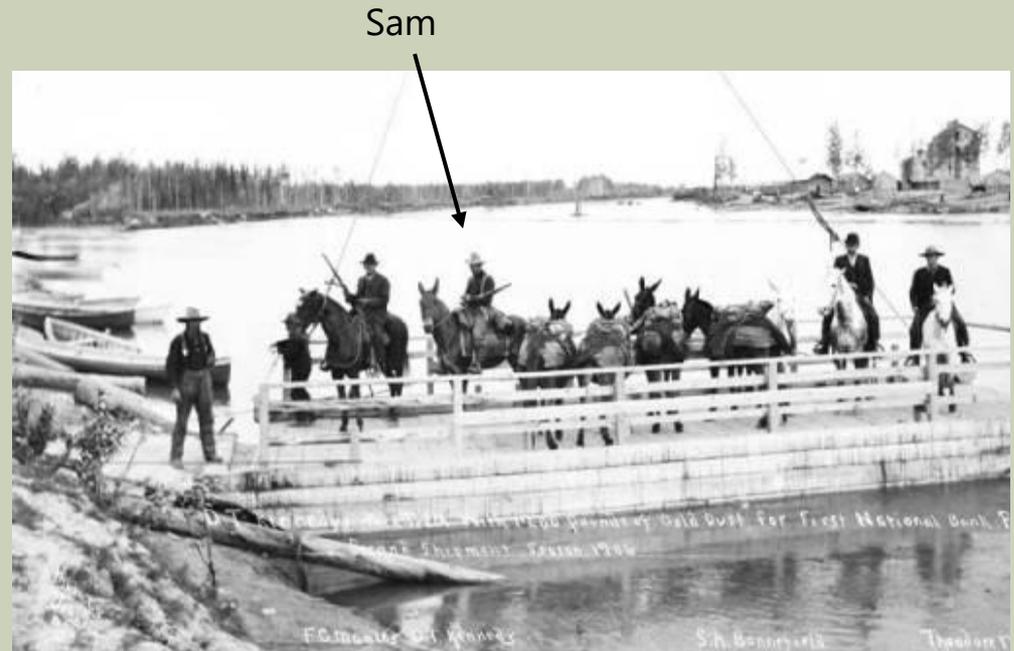


1915



EARLY PATIENTS: Sam Bonnifield, 1911

Sam Bonnifield was a professional gambler and saloon owner who followed the gold from Dawson City to Fairbanks in the early 1900's. Sam and his brother founded the First National Bank in Fairbanks.



SAM BONNIFIELD

**Diagnosis (1911): Paranoiac. Delusions of persecution.
History of mental disturbance dating back four years. Quiet,
tidy. Physical condition good.**



SEATTLE, Oct. 23.—Samuel A. Bonnifield, the banker of Fairbanks, Alaska, whose fortune is estimated at \$3,000,000, rushed into police headquarters today and demanded protection from his enemies who, he said, were pursuing him.

Bonnifield was locked up, but later was released to the custody of his brother, John Bonnifield, who agreed to place him in a private sanitarium.

Bonnifield is one of the best known of the Alaska and Klondike gold fields pioneers. He established the first saloon and gambling house in Dawson in the spring of 1897, and in one winter cleared \$500,000. He was at one time the richest man in the north.

Bonded whisky, pint 50c. Ott, 808 K.*

QUARTERLY REPORTS

STAFF:
HENRY WALDO COE, M. D.
J. W. LUCKEY, M. D.
C. U. SNIDER, M. D.

THE SANITARIUM COMPANY (INCORPORATED)

HENRY WALDO COE, M. D.
PRESIDENT AND TREASURER

L. O'CONNOR
SECRETARY

OFFICE: 516 SELLING BUILDING

PORTLAND, OREGON, March 31, 1922.

- #7 Aug. Hofstead - admitted Jan. 16, 1904. Enfeebled mentally. Stunorous condition. Confused more or less. Vague. Physical condition fair.
- 9 Peter Nebe - admitted Jan. 16, 1904. Delusions and hallucinations particularly in regard to inventions. At times industrious. Quiet. Tidy. P.c. good.
- 11 Joe Oaks - admitted Jan. 21, 1904. Enfeebled mentally. Memory poor. Quiet; tidy. Industrious. P.c. poor.
- 12 Benjamin F. Carter - admitted Jan. 21, 1904. Enfeebled mentally. Delusions of hearing and sight. Tidy, industrious. P.c. fair.
- 14 Frank Thornton - admitted Jan. 21, 1904. Enfeebled mentally. Delusions of sight and hearing. Tidy; industrious. P.c. fair.
- 16 Michael Perovich - admitted Jan. 21, 1904. Chronic delusional state. Depressed. At times irritable, though quiet and tidy as a rule. P.c. fair.
- 23 Cocawela (Male) - admitted Feb. 8, 1904. Idiot. Quiet; tidy as a rule. P.c. poor.
- 25 ^{Ellison} E. Ellison - admitted Feb. 8, 1904. Melancholia. Delusions of persecution; hallucinations of sight and hearing. Confused and vague. Quiet; Tidy. P.c. fair.
- 29 Andrew Arlandson - admitted Feb. 18, 1904. Paranoia. Hallucinations and delusions. At times irritable and unreasonnable. Industrious; tidy. P.c. good.

Anchorage
Daily News

Client No. 716

API's future *150 214 214 309* *Search for a new home continues*

Tuesday, the Planning and Zoning Commission voted 7-0 against the relocation of the Alaska Psychiatric Institute. It's unclear what the ultimate consequences will be. But the decision obviously will hamper API's efforts to acquire the Charter North Star Behavioral Health System facility on DeBarr Road.

The story of Alaska's history of those with mental problems is a troublesome one. In the early days, jail was the answer. After that, those who required hospitalization were sent to Morningside Hospital in Portland, Ore. API was built after statehood to ensure that Alaskans who needed hospitalization at least could be treated in their home state. Budgets for mental health have traditionally been modest or worse.

It's understandable that the neighbors of API, wherever it may be located, would have concerns about safety issues — specifically the possible danger posed by escaped inmates. But the current API building is about worn out. It's a decaying facility. And the state of Alaska is not going to build a new mental hospital on Adak or some other site where the neighbors are hundreds of miles away.

The government will never pursue a course so cruel to the patients. Somebody is going to share a fence line with

1915

#23. Effects of group of female patients Worthington
San. Co. Land Ok. taken at request of Dr. Alderson
May 26-'15 at time of breakfast -



I asked these women to come near the camera
that their count. and facial expression might be shown.
The white woman with the pitcher to the right is the one
timed as complaining of the food.
A.S.

DISCHARGED: Died

STAFF:

HENRY WALDO COE, M. D.
J. W. LUCKEY, M. D.
C. U. SNIDER, M. D.

THE SANITARIUM COMPANY
(INCORPORATED)

HENRY WALDO COE, M. D.
PRESIDENT AND TREASURER

L. O'CONNOR
SECRETARY

OFFICE: 516 SELLING BUILDING

PORTLAND, OREGON. Dec. 29, 1921.

The Honorable
The Governor of Alaska,
Juneau, Alaska.

Sir:

Permit us to inform you herewith that our patient, Mary Sackiloff, Jr., who entered our institution Feb. 6, 1904 from the hospital at Salem, Oregon, originally from Sitka, died yesterday from tuberculosis. She will be buried by Finley & Co. of this City in Multnomah Cemetery.

We have no record of relatives or friends.

Respectfully,

The Sanitarium Co.,

Henry Waldo Coe
President.

1923



NEENANA INDIAN MISSION,
NEENANA, ALASKA



HAND-COLORED.

1923



APRIL CHILDREN'S WARD

12104

MY UNCLE: Gilford Kriska, 1934

commitment. Pc good.
1559 KRISKA, Gilford - readmitted June 1, 1937, by transfer from Bureau
1579 of Indian affairs. Nulato. Indian. Age 14. Born in Alaska. Single.
No occupation. Diagnosis: Psychosis with mental deficiency, episodes
of instability and excitement. Unstable, mischievous, and sullen.
Prognosis unfavorable. Pc arrested pulmonary tuberculosis. years ago.
for past three or four

THE STORY OF GILFORD KRISKA

- 8/20/34 - admitted to Morningside from Nulato Hospital
- 11/17/34 - discharged from Morningside
- 2/25/34 - returned to Morningside from the Tacoma Indian Hospital
- 5/1/35 - transferred to BIA (by BIA) in accordance with their instructions (maybe to go to school...)
- 6/1/37 - transferred to Morningside from the Bureau of Education
- 7/19/43 - eloped
- 7/27/43 - returns from elopement
- 8/20/44 - eloped
- 8/24/44 - returns from elopement
- 1/23/45 - transferred to St. Elizabeth's (the files showed St. Elizabeth's requested and received payment from DOI for board and care 1/25/45-3/31/45, and 4/1/-45-6/30/45. At that time, St. E's was part of the Federal Securities Agency in WDC.)

NULATO HOSPITAL



TRANSFERRED TO ST ELIZABETHS



ADDRESS ONLY
THE SUPERINTENDENT
SAINT ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL

#55,567

FEDERAL SECURITY AGENCY
SAINT ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL
WASHINGTON 20, D. C.

JUL 21 1945

July 20, 1945

In Re: Gilford Kriska
Alaskan Indian Insane

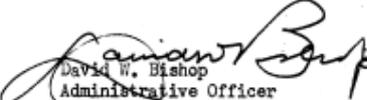
Division of Territories and
Island Possessions
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

Gentlemen:

We forward herewith Voucher Form 1080, with bill for reimbursement to Saint Elizabeths Hospital in the amount of \$182.00 for care and treatment of Gilford Kriska, Indian Insane patient, to cover the period from April 1, 1945 through June 30, 1945, a total of 91 days at \$2.00 per day.

Gilford Kriska, an Alaskan Indian, was adjudged insane in Alaska on September 21, 1944, and was admitted here from Morningside Hospital, Portland, Oregon, January 23, 1945. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs advised us that this patient is under the jurisdiction of your Office and that you have an appropriation to cover the expenses of his care and custody here.

Very truly yours,


David W. Bishop
Administrative Officer

- September 25, 1972

**GILFORD JOHN KRISKA, APPELLANT,
v.
STATE OF ALASKA, APPELLEE.**

- Before Rabinowitz, A.c.j., and Connor, Erwin and Boochever, JJ.
- PER CURIAM.
- In this sentence appeal it is claimed that a sentence of ten years, the statutory maximum for the offense of grand larceny, is excessive.

- **Kriska was convicted for the theft of a parka worth \$125.00.**

This is his ninth felony conviction. At the age of 48 he has spent less than one year of his adult life as a free citizen.

- A psychiatric evaluation, ordered by the sentencing court, shows **no evidence of psychosis or neurosis**, but places Kriska within the diagnostic group of character disorders. His personality is immature and he lacks the ability to conform his conduct to law. His condition is relatively static and seems unamenable to treatment.
- It is regrettable that efforts toward rehabilitation of Kriska have been unsuccessful. But, considering the recidivistic nature of the defendant and the need to protect society, we find the sentence to be within a zone of reasonableness. It was not an excessive sentence.
- Affirmed.
- 19720925

**AT AGE 48
HE HAS
SPENT
LESS THAN
ONE YEAR
OF HIS
ADULT LIFE
AS A FREE
CITIZEN**

1935



1935



1935



1940s



KEY ADVOCATES



Senator Bob Bartlett

Delegate from Alaska to the U.S. Senate. Championed the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act of 1956. The Library of Congress estimates that he had more bills passed into law than any other member in congressional history.



Representative Edith Green

Introduced the Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act of 1956 to the U.S. House of Representatives. She represented the Morningside Hospital Congressional District. She went on to play a key role in the passage of Title IX.

Government Launches Audit Of Morningside Hospital

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Times-Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON. (Special) — The federal government has launched an investigation of the operation and profits of Morningside hospital in Portland, Ore., where Alaskan mental patients are sent for care and treatment.

The probe, ordered by the House Interior Committee, is designed to determine authoritatively how much the hospital owners spent on care and treatment and how much went for profits under government contracts providing for the detention of Alaskan patients at Morningside.

The investigation grew out of demands by Rep. Edith Green (D-Ore.) that the government find out just how its money has been spent at the Portland institution. During hearings last spring on Mrs. Green's Alaskan mental health bill, the owner of the hospital submitted a profit statement which showed a net return in company income and his salary of over \$1 million over an 18-year period.

A. T. Samuelson, assistant director of the division of audits of the United States General Accounting Office, was due in Portland Monday to direct the investigation and audit of the company's books and records. The accounting office is a federal agency responsible only to congress for checking the accounts of other government departments and private concerns doing business with Uncle Sam.

Agents of the GAO have been combing copies of hearings before the House committee in which testimony was given by the hospital owner, Wayne W. Coe, and his son, Henry Coe.

One development leading to the probe was testimony by the Interior Department's associate solicitor, A. M. Edwards, who said that when Interior submitted its most recent five-year contract to Coe for renewal it included a clause allowing for a government audit of the hospital's books. But when Coe balked on signing the contract with this provision in it, Interior officials struck it from the contract, Edwards told the committee.

The demand for an up-to-date audit by the government of the company's accounts met stiff resistance in the committee, notably from Rep. A. L. Miller (R-Neb.), who sidetracked Congresswoman Green's audit resolution on several occasions with parliamentary maneuvers which prevented monotonously positive committee action. But shortly before Congress adjourned, the committee approved the audit move.

Results of the probe are not expected to be available for some months, probably not until Congress reconvenes in January when the Alaska mental health bill is due to come up for House debate. The bill won last minute approval by the committee, but lay late in the session to be sent to the floor.

Sen. Harry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), chairman of the Senate

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road reserve.

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tate offices?

The 10-page
was read to L
week at an
breakfast wo
Sullivan was o
drol. Bud M
to replace R
president and

Green takes
Sept 1955
Sept 19, 55

Investigation Of Hospital's Profits Opened

Institution Caring For Alaskan Mental Patients Scrutinized

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Times-Washington Correspondent

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Agents of the GAO have been combing copies of hearings before the House committee in which testimony was given by the hospital owner, Wayne W. Coe, and his son, Henry Coe, about the

JUN 18 1955

Oregonian Gets Rich Off Alaska Business

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Times Washington Correspondent
WASHINGTON (Special) — How to make a million dollars and be well on the way to a second or

government procedure. The last time Coe's contract came up for renewal in 1953, Interior suggested that it insert in the contract a clause to allow a government audit—but Coe told the

drama the outcome is still in | bring about full disclosure of M...
doubt. Congressmari
ens to talk his wi
consuming valuabi
time reading length

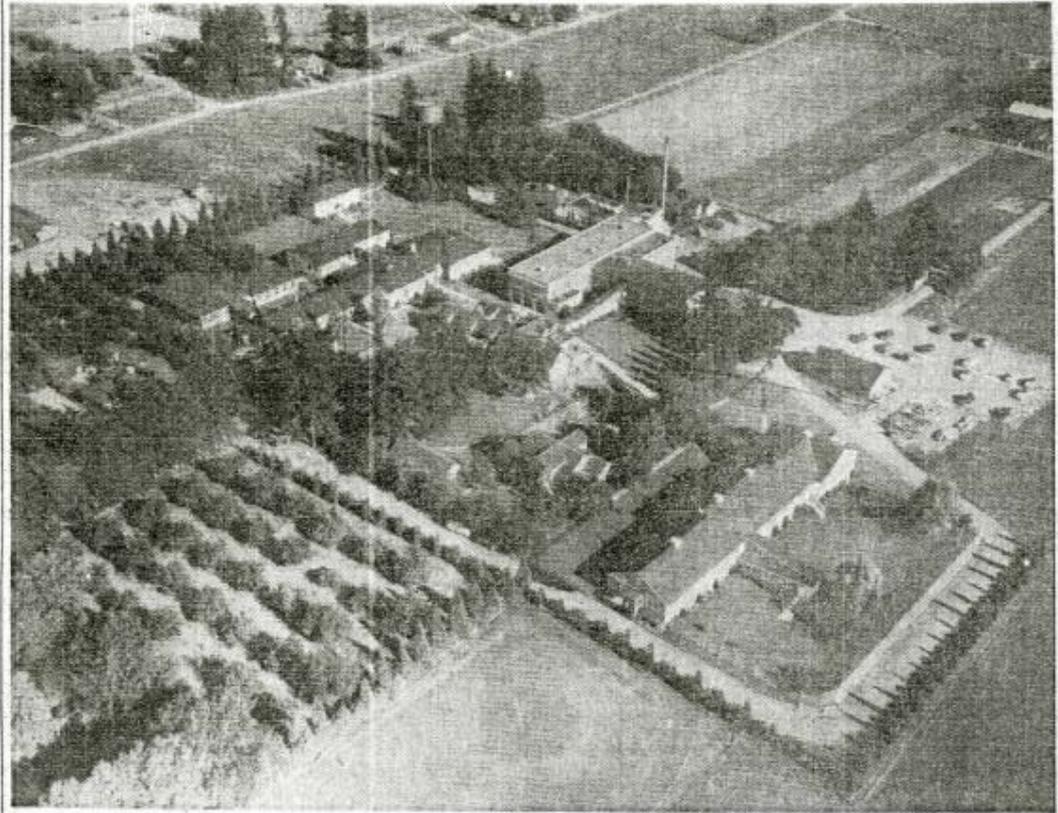
1955

THE OREGONIAN, SUNDAY, JULY 24, 1955

4M

41

Coes Deny 'Shocking' Profits, Defend Morningside Policies



Morningside nestles among trees in 100-acre tract at 10008 S. E. Stark street. Here Alaska's mentally ill have been cared for since 1904. New bill, if passed, may transfer care to Alaska. About 250 patients live here on average.

BY LEVERETT G. RICHARDS
Staff Writer, The Oregonian
bill to modernize commitment government beneficiaries," the pital in central Alaska, the Coes
procedures for Alaska's insane report concludes
The cost of transportation

JUL 11 1956

VOL. XCVI—NO. 29,855

E
P

GAO Finds Books Err At Hospital

Morningside Audit Declares Reports On Profits Faulty

BY A. ROBERT SMITH
Washington Correspondent, The Oregonian
WASHINGTON (Special)—
audit of the books of Morn-

July 17, 56

Morningside Burial Method Is Criticized

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Times Washington Correspondent
(Last in a series on
Morningside Hospital)

WASHINGTON — When an Alaskan mental patient confined to Morningside hospital, Portland, dies, he is supposed to be “interred decently”.

This is stipulated in the contract

Morningside
Patients are buried
in 7 Cemeteries in
Portland area

“they used to save
them up and bring
them 4-5 at a time”

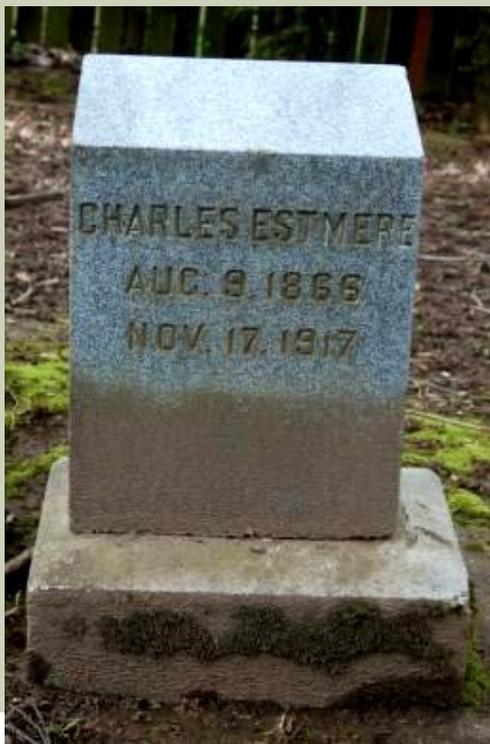
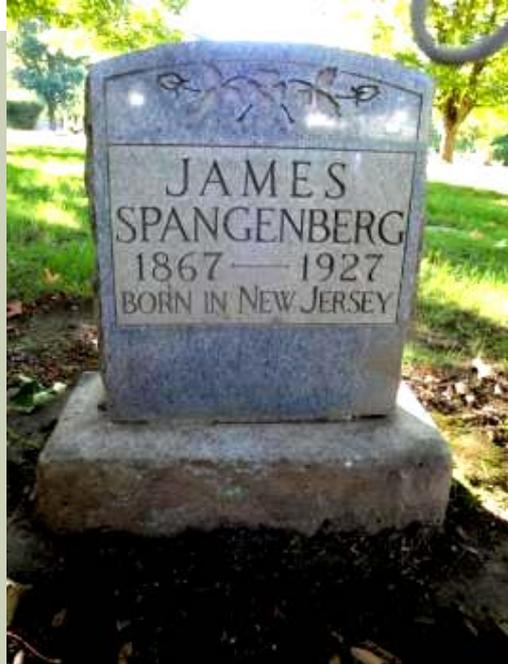


Section 7



BLOG COMMENT: 07-05

I found my Mom's father on the list. My Mother received a letter that he died Jan 1971. Where? If all patients were returned to Alaska prior to that date just where did he end up & where is he buried?



Aim Is Said Easy Incarceration Of Political Enemies

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Times Washington Correspondent
WASHINGTON — The attack

APR 4 - 1956

Alaska Mental Health Bill

CONFLICTING MEASURES HIT 'SIBERIA' ASPECT

By FRANK W. VAILLE

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two conflicting substitutes for the controversial Alaska Mental Health Bill await the attention of the Senate Territories subcommittee.

Which, if either, of the two independent proposals—by Senators Goldwater (R-Ariz) and Malone (R-Nev)—will be adopted is to be ironed out behind closed doors when the subcommittee takes up

La
En

CONSTITUTIONAL THREATS IN THE ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH ACT

an address by the
HONORABLE JOSEPH L. CALL
before The Freedom Club of
The First Congregational Church of Los Angeles
TUESDAY, MAY 1, 1956



FAIRBANKS

News - Miner

**LATE
HOME
EDITION**

America's Farthest North Daily Newspaper" --- Member of The Associated Press

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, THURSDAY, JULY 14, 1955

Sixteen Pages

No. 163

POLITICS THREATENS MENTAL HEALTH BILL

**Top Russians
Will Attend**



**Congressman from Nebraska
In Bitter Clash with Bartlett**

Hearing Uncovers Fact That No Audit

ALMANAC
Wednesday, January 18, 1956
Daylight Today 6 Hrs. 38 Min.
Sunrise 8:51 a.m. Sunset 5:29 p.m.
Yesterday's Temperature
Maximum -- 12 Minimum -- -20

Anchorage Daily Times

READ BY ALASKANS EVERYWHERE

FORECAST

Cloudy tonight and Thursday. Low tonight, 0; high Thursday, 20.

FORTY-FIRST YEAR

PHONE 56201

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 1956

16 PAGES

PRICE 10 CENTS

MENTAL HEALTH BILL APPROVED

JAN 18 1956

**House Passes
Alaska Issue
On Voice Vote**

Anchorage Daily Times

Robert B. Atwood, Editor and Publisher

Bernard J. Kosinski, Managing Editor

Published every afternoon except Sunday

By the Anchorage Times Publishing Co., 820 4th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska

Page 6

EDITORIAL PAGE

Friday, June 13, 1958

Another Crisis In Mental Health

A NEW CRISIS in Alaska's mental health program is coming at the end of this month.

The territory's contract for the care of patients at the Morningside Hospital in Portland will expire.

This should be no surprise to the

to convert the Valdez facilities to hospital use, and to transfer patients from Portland to Alaska.

The Valdez leaders thereupon arranged private financing for the conversion, and airline credit for the transportation.

MAY 28 1957

New \$6,161,600 Hospital Is Set For Anchorage

JUNEAU (AP) — The U. S. Public Health Service has approved construction of a \$6,161,600 Alaska mental hospital at Anchorage, the Territorial Department of Health said today.

The plans for the main hospital—originally to hold 225 beds but with provisions for future expansion to

A. ROBERT SMITH
WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT
812 NATIONAL PRESS BUILDING
WASHINGTON 4, D. C.

JUN 20 1958

June 7, 1955

Dear Edith:

You'll like this editorial.

How about giving HEW a shove
on transferring patients from Morningside
to Valdey?

Regards,

Bob

1 from Bob Smith
Morningside Hospital

has been for the
investigated on
the General
operate a little
was informed
Accounting Office;
Committee to
no information

TO FILE OF Mr. Coe.

Bob Smith found out also that Coe has been trying to contact the Interior Committee to pressure them not to print the report of any of the hearings. The report has not yet gone for printing. The Comm. referred him to George Abbott.

Bob Smith also thought that Mr. Coe might be contacting Mr. McKay himself to try to limit the audit. Bob said he was doubtful that the GAO could or would resist pressure if it came from the Interior Department.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust

■ Original Mental Health Trust Beneficiaries/ Morningside Population

- Mentally Ill
 - Alcoholics with Psychosis
 - Developmentally Disabled
 - Elderly with Alzheimers and Dementias
-
- 1956 Mental Health Enabling Act
 - 1 million acres of land and 20 million
-
- Today MHT is \$650 million/ 1 million acres



Judge Mary Greene was a State Appellate Court Judge in Fairbanks from 1985 to 2002 and during her tenure was responsible for some of the legal decisions regarding the Mental Health Trust lawsuit. She consolidated the classes and settled the lawsuit

KEY TIMELINES

- The Alaska Mental Health Enabling Act passed by Congress in 1956(pre statehood)- provided the Territory of Alaska with 100 million acres(to generate income to provide care) and \$6 million to build Alaska Psychiatric Institute. The federal government transferred responsibility for mental health care to the Territory. Morningside Hospital was closed.
- Harborview was built in Valdez in the 1960's to house persons with developmental disabilities who came from Morningside
- Alaska Governors and Legislatures never constituted the Mental Health Trust over a 20 year period despite the federal law.

- Finally advocates filed a lawsuit to force the State to comply, *Weiss v State* on behalf of a boy in Nenana who needed services. The attorney was Steve Cowper who eventually became Governor of Alaska.
- In 1984 in the lawsuit *Weiss V State*, the Alaska Supreme court ruled that the state breached its fiduciary responsibility to manage Trust land.
- In 1994, after a lot more litigation the lawsuit was settled by the State-reconstituting the Trust with \$200 million and 1 million acres of land.
- The Trust is more that 25 years old and serves as a unique institution in the world to advocate for the beneficiaries.

The Alaska Mental Health Trust



Vern Weiss of Nenana was the lead name on the 1982 lawsuit filed against the State of Alaska for misuse of the Mental Health Trust. He is the parent of a child with mental illness.



Steve Cowper was a lawyer on the Vern Weiss case in 1982. He served in the Alaska House of Representatives before being elected the sixth Governor of Alaska from 1986 to 1990.



Judge Mary Greene was a State Appellate Court Judge in Fairbanks from 1985 to 2002 and during her tenure was responsible for key legal decisions regarding the Mental health Trust. She spent ten years settling the case after the Supreme Court ruled. She passed away last year.

Date AUG 16 2000

Anchorage
Daily News

Client No. 216

Zoning panel votes against new API site

216 309 150 214 315
By PETER PORCO
Daily News reporter

The fate of the API/Charter North move has been thrown wide open by the Planning and Zoning Commission's 7-0 vote against the relocation Monday night.

State officials say they are flabbergasted. Opponents are cheered. The official neighborhood group is disappointed, fearing it has lost the leverage to get the state to develop the new psychiatric hospital in a way that eases its impact on Airport Heights.

Despite the unanimous "no" vote, Alaska Psychiatric Institute still wants to acquire the Charter North Star Behavioral Health System facility on DeBarr Road near Lake Otis Parkway and move there within two years, API director Randall Burns said Tuesday. Last week, the state signed an agreement with Charter North to buy the facility for \$11.7 million.

See Back Page, API

Option for API offered

Building new hospital gains favor in area

By LISA DEMER
Daily News reporter

With the political mood increasingly hostile to the idea of moving Alaska Psychiatric Institute into the Airport Heights neighborhood, another option is back on the table: building a new hospital, officials said Thursday.

The glitch is likely to be an old one: money.

Both ideas will be discussed Saturday at a public meeting organized by state Rep. Sharon Cissna, a Democrat and longtime resident of Airport Heights. Her agenda is to find a solution for replacing the 38-year-old building at what she is calling an "API summit."

"We've got two options out there. They are both acceptable to us. One of them costs a lot more money than we have," said Karen Perdue, state commissioner of health and social services.

API is the state's only public mental hospital. Many Airport Heights residents have protested API's moving into the Charter building, which borders the neighborhood elementary school. Charter treats mainly children, and none of its patients are committed by the courts. API patients are mainly adults, and few are there voluntarily. Some were found not guilty of violent crimes by reason of insanity or are awaiting psychiatric evaluations for fitness to stand trial.

The estimated cost of a new hospital on the grounds of API off Providence Drive is \$55.5 million, including demolition. That's \$33 million more than the state has for the project, said API director Randall Burns.

Burns said he has not been directed to



State Rep. Sharon Cissna has called for ideas to be presented Saturday morning at the "API summit."

KEY TIMELINES

- In the mid 1990's, Alaska became the first state to close all its institutions for developmentally disabled persons- Harborview and Hope Resources.
- Alaska adopted a waiver to develop wrap around services for ICF-MR residents.
- In the 1990's Alaska also determined to replace API- eventually downsizing from 225 beds to 80 beds.
- In the 1980's and 1990's community mental health funding moves from general fund to Medicaid fee for service with limited Medicaid waivers to allow money to follow clients.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Take Nothing for granted– the services that exist today were fought for by somebody –usually ordinary advocates- in the past 120 years.
- Do Not Be Complacent- Ask the question...Has daily life really improved for the vulnerable people in our society? This is why we study history.
- I ask the question myself *Has the Alaska Mental Health Trust settlement made a difference or enough of a difference for its core beneficiaries?* I would say no.
- Look for opportunities to be the right person at the right time to continue to fix the system for vulnerable people.

MORNINGSIDE HOSPITAL BLOG

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Questions/Feedback

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